



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2012
ROOM 21

Present:

Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Brenda Hale MLA
Chris Hazzard MLA
Trevor Lunn MLA
Michelle McIlveen MLA
Sean Rogers MLA
Pat Sheehan MLA

In Attendance:

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Kerry Richards (Clerical Officer)
Ursula Savage (Bursary Student)
Eilis Haughey (Bill Office Clerk) *item 9 only*

Apologies:

Jonathan Craig MLA
Jo-Anne Dobson MLA

The meeting commenced in open session at 9.05am.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Chairperson's Business

- 2.1. The Chairperson welcomed Paula Best into her temporary role as Assistant Clerk to the Committee for Education and Kerry Richards as Clerical Officer.
- 2.2. The Chairperson reminded Members that the Committee's Priorities for Youth briefing event was scheduled for 4.00pm in Room 115.
- 2.3. The Chairperson referred Members to tabled items which included a list of suggested recipients of Christmas cards.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to send hard copy Christmas cards to all the suggested recipients.

- 2.4. The Chairperson advised Members of a press report which rated the UK education system as the 6th best in the world.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask Assembly Research to provide a briefing paper on this report and on the Trends in International Maths and Science (TIMS) and Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS) which are to be published in December.

3. Draft Minutes of 21 November 2012

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2012 were agreed by the Committee.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from last week's meeting.

5. Briefing from the Assembly Bill Office on the legislative procedures for the Committee Stage of the Education Bill

The Committee deferred consideration of this agenda item until later in the meeting.

6. SL1: The Education (Levels of Progression for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3) Order (NI) 2012

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education on the (Levels of Progression for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3) Order (NI) 2012.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer its consideration of the SL1 pending confirmation from school principals, involved in the Levels of Progression Shadow Year, of the workability and appropriateness of the Levels of Progression.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk should organise an urgent visit to a school to allow Members to speak to school principals who were involved in the Shadow Year of the Levels of Progression.

7. Briefing from NITC on the Committee Stage of the Education Bill

The briefing commenced at 9.25am.

The following representatives of the Northern Ireland Teaching Council (NITC): Mr John Devlin, National Association and Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) and Mr Gerry Murphy, Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) briefed the Committee on NITC's submission to the call for evidence for the Committee Stage of the Education Bill.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Brenda Hale joined the meeting at 9.28am.

Pat Sheehan joined the meeting at 9.59am

The briefing ended at 10.48am.

8. Briefing from NAHT on the Committee Stage of the Education Bill

The briefing commenced at 10.49am.

Pat Sheehan left the meeting at 10.49pm.

Mr Aidan Dolan, Director of Education (NAHT) and Mrs Clare Majury, NI President (NAHT) briefed the Committee on NAHT's submission to the call for evidence for the Committee Stage of the Education Bill.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Michelle McIlveen declared an interest as a member of the Board of Governors of a number of schools at 11.35am.

The briefing ended at 11.39am.

The meeting moved into closed session at 11.40am.

The Committee considered the following deferred agenda item.

9. Briefing from the Assembly Bill Office on the legislative procedures for the Committee Stage of the Education Bill

The Committee received a briefing from Eilis Haughey from the Assembly Bill Office on the Committee Stage of the Education Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek an explanatory briefing paper on the legislative process from the Bill Office.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to write to the Department for Education seeking an update on progress in respect of the production of amendments to the Education Bill designed to incorporate the Heads of Agreement document.

The meeting was suspended at 12.02pm

The meeting resumed in public session at 12.33pm.

10. Briefing from ASCL on the Committee Stage of the Education Bill

The briefing commenced at 12.34pm.

The following representatives of the Association of School and College Leaders: Ms Debra O'Hare, President (ASCL) and principal of Wallace High School; Mr Scott Naismith, Vice President (ASCL) and principal of Methodist College; Mrs Janet Williamson, principal of Royal Belfast Academical Institution and Mr Frank Cassidy, Regional Officer (ASCL) presented ASCL's submission to the call for evidence for the Committee Stage of the Education Bill.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Sean Rodgers left the meeting at 1.20pm.

The briefing ended at 1.28pm.

The Committee considered the following additional agenda item.

11. Response from the Department of Education on the Education Bill

The briefing commenced at 1.28pm.

