



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2014
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present:

Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Jonathan Craig MLA
Trevor Lunn MLA
Nelson McCausland MLA
Maeve McLaughlin MLA
Robin Newton MLA
Sandra Overend MLA
Pat Sheehan MLA

In Attendance:

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

Apologies:

Chris Hazzard MLA
Seán Rogers MLA

The meeting commenced in private session at 10.05am.

Members discussed the Departmental briefing on the inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement Process.

The meeting entered public session at 10.17am.

1. Apologies

Apologies were as indicated above.

2. Chairperson's Business

2.1 Change of Membership

The Chairperson advised Members that from next week Colum Eastwood MLA will replace Sean Rogers MLA as a Member of the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Mr Rogers in order to wish him a speedy recovery.

10.18am Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.

2.2 Serious Road Accident

The Chairperson advised Members of a serious road accident that took place on Tuesday 11 November 2014 in Cloughmills involving children on their way to school. The Committee expressed its concern.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the family involved expressing its sympathies and best wishes.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister and the North Eastern Education and Library Board indicating its concern and asking to be kept updated on the Board's and the Department's consideration of related matters.

2.3 BBC Spotlight Programme

The Chairperson referred Members to a BBC Spotlight programme regarding child protection/cyber-bullying issues.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department asking whether revised guidance is to be issued to schools on the use of social media by school children outside of school and whether this will form part of the preventative education or anti-cyberbullying message. Members also agreed to write to the Department seeking clarification on the support and advice that is to be offered to the relevant schools in respect of this serious child protection/cyber-bullying issue.

2.4 Autism Services

The Chairperson referred to recent press reports in respect of delays to diagnoses and access to services for school children with autism.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarity on the provision of autism services and the waiting lists and time delays reported in the press.

10.23 Maeve McLaughlin re-joined the meeting.

2.5 New Member of Staff

The Chairperson welcomed Kevin Marks to the Education Committee team.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting on 5 November 2014.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry

The Chairperson advised Members that additional submissions to the inquiry had been added to the SkyDrivePro link.

Agreed: The Committee noted some late submissions to the inquiry and agreed to accept them and publish them on the Committee's webpage.

Members also noted further Departmental correspondence regarding Shared Education Peace IV and Signature Programmes.

4.2 Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Committee noted two Departmental consultation response documents regarding the Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme (NITPS) and a response from the Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU) on NITPS issues raised by the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Departmental consultation response summaries to the teaching unions attending the informal meeting on Tuesday 18 November 2014.

The Committee also noted an additional DE consultation which refers to a proposed statutory rule which will bring into effect aspects of the reform of the NITPS impacting on teachers in the transitional group.

5. Attainment targets – Assembly Research – written briefing

The Committee noted a written briefing from Assembly Research regarding Attainment Targets.

6. Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement Process - Departmental response

Departmental witnesses joined the meeting at 10.29am.

David Hughes, Director of Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards; Noelle Buick, Chief Inspector, Education and Training Inspectorate; and Paul McAlister, Assistant Chief Inspector, Education and Training Inspectorate provided the Departmental

response to the Committee's report on its inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement Process.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

10.49am Jonathan Craig joined the meeting.

11.17am Trevor Lunn left the meeting.

11.54am Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.

12.36pm Jonathan Craig left the meeting.

The witnesses left the meeting at 12.48pm

12.48pm Pat Sheehan left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk should review the written and oral responses from the Department and that the Committee would give further consideration to this matter.

7. Education and Training Inspectorate – Chief Inspector's Report 2012-14

Departmental witnesses joined the meeting at 12.49pm.

Noelle Buick, Chief Inspector, Education and Training Inspectorate; Paul McAlister, Assistant Chief Inspector, Education and Training Inspectorate; John Baird, Assistant Chief Inspector, Education and Training Inspectorate; and John Anderson, Managing Inspector, Education and Training Inspectorate briefed the Committee on the Education and Training Inspectorate, Chief Inspector's 2012-14 Report.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The witnesses left the meeting at 1.35pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department asking that it consider commissioning the Education and Training Inspectorate to carry out an audit of good practice in schools in respect of the recognition of the cultural rights of children in line with the relevant aspects of the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other international obligations.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to write to the Department seeking a response in respect of ETI's criticisms of the Department's policies relating to Initial Teacher Education and Continuous Professional Development for teachers and Early Years planning.

