



Northern Ireland  
Assembly  
Committee for Education  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
TUESDAY 24 MARCH 2015  
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, ROOM 21

**Present:**

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

**In Attendance:**

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

**Apologies:**

Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

*The meeting commenced in private session at 4.28pm.*

**1. Post-primary counselling**

The Committee considered correspondence from UNISON relating to complaints in respect of the post-primary schools counselling service.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward a redacted copy of the correspondence to the Department and to seek an oral briefing on the post-primary schools counselling service including details of the re-tendered contract.

*The meeting moved into public session at 4.38pm.*

**2. Apologies**

Apologies are as indicated above.

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

#### **3.1 Glenveagh Special School**

The Chairperson thanked Members for attending the informal meeting with Glenveagh Special School on Wednesday 18 March 2015 and noted an invitation for Members to attend Glenveagh's prize-giving days. The Chairperson reminded Members that a copy of the 2012-13 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) report on challenging behaviour in special schools had been circulated.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking clarification on: Area Planning for special schools; the level of temporary staff in special schools; and the absence of Entitlement Framework and Looked After Children funding for special schools.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed write to the Department seeking sight of the planned ETI update on challenging behaviour in special schools.

#### **3.2 Health Services and Access to the Education Curriculum – Joint Committee Event**

The Chairperson thanked Members for attending the joint Health and Education stakeholder event on 18 March 2015. The Committee noted that the Clerk will produce and circulate a summary of the evidence gathered.

#### **3.3 Designation of St. Ronan's College, Lurgan**

The Chairperson thanked Members for attending the informal meeting with concerned parents to discuss the designation of St. Ronan's College, Lurgan. The Committee also noted a further written submission from the concerned parents.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and the Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education (NICCE) seeking an explanation for the decision to designate St. Ronan's as a non-selective grammar in Development Proposal 291.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to write to the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) and CCMS seeking clarification on the consultation process for Development Proposal 291 - specifically if it included feeder primary schools and the parents of prospective pupils.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to write to the Department seeking sight of Development Proposal 291.

#### **3.4 Research Paper**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to commission Assembly Research to produce a paper on the management and delivery of Special Educational Needs in the education system in Finland.

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

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 18 March 2015.

#### **5. Matters Arising**

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

The Committee noted submissions to the inquiry from: the Equality Commission; Shauna Mulligan (an integrated education alumnus); the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) enclosing its report on the integrated schools parliament event; and the University of Ulster in respect of the ePartners programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to publish these papers on the Committee's inquiry webpage.

#### **6. Education Order (Northern Ireland) 1998 – Commencement Order**

The Committee noted Departmental correspondence and a Commencement Order relating to Article 81(2) of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarification on the relevant provisions and the impact on unapproved courses (if any) and qualification portability.

#### **7. Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill – Committee Stage**

The Committee considered a schedule setting out the anticipated timings for the Committee Stage of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Bill.

The Committee also noted a Departmental response to queries regarding the SEND Bill.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to put down the following motion:

*“That in accordance with Standing Order 33(4), the period referred to in Standing Order 33(2) be extended until 13 November 2015, in relation to the Committee Stage of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill (NIA Bill 46/11-16)”*

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to publish the Departmental response on the SEND Bill on its webpage and share the response with stakeholders.

## 8. DE Schedule for the Retention and Disposal of Employee Records

The Committee considered the Department of Education's schedule for the retention and disposal of employee records. The Committee noted relevant Departmental correspondence.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to put down the following motion:

*"That this Assembly requires the preservation of 'medical records of those exposed to a substance hazardous to health' listed for disposal in the Department of Education Retention and Disposal Schedule for Employee Records laid in the Assembly on 25 February 2015."*

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to write to the Department seeking an assurance that it will review and revise the disposal and retention periods of employee records relating to exposure to asbestos.

5.03pm Danny Kinahan joined the meeting.

## 9. Correspondence

9.1 The Committee noted an index of incoming correspondence.

9.2 The Committee noted correspondence from a concerned parent in respect of School Starting Age flexibility.

9.3 The Committee noted a request from Home Education in Northern Ireland (Hedni) to address the Committee on the Draft Elective Home Education (EHE) Policy at the meeting on 15 April 2015.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to Hedni seeking to arrange an informal oral briefing and requesting a written briefing paper.

9.4 The Committee noted correspondence from the Carnegie UK Trust enclosing a copy of the report 'Towards a Wellbeing Framework: Findings from the Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland'.

9.5 The Committee considered correspondence from a concerned teacher in respect of the discontinuation of funding for the Primary Modern Language Programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking further information on the Erasmus+ Programme and other measures designed to support the teaching of modern foreign languages in primary schools.

9.6 The Committee noted correspondence from the National Association of Head Teachers (NI) enclosing a copy of its Challenging Behaviour Research Report.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the report to the Department of Education for comment.

**9.7** The Committee noted correspondence from the Assembly EU Affairs Manager enclosing a copy of the monthly newsletter on European issues.

**9.8** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education notifying the Committee of a consultation on the grading of GCSEs.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking a briefing following the conclusion of the consultation.

**9.9** The Committee noted a request from the Early Years organisation to meet with the Committee to discuss the impact of the proposed cuts to the Early Years Fund.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to arrange an informal meeting with the Early Years organisation.

**9.10** The Committee noted a response from the Youth Council for Northern Ireland (YCNI) to Committee queries in respect of the YCNI's administration and associated funding.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek an informal meeting with YCNI.

**9.11** The Committee noted a copy of a diabetes guide for schools in Northern Ireland.

**9.12** The Committee noted a copy of guidance for supporting pupils with medical conditions in schools in England.

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

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek a formal briefing on "The World Around Us" from teachers involved in the Royal Society of Chemistry fellowship programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to change the location of its meeting on 15 April 2015 from University of Ulster, Coleraine to Parliament Buildings.

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

## **11. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

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

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 25 March 2015 at 11.00am in Limavady High School.

*The meeting was adjourned at 5.17pm.*

**Michelle McIlveen**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Education**  
**15 April 2015**