



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 25 June 2014
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present:

Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
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)
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Sharon McGurk (Clerical Supervisor)
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

Apologies:

Jonathan Craig MLA

The meeting commenced in private session at 10.00am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to rearrange its agenda, commencing in closed session and considering a briefing from its Special Adviser followed by the draft Terms of Reference for its Inquiry into Shared/Integrated Education.

10.01am Danny Kinahan joined the meeting.

1. Alternative measures as a basis for funded school interventions - Special Advisor Briefing

The Special Advisor joined the meeting at 10.02am.

Dr. Ian Shuttleworth briefed the Committee on his interim findings in respect of alternative measures as a basis for funded school interventions

The Committee noted a briefing paper provided by Dr. Shuttleworth.

10.06am Stephen Moutray joined the meeting.

10.09am Jo-Anne Dobson joined the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

10.15am Pat Sheehan left the meeting.

10.26am Danny Kinahan left the meeting

The Special Advisor left the meeting at 10.44am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking: an update on the auditing of the effectiveness of social deprivation funding allocated under the Common Funding Scheme and information in respect of the Department's interaction with the Administrative Data Research Centre.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Dr Shuttleworth asking that he include in his final report information on: the use of alternative measures in other jurisdictions and educational baselining for pupils commencing primary school.

2. Committee Inquiry- Shared/Integrated Education- Terms of Reference

The Committee noted the draft Terms of Reference for its Inquiry into Shared/Integrated Education.

10.46am Robin Newton joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed give further consideration to the Terms of Reference following a Departmental update on Shared Education at the Education Committee meeting of 2 July 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Inquiry should include an informal evidence event involving school councils from different sectors and from across Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed that the Inquiry should include visits / engagement with schools from different sectors and from across Northern Ireland including: Shimna Integrated College and Drumragh Integrated College.

The meeting entered public session at 10.52am.

3. Apologies:

Apologies were as indicated above.

4. Chairperson's Business

4.1 Teachers Redundancy Scheme

The Committee discussed issues relating to redundancies for teachers.

10.56am Chris Hazzard joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister immediately regarding the reported delay in the confirmation of funding for some teacher redundancies.

Agreed: The Committee further agreed that in the absence of a satisfactory response in respect of teacher redundancies, it would undertake an emergency meeting with Departmental officials on this issue in the immediate future.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarification on the reasons why 93 teachers who had applied for redundancy in this academic year, did not meet the criteria and how this compares with previous years.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department asking that it confirms the arrangements and timescales through which teachers will receive their 1% pay increase back-dated to September 2013.

4.2 New protocol for school builds

The Chairperson reminded Members about the Minister's announcement yesterday regarding a new protocol for capital works.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek a briefing on the capital works protocol and to also seek clarification as to whether the Area Planning Needs Model has been changed in line with revised guidance to officials on Articles 64 and 89.

4.3 CBI Meeting

The Chairperson informed the Committee that he had informally met with representatives of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) to discuss the CBI First Steps report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk should draft a high-level submission to CBI which would be considered at the meeting of 2 July 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite CBI to brief the Committee, in the autumn, on its final Northern Ireland report.

4.4 Freedom of Information Requests

Agreed: The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson in respect of the release of Committee papers sought under a Freedom of Information request during summer recess.

4.5 Buddy Up Programme

The Committee noted a previously emailed invitation from Community Relations in Schools to attend a presentation on the 'Buddy Up' programme on 24 June 2014. The Chairperson informed Members that he had attended this event.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking its views on the 'Buddy Up' programme and to detail any assistance that it is providing.

4.6 Sentinus Big Bang Event

The Chairperson informed Members that he had attended the Sentinus Big Bang event on 20 June 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Sentinus seeking a list of all the winning schools that had participated in the event.

4.7 Capital Budget 2014-15

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarity on the reported changes to the capital budget – particularly as to whether £10m was to be reallocated or returned to the Centre owing to legal issues relating to Newtonbreda/Knockbreda High Schools.

4.8 Special Educational Need (SEN) Bill

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write again to the Department seeking a further update on the introduction of the SEN Bill.

4.9 Review of Teacher Health and Well-Being

Agreed: The Committee agreed to again write to the Department seeking an update on the PwC Review of Teacher Health and Well-being.

4.10 Education Committee Membership Change

The Chairperson noted that Education Committee Members Jo-Anne Dobson MLA is to be replaced by Sandra Overend MLA from 4 July 2014. The Chairperson thanked the Member for her contribution to the Committee for Education.

5. Minutes of previous meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting of 18 June 2014.

6. Matters Arising

The Chairperson referred Members to the Committee visit to the Fermanagh Trust and to a letter that was presented by a pupil from St. Martin's Primary School, on her experience of shared education.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the letter to the Minister for his information.

