



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 13 MAY 2015
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present:

Peter Weir MLA (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

In Attendance:

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

Apologies:

Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

The meeting commenced in public session at 10.02am.

1. Apologies

Apologies are as indicated above.

2. Chairperson's Business

2.1 Congratulations

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Michelle McIlveen MLA to congratulate her on her appointment as Junior Minister at the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

10.04am Chris Hazzard joined the meeting.

2.2 Teaching and non-Teaching Redundancies

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department of Education advising of delays to the redundancy process for teaching and non-teaching staff.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking clarity both in terms of the contractual redundancy notice period for teachers and in respect of the impact on schools' budgets if access to the Public Sector Transformation Fund is not confirmed shortly.

2.3 Home Education Northern Ireland (HEdNI)

The Chairperson noted that Members of the Committee had met with Home Education NI on Tuesday 12 May 2015 in order to discuss Elective Home Education. The Committee also noted that the Education Authority would brief on this issue before Summer Recess.

10.10am Maeve McLaughlin joined the meeting.

10.10am Sandra Overend joined the meeting.

2.4 Strandtown Primary School

The Chairperson reminded Members that the Committee had previously written to the Belfast Education and Library Board in respect of over-subscription at Strandtown Primary School in East Belfast.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Education Authority seeking clarification in respect of reported possible planned changes to provision at Strandtown Primary School and/or its feeder schools and on the way forward for the relevant Area Plan.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 29 April 2015.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry

The Committee noted a Departmental response in respect of the Committee's inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education enclosing a copy of relevant results of the 2012 Young Life and Times Survey.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to add this correspondence to its Inquiry submissions.

4.2 SEND Bill

The Committee noted that written submissions to the Committee Stage of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Bill were available via SkyDrivePro.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish all submissions on its webpage.

5. Correspondence

5.1 The Committee noted an index of incoming correspondence.

5.2 The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister providing commentary on the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsperson Bill.

5.3 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to Committee queries regarding the Delivering Social Change – Literacy and Numeracy Programme.

5.4 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department confirming that £250k of funding for Booktrust's Bookstart programmes ended in 2014-15.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking clarity on the Department's priorities for the June Monitoring Round and highlighting concerns in respect of the funding for Early Years provision; Sentinus STEM programmes; the Booktrust's Bookstart programme; and the Primary School Modern Language Programme.

5.5 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education on the recent consultation on Addressing Bullying in Schools.

5.6 The Committee noted the recent launch of the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department urging it to raise awareness and encourage schools' participation in the Exhibition.

5.7 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel outlining the performance of departments in implementing their Savings Delivery Plans in the final year of the 2011-15 budget period.

5.8 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education in respect of its Savings Delivery Plans 2011-15: 2013-14 Achievement Report.

5.9 The Committee noted a response from CCEA to Committee queries regarding GCSE specification development and GCSE / A-Level approval.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek an oral briefing from CCEA regarding GCSE specification changes.

5.10 The Committee noted a response from CCEA to Committee queries regarding Levels of Progression.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek an oral briefing from CCEA on Levels of Progression.

5.11 The Committee noted an invitation from Stranmillis University College for the Chairperson to attend a graduation celebration event on Thursday 2 July 2015 at 10.00am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson to attend the graduation celebration event.

5.12 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to Committee queries regarding vision problems and educational attainment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write again to the Department seeking a more detailed response in respect of the funding for the Regional Vision Resource Base.

5.13 The Committee noted correspondence from the Confederation of British Industry enclosing a copy of its report to the Enterprise, Trade and Investment Committee and including a request to meet with the Chairperson in order to discuss educational priorities for the business community.

5.14 The Committee noted correspondence from a concerned individual regarding their appointment to the Board of Governors of a school.

5.15 The Committee noted a previously circulated invitation from Whole School to an event entitled "*Closing the ICT skills gap - A window of Opportunity for Northern Ireland*" on Monday 11 May at 12:30pm in the Long Gallery.

5.16 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to Committee queries in respect of the Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI's) role in Development Proposals.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking an explanation for the revision to the guidance to ETI in respect of Development Proposals.

5.17 The Committee noted a holding letter from the Department of Education in respect of the ETI Evaluation of the Special Educational Needs Capacity Building - Early Years Settings Pilot.

5.18 The Committee noted a holding letter from the Department of Education in respect of the future of the Youth Council for Northern Ireland.

5.19 The Committee noted a holding letter from the Department of Education in respect of the review of Sure Start.

5.20 The Committee noted a holding letter from the Department of Education in respect of school starting age flexibility.

5.21 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to Committee queries regarding the discontinuation of funding for the European Studies Programme (ESP).

5.22 The Committee noted an invitation from the Committee for Employment and Learning to a Colleges NI event on 19 May 2015 in the Long Gallery.

6. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold a meeting in Stranmillis University College before Summer Recess.

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

The meeting moved into private session at 10.31am.

7. Area Planning – position paper

The Committee noted and discussed changes to its position paper on Area Planning.

10.46am Seán Rogers joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to formally rescind its previous decisions in respect of Recommendations 3 and 5 and to formally endorse revised and additional text including revised wording for Recommendations 3 and 5.

The Committee noted that it had previously agreed, subject to the agreement of changes to the position paper, to put down a motion for plenary debate in respect of Area Planning.

10.56am Nelson McCausland left the meeting.

8. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – Suggested Questions

The Committee discussed possible lines of questioning in respect of the final Departmental briefing on the Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

11.03am Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.

The meeting was suspended at 11.13am.

The meeting resumed in public session at 11.18am. The following Members were in attendance; Peter Weir, Trevor Lunn, Nelson McCausland, Seán Rogers, Jonathan Craig, Chris Hazzard and Robin Newton.

9. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education - final oral Departmental evidence session

The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education in respect of Jointly Managed Church schools and a report on the ePartners programme from Ulster University.

Officials joined the meeting at 11.19am.

Faustina Graham, Director of Collaborative Education and Practice, Department of Education; Andrew Bell, Head of Shared Education and Community Relations Team, Department of Education and Suzanne Kingon, Head of Irish Medium and Integrated Education Team briefed the Committee on the Department's draft Shared Education Bill and draft Shared Education policy as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

11.20am Sandra Overend joined the meeting.

12.17pm Chris Hazzard left the meeting.

12.45pm Jonathan Craig left the meeting.

1.04pm Seán Rogers left the meeting.

A question and answer session followed the briefing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider a response at its next meeting to the Department in respect of the draft Shared Education Bill.

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

- clarification on whether Shared Education funding for schools is contingent on participation in the Levels of Progression;
- clarity on the use of the phrase 'equality of identity' within the Shared Education policy;
- figures relating to non-Integrated schools that meet the criteria for Integrated status in respect of the religious breakdown of the enrolment and the membership of the Board of Governors;
- figures relating to Integrated schools in respect of the religious breakdown of the enrolment and the membership of the Board of Governors;
- figures for the number of people who attended the Department's Shared Education Bill/policy public consultation events;
- clarification on the legislative position in respect of Special Schools adopting Integrated status; and
- sight of the Shared Education continuum model produced by ETI for the Early Years and Youth sectors.

Officials left the meeting at 1.13pm.

10. Any Other Business

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking information in respect of study leave for Year 12 pupils including clarity on

the position for: statemented pupils; pupils required to complete examination coursework; and the role of classroom assistants and teachers.

11. Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 13 May 2015 at 10.00am in Ceara Special School, Lurgan.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.20pm.

Peter Weir
Chairperson, Committee for Education
20 May 2015