



Northern Ireland  
Assembly  
Committee for Education  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2015  
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

**Present:**

Peter Weir MLA (Chairperson)  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn 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:**

None

*The meeting commenced in public session at 10:07am.*

The Chairperson suggested that owing to the additional plenary sitting, the Committee should defer some items of business and reorder its agenda.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to adopt a revised agenda for the meeting.

**1. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Bill - Overlap between Committee SEN Amendments and the Children's Services Co-operation Bill**

*The witnesses joined the meeting at 10:08am.*

Steven Agnew MLA, Green Party and Gareth Brown, Green Party briefed the Committee on the overlap between the Committee's Special Educational Needs co-operation amendments and the provisions of the Children's Services Co-operation Bill.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education relaying the views of the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety on the Committee's SEN co-operation amendments to the SEND Bill and including the final text of the Department of Education's amendments to the Bill.

A question and answer session followed the briefing.

*The witnesses left the meeting at 10:22am.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to submit its previously agreed SEN co-operation amendments for the Consideration Stage of the SEND Bill.

## **2. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

## **3. Minutes of previous meeting**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 11 November 2015.

## **4. Correspondence**

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

**4.2** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education in respect of costs associated with the provision of free school uniforms.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking further information as to how it is encouraging schools to minimise school uniform costs by including the use of generic, non-branded material and improving retailer choice.

**4.3** The Committee noted a response from INTO in respect of changes to school inspection.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarity in respect of the reported requirement for school leaders to sign confidentiality agreements prior to their participation in inspection moderation meetings.

**4.4** The Committee noted correspondence from Moat Primary School, Lisnaskea enclosing a letter of complaint to the Minister regarding the use of Levels of Progression as assessment criteria for the Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Minister and to defer its consideration of this matter until its next meeting.

**4.5** The Committee noted correspondence from the Assembly EU Affairs Manager enclosing a copy of the November issue of the EU Matters newsletter.

**4.6** The Committee noted correspondence from Home Education Northern Ireland commenting further on the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety's child safeguarding policy.

**4.7** The Committee noted correspondence forwarded by the Committee for Finance and Personnel from the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) regarding 2014-15 Savings Delivery Plan performance for other departments.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking commentary on its 2014-15 Savings Delivery Plan performance as compared to other departments.

**4.8** The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Employment and Learning to the Department of Education regarding issues raised by representatives from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in relation to Union Learn qualifications and funding.

**4.9** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding Levels of Progression and the Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to defer its consideration of this matter until its next meeting.

## **5. Draft Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered its draft forward work programme.

The Committee noted a planned visit programme for Dublin on Thursday 7 January 2016, which would include attendance at the BT Young Scientist Exhibition; an informal meeting with the Oireachtas Committee for Education and Social Protection in Leinster House; and possible meetings with the Higher Education Authority and Irish Universities Association.

The Committee noted that 10 and 24 February 2015 have been provisionally set aside for stakeholder events in respect of the Committee's anticipated mini-inquiry into the Programme for Government.

The Committee noted that written submissions to the Committee Stage of the Shared Education Bill are currently being received and that some stakeholders would be invited to provide oral evidence to the Committee at its meetings on 25 November 2015 and 2 December 2015.

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

## **6. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

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

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 25 November 2015, at 10.00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting was adjourned at 10:29am.*

**Peter Weir**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Education**  
**25 November 2015**