The Committee noted several research papers into Shared Education provided by Professor Colin Knox, University of Ulster.

7. Levels of Progression – Departmental Briefing

Departmental officials joined the meeting at 11.18am.

Katrina Godfrey, Deputy Secretary, Department of Education; Dr. David Hughes, Director of Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards, Department of Education; Carl Savage, Deputy Principal, Department of Education; and Ruth Kennedy, Business Manager, CCEA briefed the Committee on Levels of Progression

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Seán Rogers declared an interested as a Member of a Board of Governors of a school.

11.28am Stephen Moutray left the meeting.

11.30am Jo-Anne Dobson left the meeting.

11.38am Danny Kinahan re-joined the meeting.

12.04pm Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.

The officials left the meeting at 12.21pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek an update, in the autumn, on the outworking of the moderation process for Levels of Progression.

In respect of agenda item 4.1, the Committee considered a draft letter to the Minister for Education regarding redundancy payments for teachers.

The Committee divided on the proposal to forward the letter to the Minister.

Ayes

Danny Kinahan
Trevor Lunn

Noes

Chris Hazzard

Robin Newton
Sean Rogers
Mervyn Storey

There were no abstentions.

The proposal was agreed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Minister.

12.24pm The Chairperson left the meeting and the Deputy Chairperson assumed the chair.

12.24pm Stephen Moutray re-joined the meeting.

8. EU Funding in Schools- Departmental Briefing

Departmental officials joined the meeting at 12.25pm.

Dr. David Hughes, Director of Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards, Department of Education; and Barry Jordan, Director of Equality and All Ireland, Department of Education briefed the Committee on EU Funding in Schools.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

12.41pm The Chairperson re-joined the meeting and assumed the chair.

12.41pm Danny Kinahan left the meeting.

12.47pm Stephen Moutray left the meeting.

The officials left the meeting at 12.47pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking an update on the: uptake by schools of Peace IV funding and participation in the DE International Education Programme.

9. Correspondence

9.1 The Committee noted correspondence from the Chairperson of the Lisburn Policing and Community Safety Partnership on the provision of a School Crossing Patrol Officer for Forthill Integrated Primary School in Lisburn.

9.2 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding the consultation on adjustments to the NI Teachers' Pension Scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek a Departmental briefing on the consultation findings.

9.3 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding Computer Based Assessment (CBA). Members noted that the Department is to provide an update on the way forward for CBA in the autumn.

9.4 The Committee noted a request which it had previously agreed from Drumagh Integrated College for the Committee to meet with its students regarding the Committee's Inquiry on Shared/ Integrated Education.

9.5 The Committee noted a holding response from the Department of Education regarding its request for sight of the report of the Irish Medium Post-Primary Group.

9.6 The Committee noted correspondence from the University of Ulster regarding a briefing/visit in respect of its work on Visual Health for School Age Children.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing/visit in the autumn.

9.7 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education enclosing further information on the General Teaching Council of Northern Ireland (GTCNI) Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing with the Department of Education and Department for Employment and Learning before the Second Stage of the GTCNI Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider a written briefing on the proposed statutory rule relating to the GTCNI constitution at the meeting of 2 July 2014.

9.8 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding its request for information on the funding of voluntary redundancy for teachers in 2014-15.

9.9 The Committee noted correspondence from Parenting NI requesting a meeting with the Committee to discuss its work and the development of a parental consultation platform for education policy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to arrange an informal meeting with Parenting NI.

9.10 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment to the Department of Education regarding its recent Green Investment Bank event and energy efficiency in schools.

9.11 The Committee noted correspondence from the Speaker relating to a Public Petition regarding Collegiate Grammar School that was laid in the Assembly on 17 June 2014.

9.12 The Committee considered correspondence from Sean Rogers MLA in reference to the practice of exempting certain pupils from examination statistics.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department and to GTCNI seeking commentary on the numbers of students exempted from statistics and the effects such exemptions may have on the inclusion of SEN students.

9.13 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education in respect of queries from Shimna Integrated College regarding the funding for its Sharing Languages, Sharing Cultures (SLSC) Project

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this correspondence and forward it to Shimna Integrated College.

9.14 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education in response to Committee queries on the reported planned changes to the designation of Seagoe Primary School

9.15 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education in response to Committee queries relating to the revised CFS.

10. Draft Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

11. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

12. Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting

In the event that an emergency meeting on teacher redundancies is not convened, the Committee will meet again on Wednesday 2 July 2014 at 9.30am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.53pm.

Mervyn Storey
Chairperson, Committee for Education
2 July 2014