



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2014
SENATE CHAMBER

Present:

Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Jonathan Craig MLA
Jo-Anne Dobson MLA
Chris Hazard MLA
Trevor Lunn MLA
Stephen Moutray MLA
Robin Newton MLA
Seán Rogers MLA
Pat Sheehan MLA

In Attendance:

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)
Karen Jardine (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Sharon McGurk (Clerical Supervisor)
Sharon Young (Clerical Officer)

Apologies:

Maeve McLaughlin MLA

The meeting commenced in public session at 9.34am.

1. Apologies

Apologies were as indicated above.

2. Chairperson's Business

2.1 Minor Works

The Chairperson advised Members of a response to AQO 5479/11-15 which made reference to a Memorandum of Agreement between the Department and the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) in respect of Minor Works undertaken by ELBs in non-controlled schools.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department and seek clarity on the relevant Memorandum of Agreement.

2.2 Social Media

The Chairperson noted that it is understood that work is underway in respect of a social media strategy for statutory committees.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider a social media strategy for the Education Committee following an anticipated briefing on this subject in March to the Chairpersons' Liaison Group.

3. Draft Minutes of 5 February 2014

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2014 were agreed by the Committee.

4. Matters Arising

The Committee noted further information relating to the Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement process including:

- a Departmental response on Parent Councils; and
- Assembly Research briefing papers on inspection notification and information requirements; and governance issues and budgets for inspectorates in other jurisdictions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the relevant papers should be published on the Committee's webpage with the other Inquiry papers.

5. Common Funding Scheme – Consultation Feedback

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 9.38am:

Trevor Connolly, Director of Finance; Karen McCullough, Head of Standards & Improvement Team; and Roisin Lilley, Head of Common Funding Implementation Team

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session and was recorded by Hansard.

9.41am Danny Kinahan joined the meeting.

10.02am Pat Sheehan joined the meeting.

10.23am Jo-Anne Dobson left the meeting.

Jonathan Craig declared an interest as a member of a Board of Governors.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 11.40am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider its response to the consultation on proposals to revise the Common Funding Scheme at its meeting on Wednesday 19 February 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to again request sight of the revised spreadsheets showing CFS allocations by school for 2014-15 which include the additional £15.8m and details of the proposed transitional contingency fund.

6. Departmental / CCEA Briefing – Review of A-Levels and GCSEs – Consultation Feedback

The following officials joined the meeting at 11.47am.

David Hughes, Director of Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards; Dale Heaney, Head of Assessment and Qualifications Team; and Roger McCune, Qualifications and Skills Accreditation, CCEA.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session and the evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

12.21pm Jo- Anne Dobson returned to the meeting.

12.23pm Jonathan Craig left the meeting.

12.32pm Danny Kinahan left the meeting.

12.32pm Seán Rogers left the meeting.

12.38pm Robin Newton left the meeting.

The officials left at 12.40pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider its draft response to the consultation on the Review of A-Levels and GCSEs at its next meeting.

7. Correspondence

7.1 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education on the Notifiable Occupations Scheme and its use by educational bodies in Northern Ireland to ensure an adequate level of child protection in schools.

7.2 The Committee noted responses from the Department of Education and the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the continued funding of shared education programmes like the Primary Integrating / Enriching Education Project (PIEE) Project.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the North Eastern Education and Library Board seeking a response on the relevant funding opportunities provided by the Community Relations Equality and Diversity (CRED) Enhancement Scheme.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to write to the Department seeking a briefing on the “Together, Building a United Community” (TBUC) shared campuses initiative following the Easter Recess.

7.3 The Committee noted correspondence from The Prince’s Trust requesting an opportunity to brief the Committee and highlighting an upcoming Education Conference.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to The Prince’s Trust to request a written briefing and further information on the Education Conference.

7.4 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding its Inquiry into Flexible Working in the Public Sector in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence as requested to the Department and Education and Library Boards to seek information on the extent of flexible working in the education sector.

7.5 The Committee noted correspondence from a teacher regarding the use of Randomised Controlled Trials to assess the effectiveness of education policies.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to CCEA for comment.

7.6 The Committee noted an update from the Department on its progress on the Programme for Government 2011-2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request sight of the second Outline Business Case for the proposed shared educational campus at Lisanelly.

7.7 The Committee noted correspondence from Asthma UK Northern Ireland regarding a proposal that schools be required to maintain a stock of emergency inhalers.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking its views on the proposal and to seek an update on the Department’s policy regarding medication in schools.

7.8 The Committee noted a response from CCEA regarding International GCSE Spanish.

7.9 The Committee noted a public petition regarding the proposed closure of the Immaculate Conception College, Londonderry, presented to the Speaker during plenary on Monday 3 February 2014.

7.10 The Committee noted an invitation from the General Teaching Council NI (GTCNI) to a round-table discussion at Stranmillis College on 6 March 2014, on the outcome of the BERA-RSA Inquiry into “The role of research in teacher education: reviewing the evidence”.

7.11 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the Joint Ministerial Council (Europe) meeting October 2013.

7.12 The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding information in the monthly DE Investment Strategy Northern Ireland (ISNI) Capital Report.

7.13 The Committee noted an invitation from the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) to an event at Parliament Building on 7 March 2014 to mark Integrated Education Week 2014: “Building Bridges”.

7.14 The Committee noted an invitation from the Department for Social Development to the Launch of the Delivering Social Change Nurture Unit Signature Project.

8. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme as amended.

The Committee considered a paper from the British Council seeking the Committee’s support for a lunchtime event on 27 May 2014 which would showcase opportunities available to local schools in respect of EU and international funding.

12.48pm Danny Kinahan returned to the meeting.

12.48pm Robin Newton returned to the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed in principle to host the event with the British Council on 27 May 2014 and that the Clerk should return to the Committee with a revised proposal.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme as amended.

9. Any Other Business

The Chairperson reminded Members that a meeting with parents and community groups opposed to the closure of Newtonbreda High School had been organised in Room 277 at 1.00pm.

10. Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 19 February 2014 at 10.00 am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.49pm.

Mervyn Storey
Chairperson, Committee for Education
19 February 2014