8. Correspondence

8.1 The Committee noted an index of incoming correspondence.

8.2 The Committee noted an invitation from Community Relations in Schools (CRIS) to attend its 2013-14 Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 18 November 2014 in the Conference Room, North City Business Centre, Belfast, from 7.00pm - 9.00pm.

8.3 The Committee noted an invitation from Deloitte to the Chairperson to attend an information session regarding "The State of the State 2014-15: Government's inflection point" publication.

8.4 The Committee noted correspondence from Riverside School to the Deputy Chairperson regarding issues with teachers' laptops following the C2k ICT transformation process.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking an update on the ICT transformation process and suggesting that ICT support be targeted at Special Schools and schools with a high number of children with Special Educational Needs which make extensive use of ICT provision.

8.5 The Committee noted an invitation from the Early Years Organisation to attend an Irish Medium and New School Resources event on Tuesday 18 November 2014 in the Dun Uladh Cultural Heritage Centre, Omagh at 1.00pm.

8.6 The Committee noted a response from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) in relation to its queries regarding meaningful engagement in respect of Area Planning; and the role of CCMS and the Trustees of Catholic Maintained schools regarding the transformation of Catholic Maintained schools to Integrated status.

8.7 The Committee noted a copy of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland Brochure for 2014-15.

8.8 The Committee noted responses from the Department of Education and the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety regarding the Mental Health Capacity Bill.

8.9 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding the Committee's queries in respect of school children's right of access to their culture and identity.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to suggest that it review the UNCRC and other related international standards in order to determine how best the cultural rights of school children might be met and to amend or develop its policies accordingly.

8.10 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding how the Delivering Social Change: Literacy and Numeracy Signature Programme was to be monitored and evaluated.

8.11 The Committee noted a response from the Minister of the Environment regarding the interaction between schools and the new district councils in relation to Community Planning. The Committee noted that a consultation is to be launched in November regarding guidance dealing with (among other things) the role of statutory education partners with councils in respect of Community Planning.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Committee for the Environment asking to be advised of the relevant outcomes of the consultation.

8.12 The Committee noted an invitation to the Irish Association of Supported Employment and Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment, Joint Conference on Thursday 20 and Friday 21 November 2014 in the Holiday Inn Hotel, Belfast.

8.13 The Committee noted an invitation from the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) to attend the NICCY Annual Event Seminar on Thursday 20 November 2014 in the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings at 9.45am- 2.00pm.

8.14 The Committee noted an invitation from the Joint Consultative Forum to attend the 10th Anniversary Special Meeting on Monday 1 December 2014 in Ashfield Girls' High School, Holywood Road, Belfast at 10.00am.

8.15 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding school redundancies.

8.16 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding a proposed Legislative Consent Motion (LCM) on Public Service Pension Schemes.

8.17 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to its request for further information regarding the 2013-14 Savings Delivery Plans.

8.18 The Committee noted a response from the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment regarding the level of examination re-marks at GCSE and A-level in 2014.

8.19 The Committee noted an invitation from the Early Years organisation to attend the "Celebration of 10 Years of Peace Building with Young Children" on Thursday 4 December 2014 in Early Years, Boucher Road, Belfast at 6.30pm.

8.20 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel providing further information on scrutiny of the 2015-16 Budget.

The Committee also noted that it had sought a Departmental briefing on the 2015-16 Budget, for its meeting on 3 December 2014 but had yet to receive confirmation of this briefing.

8.21 The Committee noted an invitation from the Committee for Employment and Learning to attend the Belfast Rotary Club Technology Tournament in the Long Gallery on 18 November 2014 at 10.45am.

8.22 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding a proposed Legislative Consent Motion on Public Service Pension Schemes.

9. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 19 November 2014 at 10.00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.41pm.

Michelle McIlveen
Chairperson, Committee for Education
19 November 2014