



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 21 OCTOBER 2015
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present:

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

In Attendance:

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)
Paul Stitt (Assistant Clerk)
Paula Best (Clerical Supervisor)
Kevin Marks (Clerical Officer)

Apologies:

Danny Kennedy MLA
Nelson McCausland MLA

The Deputy Chairperson Sandra Overend chaired the meeting when it commenced in public session at 10:03am.

1. Apologies

Apologies are as indicated above.

2. Chairperson's Business

2.1 Stranmillis University College

The Chairperson reminded the Committee of its meeting in Stranmillis University College on 7 October 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Principal of Stranmillis University College thanking both her, and her staff, for arranging and hosting the Committee's meeting and for the informative informal briefing regarding Early Childhood Education.

2.2 Sure Start

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the independent report on Sure Start had recently been published on the Department's website.

2.3 SEND Bill

The Chairperson reminded Members of recent Departmental submissions to the Committee Stage of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Bill including the Phase I report on Allied Health Professionals' support for children and young people with SEN and the Education and Training Inspectorate report on the Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing Pilot.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Public Health Agency to seek sight of the Phase II Allied Health Professionals report.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to write to the Department seeking clarity on the roll-out of the SEN school clusters and the nature of the new psychology assistant role and the impact of the latter on existing Educational Psychology Services.

2.4 Coding in Schools

The Chairperson invited the Committee to note recent innovative use by schools of technology in order to deliver lessons on computer coding in compliance with the Revised Curriculum.

Chris Hazzard joined the meeting at 10:07am

3. Minutes of previous meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 14 October 2015.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) - Levels of Progression / Computer Based Assessment / GCSE & A-Level Re-Specification

Officials joined the meeting at 10:08am.

Justin Edwards, Chief Executive, CCEA; Richard Hanna, Director of Education Strategy, CCEA; and Roger McCune, Head of Regulation, CCEA briefed the Committee on Levels of Progression; Computer Based Assessment; and GCSE & A-Level re-specification.

A question and answer session followed the briefing.

Seán Rogers declared an interest as the chairperson of the Board of Governors of a school.

*The Chairperson Peter Weir joined the meeting and assumed the chair at 10:24am.
Chris Hazzard left the meeting at 10:47am.
Sandra Overend left the meeting at 11:21am.*

The officials left the meeting at 11:28am.

The Committee noted that it had previously written to the Department seeking clarification on the revised numeracy and literacy baseline.

6. Correspondence

6.1 The Committee noted an index of incoming correspondence.

6.2 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education providing information on the uptake of School Clothing Allowance.

6.3 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding the Careers Advisory Forum and the Aiming Higher Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to the Committee for Employment and Learning and to Business in the Community for their information.

6.4 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding changes to school inspection and the role of the Controlled Schools Support Council.

6.5 The Committee noted a response from the Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU) to Committee queries in relation to changes to school inspection.

6.6 The Committee noted correspondence from the Education Authority regarding its consultation on proposed revisions to Home to School Transport eligibility criteria.

6.7 The Committee noted correspondence from the Assembly and Executive Review Committee enclosing a copy of the call for evidence for The Assembly and Executive Reform (Assembly Opposition) Bill.

6.8 The Committee noted an invitation from the International Red Cross and the Red Crescent Movement to attend an event entitled Celebrating Humanitarian Action - Across the Globe and Around the Corner, on Wednesday 18 November from 9.30am to 4.30pm in the Ulster Museum.

6.9 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Employment and Learning to queries in relation to the impact of changes to GCSE grading structures.

6.10 The Committee noted correspondence from the Education Authority enclosing a copy of its Quarterly Equality Screening Report July - September 2015.

6.11 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister enclosing a copy of an evaluation report of the Contested Space/Interface Programme.

6.12 The Committee noted correspondence from Solace NI regarding representation from local councils at Committee meetings.

6.13 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister enclosing a copy of the Carnegie UK Trust report entitled: Towards a Wellbeing Framework Report on Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland.

6.14 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to queries in relation to savings associated with the cancellation of the RTU Summer School.

6.15 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to queries in relation to the attainment of ethnic minority pupils. The Department also advised in respect of planning for the placement of refugee children in schools.

6.16 The Committee noted a response from the Committee for Employment and Learning indicating that it is not to put down an amendment to the SEND Bill in respect of the extension of statements beyond the age of 19.

6.17 The Committee noted correspondence from the AdHoc Committee on the Mental Capacity Bill to the Department on providers of Education Other Than At School (EOTAS).

The meeting moved into private session at 11:34am.

7. Terms of Reference Mini Inquiry / Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the terms of reference for its mini-inquiry into the Programme for Government.

The Committee considered its draft forward work programme.

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

The meeting moved into public session at 11:36am.

8. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 4 November 2015, at 10.00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:36am.

Peter Weir
Chairperson, Committee for Education
4 November 2015