



Northern Ireland  
Assembly  
Committee for Education  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 4 MARCH 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  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:**

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

**Apologies:**

None

*The meeting commenced in public session at 9.33am.*

**1. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

**2. Chairperson's Business**

**2.1 SEND Bill**

The Committee noted that the Second Stage of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill will be considered on Tuesday 10 March 2015.

**3. Minutes of previous meeting**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of its meetings held on 18 and 25 February 2015.

#### **4. Matters Arising**

There were no Matters Arising.

#### **5. Ministerial briefing – 2015-16 Department of Education Final Budget**

*The Minister and officials joined the meeting at 9.35am.*

John O'Dowd MLA, Minister for Education; Fiona Hepper, Deputy Secretary, Department of Education; Trevor Connolly, Director of Finance, Department of Education; and Philip Irwin, Director of Investment and Infrastructure, Department of Education briefed the Committee on the 2015-16 Department of Education Final Budget.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Committee noted correspondence dated 2 and 3 March 2015 from the Minister of Education regarding the 2015-16 Budget.

The Committee also noted related correspondence from Youthnet and the Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster.

*9.49am The Chairperson (Michelle McIlveen) left the meeting and the Deputy Chairperson (Danny Kinahan) assumed the chair.*

*9.56am Pat Sheehan joined the meeting.*

*9.56am Sandra Overend joined the meeting.*

*9.58am Maeve McLaughlin joined the meeting.*

*11:03am Jonathan Craig left the meeting.*

*11.03am Seán Rogers left the meeting.*

*The Minister and officials left the meeting at 11.04am.*

*11.04am Sandra Overend left the meeting.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister expressing its concerns in respect of:

- the proposed 500 teaching and 1,000 school-based non-teaching redundancies, in particular, the impact on curricular delivery in schools and the timeframes and efficiency of the associated redundancy process;
- the reduction in funding for Youth Services and the impact that this, coupled with decreases in support for: Special Educational Needs budgets, Sure Start programmes and the complete removal of

Community Education Initiative funding, will have on tackling educational inequality;

- the reduction in funding for Curriculum Development including support for modern languages in primary schools and the impact that this may have on the educational development of children and seeking clarity in respect of the funding position for CCEA's recently published Irish language programme; and
- the reduction in funding for Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in primary schools and the significant cut to the budget for Sentinus (which supports STEM in schools by securing a high level of matching funding) and the impact that this may ultimately have on the teaching of STEM in schools.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to write to the Department seeking:

- further information on the teaching and non-teaching redundancies including the anticipated breakdown of the school-based non-teaching redundancies and the impact on the number and designation of classroom assistants;
- clarity as to whether the Department will undertake its planned roll-out of the Sure Start programme from the 20% most deprived wards to the 25% most deprived wards and sight of the Sure Start Review Report;
- clarity on the level of administration funding for the Youth Council for Northern Ireland and the impact of funding changes on so-called detached youth work;
- information on the ring-fenced areas of the Department's and the Education Authority's 2015-16 budgets;
- a timeline for the agreement and publication of the Education Authority's budget;
- information on the budget settlements for third party organisations;
- clarity on the way forward for the Early Years Fund;
- sight of the Management Side Education Review Report;
- further information on the Aggregated Schools Budget including a school-by-school breakdown of budgets and enrolment;
- further information on the Capital Programme including the School Enhancement Programme; and
- sight of the Department's report on the budget consultation.

