



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 22 OCTOBER 2014
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present:

Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Jonathan Craig MLA
Chris Hazzard MLA
Nelson McCausland MLA
Maeve McLaughlin MLA
Robin Newton MLA
Sandra Overend MLA
Seán Rogers MLA
Pat Sheehan MLA

In Attendance:

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Jonathan Watson (Clerical Supervisor)
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

Apologies:

Trevor Lunn MLA

The meeting commenced in public session at 10.12am.

1. Apologies

Apologies were as indicated above.

2. Chairperson's Business

2.1 October Monitoring

The Chairperson referred Members to the Minister for Finance and Personnel's October Monitoring Resource Statement which appeared to indicate that £87m of so-called Welfare Reform penalties are to be met in 2014-15 from the resources of a number of departments, excluding the Department of Education.

The Chairperson noted that the Department of Education had previously advised in June 2014 that it had established a set aside fund of £29m to meet its anticipated share of the Welfare Reform penalties.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking clarification as to how the £29m set aside fund is to be spent.

2.2 Examination re-marking

The Chairperson drew Members' attention to recent press reports referring to a high level of examination re-marks in the summer of 2014 in England and Wales.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) seeking details of the impact on students in Northern Ireland of the reported increase in re-marks and related statistics on this matter.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting of 15 October 2014.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry

The Chairperson advised Members that additional submissions to the inquiry had been added to the SkyDrivePro link.

The Committee noted that as previously agreed, submissions to the inquiry were to be published on the Committee's webpage.

5. Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme Consultations - Departmental Briefing

Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10.18am

La'Verne Montgomery, Director of Education Workforce Development and Seamus Gallagher, Head of Pay Remit and Pensions Policy Team briefed the Committee on consultations relating to the Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme (NITPS).

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

10.50am Pat Sheehan left the meeting.

Officials left the meeting at 10.58am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking sight of the consultations response summary document; highlighting concerns in respect of proposed abrupt changes to death in service arrangements; and also seeking clarity in respect of:

- contribution tiers;
- possible overpayments and reduced costs identified in the NITPS 2014 Annual Scheme Statement; and
- options for retirement by teachers before age 65.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to write to the Teachers' Superannuation Consultative Committee and the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council seeking their views on the reforms to the NITPS.

6. School Redundancies / School Workforce Review – Departmental Briefing

Departmental officials joined the meeting at 11.00am.

La'Verne Montgomery, Director of Education Workforce Development; Kieron Moore, Head of Workforce Planning Team; Geraldine Quinn, Head of Teacher Negotiating Team; and Gavin Patrick, Deputy Finance Officer briefed the Committee on School Redundancies.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

11.23am Nelson McCausland joined the meeting.

11.39am Sandra Overend joined the meeting.

11.44am Geraldine Quinn, Head of Teacher Negotiating Team; and Gavin Patrick, Deputy Finance Officer left the meeting.

La'Verne Montgomery, Director of Education Workforce Development; Kieron Moore, Head of Workforce Planning Team briefed the Committee on the School Workforce Review.

11.49am Jonathan Craig joined the meeting.

12.04pm Seán Rogers left the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Officials left the meeting at 12.10pm.

12.12pm Nelson McCausland left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department highlighting its concerns in respect of the Department's failure to properly communicate redundancy criteria in 2014 to Employing Authorities, schools and teachers and seeking:

- clarification in respect of those approved redundancies which were not undertaken and the financial implications for the affected schools;
- sight of the suite of correspondence that is to be sent to/by all Employing Authorities in future in respect of school redundancies; and
- an update on the implementation of the lessons learned by the Department in respect of the redundancy process.

12.16pm Nelson McCausland re-joined the meeting.

7. Capital Programme / Revised Protocol – Departmental Briefing

Departmental officials joined the meeting at 12.17pm.

Philip Irwin, Director of Investment and Infrastructure; Stephen Creagh, Deputy Director of Investment and Infrastructure; and Anne Conaty, Head of Major Capital Implementation Team briefed the Committee on the Capital Programme and the related Revised Protocol.

12.19pm Chris Hazzard left the meeting.

12.29pm Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.

12.50pm Seán Rogers re-joined the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Officials left the meeting at 1.11pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department highlighting its concerns in respect of the apparent absence of an EQIA for the revised capital programme selection protocol.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to write to the Department seeking:

- details in respect of the capital overhang from the previous mandate and the projected capital overhang for the next mandate;
- details in respect of the capital announcements since 2003 and the related selection protocols;

- clarity as to how the Free School Meal Entitlement and SEN levels in schools were included in the scoring process for recent capital announcements;
- clarity as to how the Department's obligations to facilitate and encourage Integrated and Irish Medium Education were included in the application of gateway screening for recent capital announcements;
- information in respect of the number of schools that have been built using Private Finance Initiative and Private Public Partnership arrangements; and
- information on recent capital investment in youth services broken down by locality and sector and including details of funding provided by other sources.

