



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 15 OCTOBER 2014
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present:

Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Jonathan Craig MLA
Chris Hazzard MLA
Trevor Lunn MLA
Nelson McCausland MLA
Maeve McLaughlin MLA
Robin Newton 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)
James Stewart (Assembly Education Service) - *item 1 only*

Apologies:

Sandra Overend MLA

The meeting commenced in private session at 10.01am.

1. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme.

10.18am Nelson McCausland joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing, following the Easter Recess, from the Education and Library Boards on the consultation on elective home education.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety seeking clarity on those provisions of the draft Mental Health Capacity Bill which may be relevant to education.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking an update: on the development of the Looked After Children policy and interim measures designed to enhance the literacy, numeracy and general educational attainment of Looked After Children.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commission Assembly Research to produce a paper summarising the policy position in respect of Looked After Children in this and other relevant jurisdictions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk should provide further information on the Public Accounts Committee's consideration of pupil attendance issues.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department asking how it ensures that children have access to cultural education in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to revisit its strategic plan in January 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

Assembly Education Service joined the meeting at 10.35am.

James Stewart, Assembly Education Service, briefed the Committee on the pupil focus group programme to be provided by the Assembly Education Service in support of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the focus group programme but that it should include examples of so-called 'supermixed schools' i.e. single non-integrated schools which include a high degree of mixing of pupils of different faiths etc..

Assembly Education Service left the meeting at 10.48am.

The meeting entered public session at 10.48am.

2. Apologies

Apologies were as indicated above.

3. Chairperson's Business

3.1 Budget 2015-16

The Chairperson noted press reports which indicated that the Executive was to agree its 2015-16 budget by the end of October 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister asking him to set out how the Committee is to be afforded the opportunity to scrutinise the draft 2015-16 budget and seeking a Departmental briefing.

3.2 Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)

The Chairperson also referred Members to a recent press report relating to Relationship and Sexuality Education for school pupils with learning difficulties.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking clarification on the relevant policy surrounding Relationship and Sexuality Education for pupils with learning difficulties.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting of 8 October 2014.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 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.

6. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education: Written Briefing

The Committee noted a written briefing on the Committee's Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The Committee noted that as previously agreed, a blog of the meeting's evidence to the inquiry would be published on the Committee's webpage.

10.51am Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.

7. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education- briefing from Ballycastle High School and Cross & Passion College

Witnesses joined the meeting at 10.52am.

Mrs Barbara Ward, Principal, Cross and Passion College; and Mr Ian Williamson, Principal, Ballycastle High School briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

11.01am Chris Hazzard joined the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

11.53am Danny Kinahan left the meeting.

The witnesses left the meeting at 11.55am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to visit Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

8. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education- briefing from Professor Knox and Professor Borooah

The witnesses joined the meeting at 11.56am.

Professor Colin Knox, Professor of Public Policy, University of Ulster; and Professor Vani Borooah, Emeritus Professor of Applied Economics, University of Ulster briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

12.00noon Seán Rogers left the meeting.

12.03pm Maeve McLaughlin re-joined the meeting.

12.41pm Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The witnesses left the meeting at 12.56pm

12.56pm Pat Sheehan left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking further information on the Shared Education Signature Programme in particular how the Programme will facilitate Shared Education becoming a core element of strategic planning within the Department and schools.

9. Correspondence

9.1 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education enclosing the link to the current 2014-15 Common Funding Scheme.

9.2 Members noted correspondence from the chief executive of the Early Years Organisation offering her congratulations on the appointment of the Chairperson of the Education Committee.

9.3 The Committee noted correspondence from the Regional Equality Unit, Southern Education Library Board (SELB), enclosing a copy of the Section 75 Quarterly Screening Report (July- September 14) reporting the screening out of 3 policies relating to: the Code of Conduct for Commission Members; the Anti-Fraud Policy; and the Smoke Free Workplace Policy.

9.4 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding 3 Church of Ireland managed and 1 Presbyterian managed Other Maintained Primary Schools and a proposed change of designation in respect of Temporary Variations to school enrolments.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the relevant Other Maintained Primary Schools seeking their views on the proposed changes.

9.5 Members noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) to the Minister in respect of the Education Bill. The Committee noted that NICIE is seeking amendments to the Bill in order to: establish a single planning authority; allow for the option for Special Schools to transform to integrated status; require the Education Authority to facilitate and encourage Integrated Education; and allow for representation on the board of the Education Authority in respect of Integrated Education.

9.6 The Committee noted an invitation from the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) to the Chairperson to attend the launch of the Chief Inspector's Report 2012-2014 on Thursday 6 November 2014 at Belfast Metropolitan College, Titanic Quarter Campus Belfast, at 10am.

9.7 The Committee noted correspondence from the British Heart Foundation Northern Ireland in respect of the launch of the Nation of Lifesavers campaign on 16 October 2014.

9.8 The Committee noted a letter of complaint from a concerned individual regarding education in the UK.

9.9 The Committee noted an invitation from Christ the Redeemer Primary School, Lisburn, inviting Members to visit and meet pupils.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite pupils from Christ the Redeemer Primary School to visit Parliament Buildings and to explore opportunities for a visit by Members to the school.

9.10 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education indicating that the final report of the joint DE/DEL Careers Review Independent Panel is to be made available to the DE/DEL Ministers in October 2014.

9.11 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding evaluation reports on Nurture Units.

9.12 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding the Terms of Reference of its 'Review of the operation of the Barnett Formula'.

9.13 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding Prince's Trust qualifications. Members noted a list of accredited qualifications and the relevant procedure for securing accreditation.

9.14 The Committee noted an invitation for Members to attend the Northern Ireland's Commissioner for Children and Young People Annual Event Seminar, 'Exploring the best interest of children and young people', on Thursday 20 November 2014 in the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings, 9.45am- 2pm.

9.15 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department advising Members that the Minister intends to make a statement to the Assembly on 21 October 2014 on post-primary Irish Medium Education.

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 22 October 2014 at 10.00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.03pm.

Michelle McIlveen
Chairperson, Committee for Education
22 October 2014