



Northern Ireland  
Assembly  
Committee for Education  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 1 JULY 2015  
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

**Present:**

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

**In Attendance:**

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)  
Mark O'Hare (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:**

Ross Hussey MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

*The meeting commenced in private session at 9:49am.*

**1. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – agreement of Inquiry Report - written briefing**

*9:50am Maeve McLaughlin joined the meeting.*

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

**Agreed:** The Committee read and agreed the Introduction section of the report.

**Agreed:** The Committee read and agreed the Consideration of Evidence section of the report.

**Agreed:** The Committee read and agreed, subject to a single amendment, the Findings and Recommendations section of the report.

**Agreed:** The Committee read and agreed the Executive Summary and Summary of Recommendations sections of the report.

**Agreed:** The Committee read and agreed the summary of the contents of the Appendices of the report.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content to order that the report be printed.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content for an extract from the minutes of today's meeting to be included in the appendices of the report.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the report (as amended) be the Fifth Report of the Education Committee to the Assembly for the current mandate.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content to put down the following motion for debate in plenary:

*'That this Assembly approves the report of the Committee for Education on its Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education [NIA 194/11-16] and calls on the Minister of Education to implement the recommendations contained in the report'.*

The Committee noted that the report would be embargoed until the start of the debate in plenary but that prior to that, a copy of the report would be shared with the Department of Education.

*9:58am Jonathan Craig joined the meeting.*

*The meeting moved into public session at 10:00am.*

## **2. Apologies**

Apologies are as indicated above.

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

### **3.1 Paper Meeting Packs**

The Committee noted that from September 2015 paper meeting packs would no longer be produced by Committee staff.

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

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 24 June 2015.

## **5. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

## **6. SL1 Teachers' Superannuation (Additional Voluntary Contributions) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015 – Departmental Briefing**

*The official joined the meeting at 10:02am.*

Seamus Gallagher, Head of Pay Remit and Pensions Policy Team, Department of Education briefing the Committee on the SL1: Teachers' Superannuation (Additional Voluntary Contributions) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015.

A question and answer session followed the briefing.

*The official left the meeting at 10:06am.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content for the proposed statutory rule The Teachers' Superannuation (Additional Voluntary Contributions) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015 to be laid.

## **7. Committee Stage – Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Bill – Departmental Briefing**

The Committee noted a response from the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) in respect of its views on whether and how the Bill should be amended in respect of the framing of subordinate legislation.

The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education in respect of further statutory obligations on Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts to co-operate with the Education Authority.

The Committee noted an Assembly Research briefing paper entitled 'SEN funding and transitions in other jurisdictions, duties of HSC Trusts and SEN in Irish-medium education'.

*The officials joined the meeting at 10:07am.*

Caroline Gillan, Director of Access, Inclusion and Well-being, Department of Education; Irene Murphy, Head of Special Education & Inclusion Review Team, Department of Education; and Jan Matthews, Special Education & Inclusion Review Team, Department of Education 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.

*Peter Weir declared an interest as a member of the Boards of Governors of a number of schools.*

*11:31am Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking further information / clarification on a number of issues including:

- how parents can challenge school decisions in respect of dissatisfactory pre-statement SEN support;
- changes to SENDIST practices including guaranteeing children the opportunity to speak at Tribunals relating to their SEN support and the publication of SENDIST decisions;
- the Department's plans to provide advocacy support in respect of mediation; and
- how the Department envisages that the capacity of children to understand and exercise their rights will be assessed.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the NIPSO Adhoc Committee seeking its views on the extent of the proposed powers of the Ombudsperson in respect of parents who are dissatisfied with pre-statement SEN support.

*11:50am Nelson McCausland left the meeting.*

*11:52am Sandra Overend left the meeting. The Committee consequently lost its decision-making quorum but, under Standing Order 49(5) continued to hear evidence.*

*12:15pm Nelson McCausland re-joined the meeting. The Committee regained its decision making quorum.*

*The officials left the meeting at 12:21pm.*

*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 a response from the Department of Education to Committee queries in respect of the recommendations in the Education and Training Inspectorate report on The World Around Us. Members indicated they would give further consideration to this issue in September.

**8.3** The Committee noted correspondence from the Community Relations Council regarding the Community Relations and Cultural Awareness Week taking place from 28 September to 4 October 2015.

**8.4** The Committee noted correspondence from the Education Authority regarding the Equality Action Plan for the former Education and Library Boards/Staff Commission.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Education Authority / Department seeking: an update on the Looked After Children Attach Project; sight of the latest Extended Schools Annual report; and information on the Young Carers Safeguarding pilot.

**8.5** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to Committee queries in respect of the impact of the Delivering Social Change programme on Year 12 GCSE attainment including English and maths in 2013 -14.

**8.6** The Committee noted correspondence from the Speaker to the Chairperson in respect of a Public Petition for Dromore High School new build that was laid in the Assembly on Monday 22 June 2015.

**8.7** The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment in respect of its inquiry into growing the economy and creating jobs by lowering corporation tax.

**8.8** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding the implementation of the recommendations of the Marshall Report on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking: further information on the coverage of the NSPCC Preventative Education Programme and clarification on difficulties in specifying CSE in the Revised Curriculum.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to Queen's University Belfast; Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College regarding the implementation of the Marshall Report and seeking their views on how they are going to amend the curriculum in respect of the provision of CSE guidance to new teachers.

**8.9** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding the most recent Programme for Government (PfG) 2011-15 – Update for Commitments 21 and 42.

**8.10** The Committee noted correspondence from Parents of Children with Acquired Brain Injury enclosing information on leading experts in Acquired Brain Injury research.

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

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to defer any further action pending the final response from the Department of Education in respect of the application of oversight measures relating to Boards of Governors.

**8.12** The Committee noted correspondence from Investment Strategy Northern Ireland enclosing a copy of the Department of Education Procurement Activity Report for June 2015.

**8.13** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education providing an update on the Minister's intention to launch public consultations on matters relating to the Home to School Transport policy.

**8.14** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education inviting the Chairperson to meet informally with the DE senior management team.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson to meet informally with officials, diaries permitting.

**8.15** The Committee noted a Departmental response in relation to guidance on school starting school age and the post-primary transfer process.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the response to Parents Outloud for information.

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

The Committee considered its draft forward work programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to consider, in September, the rescheduling of its SEND Bill stakeholder event.

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

## **10. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **11. Elective Home Education consultation responses – Education Authority**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Education Authority seeking further information in respect of Elective Home Education.

*12.28pm Chris Hazzard left the meeting. The Committee consequently lost its decision-making quorum but, under Standing Order 49(5) continued to hear evidence.*

The Committee noted the additional information provided by the Education Authority in tabled papers.

*The officials joined the meeting at 12:29pm.*

Dr Clare Mangan, Education Authority, Belfast Region; Carol Johnston, Education Authority, North Eastern Region; Pat Ward, Education Authority, Western Region; and Nicola Topping, Education Authority, Western Region briefed the Committee on the Elective Home Education consultation responses.

A question and answer session followed the briefing.

*The officials left the meeting at 12:57pm.*

Members informally indicated that they would value further evidence from Home Education Northern Ireland (HEdNI) on Elective Home Education, in the autumn.

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

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 2 September 2015, at 11.00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting was adjourned at 12:58pm.*

**Peter Weir**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Education**  
**2 September 2015**