Mr Chris Stewart, Director of Equality and All-Ireland Division, DE provided clarification on a number of issues raised throughout the meeting by the witnesses.

Brenda Hale left the meeting at 1.31pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking clarity in respect of the following clauses:

- Clause 4(6) – Employment schemes for grant-aided schools;
- Clause 13 – Modification of employment law;
- Clause 16 – ESA to secure provision of educational and youth services and facilities;
- Clause 38 – Duties of Board of Governors in relation to achievement of high standards of educational attainment;
- Clause 39 - Appointment by ESA of governors for controlled, maintained, grant-maintained integrated and certain voluntary grammar schools; and
- 45 - Powers of inspectors.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to write to the Department seeking further information on: the funding of unions by the Department; the Jordanstown Agreement; changes to the level of autonomy available to schools in respect of the current and previous Education Bills; and clarification in respect of posts described in the Bill as specified by schools or by ESA.

The briefing ended at 2.10pm.

12. Correspondence

12.1. The Committee noted a response from the Southern Education and Library Board regarding home to school transport and the cost of sessional tickets.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to revisit this and related correspondence during its consideration of the PEDU Action Plan on School Transport.

- 12.2. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Justice relating to the Department of Education's draft Priorities for Youth policy.
- 12.3. The Committee noted correspondence from Youth Action regarding the Department of Education's draft Priorities for Youth policy.
- 12.4. The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education on policy issues relating to SEN Shared Provision.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the concerned parent who raised the policy issue.

- 12.5. The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education on the DFP Minister's Statement of 12 November 2012 providing a timescale for a briefing on the consultation on Education Maintenance Allowance and detail in respect of the October Monitoring Round and budget realignment.
- 12.6. The Committee noted a response from the Minister of Education on the Computer Based-Assessments: Northern Ireland Literacy Assessment (NILA) and Northern Ireland Numeracy Assessment (NINA).
- 12.7. The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding the publication of the report of the independent review of the Common Funding Scheme.
- 12.8. The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education providing an update on the working group to improve Prompt Payment Performance in the Education and Library Boards.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the original correspondent.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to request that Assembly Research provide an overview paper on this issue.

- 12.9. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister for Education to Alban Maginness MLA regarding the proposed closure of Artillery Youth Centre.
- 12.10. The Committee noted a response from the Minister of Education to the Chairperson of the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure regarding Disability Sport NI.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Chairperson of the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure.

- 12.11. The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to issues raised by the Committee for Employment and Learning regarding the withdrawal of ear-marked funding to Further Education Colleges and schools for collaboration in support of the Entitlement Framework.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Committee for Employment and Learning.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to write to the Department of Education requesting clarity in respect of the apparent contradiction between Area Planning policy which promotes collaboration between schools and FE colleges and the policy position set out in the correspondence relating to the Entitlement Framework.

- 12.12.** The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister for onward transmission to the Minister for Education regarding legislative proposals relating to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Minister for Education.

The Committee also noted a number of Department of Education News Releases which were previously emailed to Members.

13. Forward Work Programme

13.1 Education Bill

The Committee noted the submissions to the Committee Stage of the Education Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the submissions to the Committee Stage of the Education Bill should be published on the website.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask Assembly Research to provide a paper examining the powers of school inspectors in Scotland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold its meeting on 12 December 2012 in the Pavilion, Stormont.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold an Education Bill event in the New Year which may include the Parents Teachers Association–Northern Ireland (PTA-NI) and groups representing Boards of Governors.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the relevant clauses of the Education Bill to the Committee for Employment and Learning and the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure for comment.

13.2 Other Issues

Agreed: The Committee agreed to arrange a visit in the New Year to the NI Science Park, Titanic Quarter, Belfast as part of its consideration of the STEM policy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to visit the University of Ulster, Coleraine as part of its consideration of teacher training issues.

14. Any Other Business

The Committee discussed a response to a written question relating to the revised Early Years Strategy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that, given the level and nature of the responses to the previous consultation on the Early Years Strategy and what are understood to be wide-ranging changes to the revised Early Years Strategy, it would write to the Department seeking confirmation that a consultation on the revised Early Years Strategy will be undertaken.

15. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 5 December 2012 at 9.00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 2.22pm.

Mervyn Storey
Chairperson, Committee for Education
5 December 2012