



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2015
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present:

Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Jonathan Craig MLA
Chris Hazzard MLA
Trevor Lunn MLA
Nelson McCausland MLA
Robin Newton MLA
Sandra Overend MLA
Seán Rogers MLA
Pat Sheehan MLA

In Attendance:

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)
Barry McLernon (Clerical Officer)

Apologies:

None

The meeting commenced in public session at 10.08am.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Chairperson's Business

2.1 Area Planning Event

The Chairperson thanked all of the participants at the Committee's very successful Area Planning event held on 4 February 2015 and noted that the Committee's Special Adviser is to provide an updated report.

2.2 Designation of St. Ronan's

The Chairperson informed Members of concerns raised by Dolores Kelly, MLA on behalf of St. Ronan's School - a new school formed following the amalgamation of the Junior and Senior High Schools in Lurgan. The school has been designated as a non-selective Voluntary Grammar school. As a consequence of this designation, it is understood that children in the area wishing to attend another Voluntary Grammar will not receive free sessional bus tickets.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department asking for clarification as to whether there is any criteria used to assess the appropriateness of the designation of a new or amalgamated school or if this is purely a matter of Ministerial discretion.

2.3 Welcome to Pupils

The Chairperson welcomed pupils from Lagan College, Belfast; Shimna Integrated College, Newcastle and Belfast Metropolitan College to the public gallery.

3. Minutes of previous meetings

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meetings held on 3 and 4 February 2015.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department in respect of the CRED policy; the Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Project and the draft Shared Education policy and Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the correspondence should be published on the Committee's webpage.

The Committee also noted correspondence from the Department on the consultation on the draft EQIA relating to the proposed removal of CRED Enhancement funding.

5. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education - Education and Library Boards

The witnesses joined the meeting at 10.13am.

Paul Lawther, Assistant Senior Education Officer, Belfast Education and Library Board; Ray Gilbert, Senior Education Officer, North Eastern Education and Library

Board; John Unsworth, Assistant Senior Education Officer, Southern Education and Library Board; June Neill, Deputy Head, Curriculum Advisory Support Services (CASS), Western Education and Library Board; and Nicky McBride, Chief Administrative Officer, South Eastern Education and Library Board briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

10.30am Robin Newton left the meeting.

10.38am Seán Rogers joined the meeting.

12.00noon Danny Kinahan left the meeting.

The witnesses left the meeting at 12.00noon.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Western Education and Library Board seeking a fuller explanation of its reference to the non-partisan nature of Boards of Governors.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the South Eastern Education and Library Board seeking information on the SEELB's experience of shared education and inviting a response to the Terms of Reference of the Committee's inquiry.

6. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – Ceara Special School and Tor Bank Special School

The witnesses joined the meeting at 12.03pm.

Dr Peter Cunningham, Principal, Ceara Special School and Colum Davis, Principal, Tor Bank Special School, briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

12.33pm Pat Sheehan left the meeting.

The witnesses left the meeting at 1.07pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking information on the budget process for Special Schools and commentary in respect of the allocation of additional support for newcomer children attending Special Schools.

7. Assembly Research - written briefing - Education Other Than at School

The Committee noted a paper provided by Assembly Research on Education Other Than at School (EOTAS).

The Committee also noted correspondence from the Department enclosing information on the curriculum to which EOTAS providers and youth services providers are inspected.

8. Correspondence

8.1 The Committee noted an index of incoming correspondence.

8.2 The Committee noted a Departmental response including the revised scoring criteria for the second call for the Shared Campuses Programme and further information on the successful projects in the first call.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarification as to how the Education and Library Boards are to demonstrate that they have properly assessed community support for Shared Campuses projects.

8.3 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Environment enclosing a briefing paper from Education for Sustainable Development.

8.4 The Committee noted an invitation from the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education to attend the celebration of International Integrated Education Week 2015 'Horizons' on Thursday 5 March 2015 in the Long Gallery from 11am-12.30pm.

8.5 The Committee noted a response from the Department in respect of the final £2.6m allocation to the Department for the DSC Improving Literacy and Numeracy Programme.

8.6 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel in respect of the Spring Supplementary Estimates (SSEs).

8.7 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in respect of Assembly Statutory Committee European Priorities 2015.

8.8 The Committee noted an invitation from the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) to the Chairperson to participate in the NASUWT Pre-Conference Education Debate- 'The Future of

Education in Northern Ireland in an Age of Austerity?’ in the Stormont Hotel on Thursday 19 March 2015 at 6.30pm.

8.9 The Committee noted correspondence from Northern Ireland Kinship Care regarding the enrolment of a child in a primary school.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister asking to be kept informed in respect of this issue.

9. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme.

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

10. Any Other Business

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking an update on the progress of the working group which is to review the exclusion of pupils from the Summary of Annual Examination Results.

11. Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 18 February 2015 at 9.30am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.13pm.

Michelle McIlveen
Chairperson, Committee for Education
18 February 2015