



Northern Ireland  
Assembly  
Committee for Education  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2014  
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

**Present:**

Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Stephen Moutray MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA

**In Attendance:**

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Jonathan Watson (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:**

Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)  
Pat Sheehan MLA

*The meeting commenced in private session at 10.00 am.*

**1. Matters Arising**

**1.1 Education Budget**

The Committee discussed the Education Minister's recent correspondence relating to the Education Budget.

*The meeting entered public session at 10.06am.*

The Committee discussed a draft response to the Minister.

Members highlighted their views in respect of the importance of the provision of an adequate level of financial resources for education.

The Committee considered a motion to forward the draft response to the Minister.

The Committee divided on the motion.

All Members present indicated as follows:

<b>Ayes</b>	<b>Noes</b>	<b>Abstentions</b>
Danny Kinahan	Chris Hazzard	None
Jonathan Craig	Maeve McLaughlin	
Trevor Lunn	Seán Rogers	
Stephen Moutray		
Robin Newton		
Sandra Overend		

The motion was carried.

### **1.2 Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education**

The Committee noted that a link had been provided to Members to the responses received to-date to the inquiry.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content for the responses to be published on the Committee's webpage.

## **2. Apologies**

Apologies were as indicated above.

*10.18am Stephen Moutray left the meeting.*

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

### **3.1 All Party Group: Construction**

The Deputy Chairperson informed Members that he had recently met with the All Party Group: Construction, on behalf of the Committee, to discuss delays to DE's capital build programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to share relevant information with the All Party Group: Construction.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to write to the Department requesting that the Committee's planned briefing on the capital build programme include an explanation on the delays and details of an action plan to improve communication to schools and contractors of progress.

### **3.2 PEAT Meeting**

The Deputy Chairperson informed the Committee that the Chairperson had informally met with representatives from Parents' Education as Autism Therapists (PEAT), on behalf of the Committee, to discuss its activities and its Big Lottery funded project for Educational Inclusion for young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

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

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of its meetings of 10 September 2014.

#### **5. Primary School Area Plans – Special Advisor**

*The Special Advisor joined the meeting at 10.22 am.*

Professor Tony Gallagher briefed the Committee on his interim findings in respect of Primary School Area Plans.

*10.25am Stephen Moutray rejoined the meeting.*

*The Special Advisor left the meeting at 10.54am.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek additional information from its Special Advisor on: pilot studies in Northern Ireland relating to federated schools and studies showing the impact of school closures in rural districts in other jurisdictions.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask that during its briefing on Primary School Area Plans, reference is made to:

- the calculation of the level of school vacancy and whether this has been updated in recent years;
- the school estate costs associated with maintaining unfilled vacant places;
- the costs associated with school transport and the implications for Area Plans;
- how DE is to encourage the sharing of best practice in respect of Area Planning across the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs) and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS); and
- how DE promotes the encouragement and facilitation of Shared Education by ELBs and CCMS in the Area Planning process including the use of Shared Education benchmarks.

*10.58am Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.*

*10.59am Stephen Moutray left the meeting.*

## **6. Teacher De-registration- briefing by General Teaching Council (NI)**

*Witnesses joined the meeting at 11.00 am.*

Dr Carmel Gallagher, GTC(NI) Registrar; Ivan Arbuthnot, GTC(NI) Chairperson; and Gerry Devlin, GTC(NI) Senior Education Officer briefed the Committee on proposed Department of Education regulations relating to the de-registration of teachers.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*11.17am Maeve McLaughlin rejoined the meeting.*

*11.22am Chris Hazzard left the meeting*

*11.23am Sandra Overend left the meeting.*

*The witnesses left the meeting at 11.24am.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the following motion:

*“That the Committee for Education has considered the statutory rule: SR 2014/218 The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (Constitution) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report has no objection to the rule.”*

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed that it was content for the proposed statutory rule: The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (Registration of Teachers) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 to be made.

## **7. Emotional Health and Well-being Pilot Study – briefing by Regional Training Unit.**

*The witness joined the meeting at 11.29am.*

*11.29am Jonathan Craig left the meeting.*

Dr Tom Hesketh, Director of the Regional Training Unit briefed the Committee on the Emotional Health and Well-being Pilot Study.

*11.31am Sandra Overend rejoined the meeting.*

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*11.46am Robin Newton left the meeting.*

*The witness left the meeting at 12.16pm.*

## **8. Correspondence**

**8.1** The Committee noted an invitation from The European Commission Office Northern Ireland to attend the Celebration of the European Day of Languages 2014 at 10:00am, on Friday 26 September 2014, at Lowwood Primary School, Belfast.

**8.2** The Committee noted correspondence from a member of the public enclosing a copy of correspondence to the Education Minister regarding Teacher Redundancies.

**8.3** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education indicating that the Minister is to make the report on the Review of Home to School Transport available in due course.

**8.4** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education indicating that the Minister is to consider a paper from the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) in September in respect of Nursery Principal Release Time.

**8.5** The Committee noted correspondence from a member of the public regarding the extension of Free School Meals to all young primary school children in England and the consequential additional finance for the Northern Ireland block grant.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister of Finance and Personnel to seek clarity as to whether the additional money will be allocated to the Education Budget.

**8.6** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education providing an explanation on the Special Education Needs (SEN) and Inclusion Bill proposed new right of appeal in respect of a SEN Statement for parents of children aged under 2.

**8.7** The Committee noted correspondence from Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to the Department of Education on the Community Relations in Schools Buddy Up Programme.

**8.8** The Committee noted an invitation from the Construction Employers' Federation to the Chairperson to attend the CEF Construction Excellence Awards, at 7:30pm on Thursday 2 October 2014, Culloden Hotel.

**8.9** The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Assembly, Director of Facilities regarding the Events Policy.

**8.10** The Committee noted an invitation from the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) inviting Members to attend the launch on 24 September 2014 of the defibrillator guidelines to schools.

## **9. Draft Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme.

The Committee considered the Minister for Education's request to provide the Committee with a briefing on 24 September 2014 on Accelerated Passage for the Education Bill.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister requesting that the briefing on Accelerated Passage be re-scheduled for Tuesday 30 September 2014.

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

## **10. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

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

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 24 September 2014 at 10.00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting was adjourned at 12.26pm.*

**Mervyn Storey**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Education**  
**24 September 2014**