8. Correspondence

8.1 The Committee noted an invitation from the Southern Education and Library Board for Members to attend the Joint Consultative Forum - 10 Year Anniversary Event on Monday 1 December 2014 in Ashfield Girls High School, Belfast at 10.30am.

8.2 The Committee noted a response from CCEA indicating that additional support for schools will be required following the roll-out of A2C in 2016 in order to allow schools to easily print-off GCSE and A-Level results on a single page on exam results day.

8.3 The Committee noted a response from the Minister for Education to the Chairperson regarding the ICT and budget risks identified in the CCEA 2013-14 Annual Report.

8.4 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding Departmental Savings Delivery Plan.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department again seeking the 2013-14 SDP report and requesting a risk assessment for future SDP savings.

8.5 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education again declining to provide the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit (PEDU) Action Plans in respect of school catering and transport.

8.6 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding the timeline for retaking the Development Proposal decision for Drumragh integrated College.

8.7 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding Integrated Education and the Needs Model. The Department could not identify

previous or current adjustments to Needs Model projections in recognition of the demand for Integrated Education above population trends.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Education and Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools to seek examples of adjustments to Needs Model projections in recognition of the demand for Integrated Education above population trends.

8.8 The Committee noted an invitation from the Centre for Effective Services inviting Members to attend the 'Prevention and Early Intervention in children and young people's services' event on Wednesday 5 November 2014 at 11.30am in Duncairn Centre for Culture and Arts, Duncairn Avenue, Belfast.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Centre for Effective Services to seek sight of its report when it is published.

8.9 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department for Regional Development providing information on the Programme for Government project to Promote Cycling and Walking to School.

8.10 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding the complaints procedure in respect of SEN provision.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Education and Library Boards asking that they set out the complaints procedure for parents in respect of educational provision.

8.11 The Committee noted an invitation from Assembly Research and Information Service (RaISe) for Members to attend the Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS) on Wednesday 5 November in the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings, from 1.30pm- 3.30pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson to open proceedings at the KESS seminar.

8.12 The Committee noted correspondence from Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College regarding employment prospects for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) graduates. Members noted that information is not available on whether teaching graduates are actually employed in teaching jobs.

8.13 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (COFMDFM) regarding the Italian Ambassador / Italian Consul General's visit to the Northern Ireland Assembly on Monday 20 October 2014.

8.14 Members noted correspondence from Ballysillan Primary School to Nigel Dodds MP indicating the latest pupil and fiscal projection figures.

8.15 The Committee noted an invitation from Belfast Met for Members to attend the Supported Learning Showcase event on Tuesday 4 November 2014 in the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings, 12- 2pm.

8.16 The Committee noted correspondence from COFMDFM enclosing a submission from the Speedwell Trust; the Early Years Organisation; and the Foyle Trust for the COFMDFM inquiry into the Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking a briefing on the Community Relations Equality and Diversity (CRED) policy; confirmation regarding reported reductions in funding for CRED; and clarification in respect of the categorisation of Shared Education projects.

8.17 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education providing information on progress in respect of the Delivering Social Change: Literacy and Numeracy Signature Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking information on how Programme progress is to be monitored.

8.18 The Committee noted an Invitation from Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) for Members to attend the NICIE 'Beyond Segregation, Reimagining our Education System' Seminar on Saturday 8 November 2014 in the Canada Room, Queen's University Belfast, at 10am.

8.19 The Committee noted correspondence from Community Relations in Schools (CRIS) to the Chairperson requesting a meeting regarding the work of CRIS and providing information on the CRIS Buddy Up programme. Members noted an enclosed copy of a letter to the Minister for Education regarding Community Relations in Schools.

8.20 The Committee noted correspondence from the African Children's Choir requesting a meeting with the Committee and seeking the Committee's endorsement for its work. Members noted that the Committee does not endorse educational products or services.

8.21 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Health, Social Services and Public Safety to the Department of Education in relation to the provision of habilitation services for school children with visual impairments.

1.21pm Sean left the meeting.

9. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme.

The Committee noted that as previously agreed, it is to visit Methodist College. This visit has been scheduled for the 10 December 2014.

The Committee noted that a meet and greet session with pupils from Christ the Redeemer primary school had been scheduled for Wednesday 19 November 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 5 November 2014 at 10.00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.26pm.

Michelle McIlveen
Chairperson, Committee for Education
5 November 2014