*11.05am Sandra Overend re-joined the meeting.*

*11.05am Seán Rogers re-joined the meeting.*

*11.08am Jonathan Craig re-joined the meeting.*

## **6. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – Early Years**

*The witnesses joined the meeting at 11.10am.*

Siobhán Fitzpatrick, Chief Executive Officer, Early Years and Pauline Walmsley, Director of Knowledge Exchange, Early Years briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*11.19am Sandra Overend left the meeting.*

*11.27am Pat Sheehan left the meeting.*

*11.29am Danny Kinahan left the meeting.*

*The Clerk called on Mr Craig to speak. Mr Craig proposed that Mr McCausland do take the chair of the Committee. Mr Lunn seconded the proposal and, in the absence of other nominations, the Clerk asked Mr McCausland to take the chair.*

*The witnesses left the meeting at 11.44am.*

## **7. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – Youth Council Northern Ireland (YCNI)**

*The witnesses joined the meeting at 11.47am.*

David Guilfoyle, Chief Executive, YCNI; Norma Rea, Development Officer Equality Principles, YCNI; and Joanne Stainsby, Project Officer, YCNI briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

*Danny Kinahan returned to the meeting at 11.49am and resumed the chair.*

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*12.27pm Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.*

*12.35pm Jonathan Craig left the meeting.*

*The witnesses left the meeting at 12.38pm.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to YCNI seeking a breakdown of its administration costs and funding.

## **8. Assembly Research – Written briefings - Coding in Schools; and Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill**

The Committee noted Assembly Research written briefing papers on Coding in Schools and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill.

*12.39pm Jonathan Craig re-joined the meeting.*

## **9. Correspondence**

**9.1** The Committee noted an index of incoming correspondence.

**9.2** The Committee noted correspondence from the National Deaf Children's Society enclosing a copy of the Quality Standards for Resource Provisions.

**9.3** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department providing an update on the working group examining the increase in ineligible students in the Summary of Annual Examination Results.

**9.4** The Committee noted an invitation to Members from the Joint Consultative Forum Committee to attend the Joint Consultative Forum Meeting on Wednesday 11 March 2015 in the Belfast Education and Library Board at 10.30am.

**9.5** The Committee noted a response from the Belfast Education and Library Board setting out administrative difficulties associated with Personal Education Plans for Looked After Children.

**9.6** The Committee noted a response from the Department providing further information on the Education and Library Boards' non-teaching staff costs.

**9.7** The Committee noted a Departmental response to Committee queries indicating that Education and Training Inspectorate and Regional Project Manager reports on the SEN Early Years Pilot projects are not yet available.

**9.8** The Committee noted correspondence from Danny Kinahan MLA enclosing a copy of an article about Finland's educational success.

**9.9** The Committee noted a Departmental response to Committee queries relating to the assessment of community support for Shared Campus projects.

**9.10** The Committee noted notification from the Speaker's Office of a Public Petition relating to Mental Health and Well-being in the School Curriculum.

**9.11** The Committee noted a Departmental response to Committee queries regarding the Report into the Home to School Transport Review.

Members noted that the Department had indicated that home to school transport support - qualifying distances and the definition of suitable schools – is the subject of Departmental circulars and can be changed without legislation. The Department also advised that pupils attending schools designated as bilateral may enjoy different levels of home to school transport support depending on whether they are in the grammar stream or not.

**9.12** The Committee noted correspondence from concerned parents to the Chairperson seeking a meeting with Members regarding the designation of St. Ronan's in Lurgan.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward relevant correspondence and arrange an informal meeting with the concerned parents.

**9.13** The Committee noted correspondence from the Assembly EU Affairs Manager enclosing a list of successful Erasmus+ projects.

**9.14** The Committee noted an Invitation from Generator Northern Ireland inviting Members to attend a conference - 'MusEd: The Future of Music Education in Northern Ireland' on Thursday 26 March 2015 in the Nerve Centre at 10:00am.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that Members would attend, diaries permitting.

*12.44pm Nelson McCausland left the meeting.*

*12.44pm Seán Rogers left the meeting.*

## **10. Draft Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme.

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

## **11. Any Other Business**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking information relating to the funding of post-primary counselling services.

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

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 11 March 2015 at 10.00am in Shimna Integrated College, Newcastle.

*The meeting was adjourned at 12.46pm.*

**Michelle McIlveen**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Education**  
**11 March 2015**