



Northern Ireland  
Assembly  
Committee for Education  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2015  
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

**Present:**

Peter Weir MLA (Chairperson)  
Sandra Overend MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA

**In Attendance:**

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Danielle Saunders (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:**

Ross Hussey MLA

*The meeting commenced in private session at 9.36am.*

**1. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – draft report - written briefing**

*9.47am Sandra Overend joined the meeting.  
10.09am Maeve McLaughlin joined the meeting.*

The Committee noted a further response from the Department of Education in respect of the use of the phrase 'equality of identity' in the DE draft Shared Education policy.

The Committee also noted that a copy of 'The Economics of Schooling in a Divided Society – The Case for Shared Education' by Professors Knox and Borooah was available in the Committee office.

The Committee considered the draft report on its Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

**Agreed:** The Committee considered a number of revisions and agreed to consider the final version of the report at its meeting on 1 July 2015.

*The meeting moved into public session at 10.35am.*

## **2. Apologies**

Apologies are as indicated above.

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

### **3.1 New Member**

The Chairperson welcomed Ross Hussey MLA to the Committee for Education.

### **3.2 Youth Parliament**

The Chairperson reminded Members of an informal meeting with members of the Youth Parliament (MYPs) on 17 June 2015. The Chairperson advised that he was to put down a number of written questions related to the issues raised by the MYPs.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that Members would sponsor a planned Youth Parliament "Make Your Mark" event in the Long Gallery in September 2015 on an individual basis.

*10.38am Robin Newton left the meeting.*

### **3.3 FoI Requests over Summer Recess**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson in respect of the release of Committee papers sought under Freedom of Information requests during summer recess.

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

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 17 June 2015.

## **5. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

## **6. Committee Stage – Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Bill – Equality Commission for Northern Ireland / Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC)**

*The witnesses joined the meeting at 10.41am.*

Michael Wardlow, Chief Commissioner, Equality Commission; Roisin Mallon, Senior Policy Manager, Equality Commission; Les Allamby, Chief Commissioner, NIHRC; David Russell, Deputy Director, NIHRC; and Colin Caughey, Policy Worker, NIHRC briefed the Committee as part of the Committee Stage of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill.

*10.49am Jonathan Craig left the meeting.*

*11.14am Nelson McCausland left the meeting.*

*11.45am The Chairperson left the meeting and the Deputy Chairperson assumed the Chair.*

*11.49am The Chairperson returned to the meeting and resumed the chair.*

A question and answer session followed the briefing.

*The witnesses left the meeting at 12.00noon.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking information in relation to the uptake and costs associated with the Dispute Avoidance Resolution Scheme.

*12.01pm Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.*

## **7. Committee Stage – Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Bill – Independent Parents of Children with Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI Parents)**

*The witnesses joined the meeting at 12.02pm.*

Mrs Jane-Louise Kelly and Mrs Maria Treacy briefed the Committee as part of the Committee Stage of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill.

A question and answer session followed the briefing.

*The witnesses left the meeting at 12.48pm.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education highlighting the concerns raised by ABI Parents and seeking clarity in respect of the number and classification of children with Acquired Brain Injury.

*The Committee revised the order of the items in the agenda.*

## **8. Correspondence**

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

**8.2** The Committee noted correspondence from the Education Authority enclosing a copy of the consultation, which closes on 28 August 2015, on the Education Authority's draft Equality Scheme.

**8.3** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to Committee queries in respect of GCSE/A-Level school-leavers' results and the additional measures the Department is to adopt in order to address the attainment gap.

**8.4** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to Committee queries in respect of the development of anti-cyberbullying and on-line safety guidance.

**8.5** The Committee noted correspondence from the EU Affairs Manager enclosing a copy of the EU Matters update.

**8.6** The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Employment and Learning enclosing a copy of correspondence from Elluminate Our Lives regarding Elluminate – the provision of e-Learning for children who are absent from school.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking an update on Elluminate.

**8.7** The Committee noted a previously circulated invitation from Ulster University to an online conference on the role of ICT and blended learning on 23 June 2015.

*12.50pm Jonathan Craig re-joined the meeting.*

**8.8** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to Committee queries in respect of alleged governance and Data Protection issues in a primary school.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking clarity on how often oversight powers in respect of Boards of Governors have been used.

**8.9** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to Committee queries in respect of the Education and Training Inspectorate's evaluation of the SEN Capacity Building – Early Years Settings Pilot.

**8.10** The Committee noted correspondence from BT informing Members of the first ever Northern Ireland BT Young Scientist Business Bootcamp.

**8.11** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education enclosing information sent to Area Learning Communities regarding the BT Young Scientist Exhibition.

## **9. Draft Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered its draft forward work programme.

The Committee noted a request from the General Secretary of the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) to meet with the Committee to discuss the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Bill.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to arrange an informal meeting with AEP.

**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 implementation of the actions in the Careers Review Strategy and to forward to the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) relevant correspondence from the Department of Education on this subject.

## **11. Committee Stage – Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill – Blind Children UK (NI)**

*The witnesses joined the meeting at 12.54pm.*

Andrew Murdock, Policy and Engagement Manager, Blind Children UK (NI); Martin Walls, Service Delivery Manager, Blind Children UK (NI); June Best; and Michelle Bateson briefed the Committee as part of the Committee Stage of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill.

*1.15pm Seán Rogers left the meeting.*

A question and answer session followed the briefing.

*The witnesses left the meeting at 1.26pm.*

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

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 1 July 2015, at 9.30am in Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting was adjourned at 1.26pm.*

**Peter Weir**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Education**  
**1 July 2015**