



Northern Ireland  
Assembly  
Committee for Education  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 9 APRIL 2014  
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

**Present:**

Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Jo-Anne Dobson MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin 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)  
Emma Swan (Clerical Officer)

*The meeting commenced in public session at 10.01am*

*The Committee agreed to take agenda item 5 as its first item of business.*

**1. Common Funding Scheme and Education Bill - Ministerial Briefing**

*The Minister of Education and the following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10.02am:*

Paul Price, Director of ESA Delivery; Fiona Hepper, Deputy Secretary; Roisin Lilley, Head of Common Funding Implementation Team; Karen McCullough, Team Leader Common Funding Implementation; and Kathryn Menary, Workforce Planning Team

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

*10.03am Chris Hazzard and Jo-Anne Dobson joined the meeting.*

*10.14am Jonathan Craig joined the meeting.*

*11.02am Pat Sheehan left the meeting.*

*11.10am Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.*

*The Minister and the Departmental officials left the meeting at 11.35am.*

*11.36am Jo-Anne Dobson left the meeting.*

*11.37am Chris Hazzard left the meeting.*

The Committee noted correspondence from OFMDFM in response to its queries raised during the Committee Stage of the Education Bill relating to employment issues in schools.

The Committee also noted correspondence from the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) regarding funding for Nursery Principal Release Time.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request sight of the report on its review of funding for Nursery Principal Release Time when it becomes available.

*11.38am Trevor Lunn and Seán Rogers left the meeting.*

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to write to the Department to seek comment on a recent media article which suggested that at least 300 schools will lose funding in 2014/15.

The Committee noted that the Department had failed to provide additional information on the revised Common Funding Scheme as requested.

**Agreed:** The Committee therefore agreed to again seek clarification on how the additional £15.8 million added to the Common Funding Scheme budget and changes to other factors has affected school allocations.

*11.40am Seán Rogers, Trevor Lunn and Jo-Anne Dobson returned to the meeting.*

## **2. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

## **3. Chairperson's Business**

### **3.1 Holy Family Primary School Choir**

The Chairperson thanked Members for their support in hosting the performance by the Holy Family Primary School Choir in the Great Hall on Tuesday 8 April 2014.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the principal of Holy Family Primary School to thank the school choir for its performance.

### **3.2 BBC School Report**

Members noted that a number of local schools had participated in the BBC School Report Day covering a range of issues.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to write to the BBC to congratulate it on this successful initiative and also to indicate that the Committee would like to participate as required in the next BBC School Report Day.

### **3.3 Early Years**

Members referred to concerns raised by constituents regarding initial allocations for pre-school places for 2014/15.

*11.45am Chris Hazzard returned to the meeting*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek clarity on:

- whether there are any plans to undertake a wide-ranging Area Based Planning review of Early Years places across Northern Ireland;
- Departmental guidance to Early Years providers in respect of admission criteria relating to catchment areas, excessive travel distances or “grannyng”;
- the lessons learned by the Department regarding improved communication with parents following previous allocations of Early Years places; and
- the lessons learned by the Department through its study of parents who have dropped out of, or chosen not to participate in the allocation process for Early Years places.

*11.48am Stephen Moutray left the meeting.*

## **4. Draft Minutes of previous meeting**

**Agreed:** The minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2014 were agreed by the Committee.

## **5. Matters Arising**

### **5.1 Area Planning and Shared Education**

The Chairperson referred Members to information from the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education relating to the Area Planning Process, which had been noted at the previous meeting.

Members also noted in their tabled items a letter from the Integrated Education Fund regarding the possible terms of reference for the Committee’s planned inquiry into Integrated and Shared Education.

Members also noted a letter from the Department responding to Committee queries in respect of the IEF Report: The Business of Education.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to note the information received and take it into consideration when drawing up the Terms of Reference for the planned Committee inquiry into Integrated and Shared Education.

*11.52am Robin Newton left the meeting.*

*11.52am Stephen Moutray returned to the meeting.*

## **5.2 Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement Process**

Members noted correspondence from the Department providing further clarity on the sharing of draft inspection summaries.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to add the correspondence to its inquiry report and to publish the information on the Committee's webpage, along with the other inquiry papers.

## **6. STEM in Schools - Written Briefing - Consideration of Summary Paper**

The Committee considered a summary paper of its consideration of matters relating to the promotion of STEM in Schools.

The Committee also noted correspondence from the Association of Science Education providing comment on the briefing given by Departmental officials at the meeting on 19 March 2014.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it would invite representatives of STEMEC, the Scottish STEM Education Committee to brief Members on Scotland's experience in promoting STEM in schools.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to host a STEM-related event with Sentinus preferably in October 2014.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that, following the suggested briefing and event, and informed by the findings of the ETI evaluation of *The World Around Us*, it intended to publish a short paper setting out its views in respect of STEM in schools, and to perhaps use the report as a basis for a plenary debate on the matter.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to write to St Mary's University College, University of Ulster, Coleraine and Stranmillis University College to ask how initial teacher training has been adapted to promote confidence in primary school teachers in their teaching of STEM.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to express its support for the STEM Bus, and to request that consideration be given to a bid for a second STEM Bus in the next Budget process.

12.02pm Jo-Anne Dobson left the meeting.

## 7. Correspondence

**7.1** The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding a list of EU Events and Conferences compiled by Barroso Desk Officers.

**7.2** The Committee noted the monthly Department of Education Investment Strategy Northern Ireland (ISNI) Capital Report for March 2014.

**7.3** The Committee noted a response from the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) to its request for more detailed information on DE capital projects through the NI Executive Investment Strategy Project Delivery Portal.

**7.4** The Committee noted a response from the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) regarding its engagement with the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP).

**7.5** The Committee noted correspondence from the Regional Training Unit (RTU) providing information on RTU's Emotional Health and Well-being pilot study.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek an update on its actions in respect of the findings of the RTU Emotional Health and Well-being pilot study.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek an oral briefing from RTU on the pilot study.

**7.6** The Committee noted correspondence from the Deputy Chairperson, Danny Kinahan MLA, relating to the correlation between FSME levels in schools and the Special Education Needs register.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for its comment on the issues raised.

**7.7** The Committee noted correspondence from Ballysillan Primary School regarding the position of the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

**7.8** Members noted correspondence from Rosetta Primary School relating to a Development Proposal.

**7.9** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department in response to queries from the Committee for Finance and Personnel as part of its inquiry into Flexible Working.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Committee for Finance and Personnel.

## **8. Draft Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme and noted that the meeting on 7 May 2014 is scheduled to begin at 9.30am.

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

## **9. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **10. Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement Process - Consideration of Draft Report**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the draft report until after the Easter recess.

## **11. Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting**

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 30 April 2014 at 10.00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.11pm.*

**Mervyn Storey**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Education**  
**30 April 2014**