



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

Present:

Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Jonathan Craig MLA
Trevor Lunn 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)
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

Apologies:

Chris Hazzard MLA

Agreed: The Committee agreed to change the order of the items in the agenda.

The meeting commenced in private session at 9.45am.

1. NEELB Report – Home to School Transport / Serious Road Accident

The Committee noted a copy of an NEELB report on its treatment of an application for Home to School Transport support from a family subsequently involved in a serious road traffic accident.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking an update on the relevant safety issues raised in the independent Home to School Transport report including those relating to road safety assessment; road safety infrastructure improvement and the retention of school crossing patrols.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Education and Library Boards seeking examples of when they have varied Home to School Transport pick-

up points or other Home to School Transport arrangements following the assessment of a road as unsafe.

9.54am Danny Kinahan joined the meeting.

The meeting moved into public session at 9.55am.

2. Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry – Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education

The witnesses joined the meeting at 9.56am.

Jim Clarke, Chief Executive, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; Malachy Crudden, Head of Education Standards, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and Father Tim Bartlett, Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

10.00am Sandra Overend joined the meeting.

Seán Rogers declared an interest as a member of a Board of Governors of a Catholic school.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairperson passed on her condolences to Mr Gerry Lundy, Deputy Chief Executive, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools on the recent death of his mother.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

10.34am Maeve McLaughlin joined the meeting.

10.45am Jonathan Craig joined the meeting.

11.41am Nelson McCausland left the meeting.

11.52am Robin Newton left the meeting.

The witnesses left the meeting at 12.02pm.

12.02pm Pat Sheehan left the meeting.

3. Apologies

Apologies are as indicated above.

4. Chairperson's Business

4.1 PEAT Petition

The Chairperson advised Members that she had received a petition from Parents Education as Autism Therapists (PEAT) asking that parents and carers of children

and young people with Autism in Northern Ireland be given the chance to choose effective Applied Behaviour Analysis or ABA-based interventions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the petition to the Department of Education and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for comment on the relevant therapy options for children in schools.

4.2 Teaching and Non-teaching Redundancy

The Chairperson noted correspondence from the Department of Education in respect of the redundancy packages for teaching and non-teaching staff. Members highlighted their concerns that the current redundancy process should be managed more efficiently and effectively than the process in 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking the anticipated overall costs of teaching and non-teaching redundancies in 2015.

4.3 Primary Schools Language Programme

The Chairperson advised Members that she had received information regarding the impact of the reduction in Departmental funding for the Primary Schools Language Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write again to the Department highlighting its concerns in this regard and again seeking a breakdown of the funding cuts in 2015-16.

5. Minutes of previous meeting

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

6. Matters Arising

6.1 Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education

The Committee noted a paper by Assembly Research entitled 'Young people's views on sharing and integration in education'.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the paper should be published on the Committee's inquiry webpage.

7. Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme – Secondary Legislation

The Departmental official joined the meeting at 12.06pm.

Seamus Gallagher, Head of Pensions Policy Team, Department of Education briefed the Committee on the statutory rule: SR 2015/126 The Teachers' Pensions (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

12.12pm Nelson McCausland re-joined the meeting.

12.12pm Robin Newton re-joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the following motion:

“That the Committee for Education has considered: SR 2015/126 The Teachers’ Pensions (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules has no objections to the rule.”

The official left the meeting at 12.14pm.

8. GTCNI Secondary Legislation – Teacher Eligibility

Officials joined the meeting at 12.15pm.

Miriam Miskelly, Head of Teacher Education Team, Department of Education; and Sam Dempster, Teacher Education Team, Department of Education briefed the Committee on the statutory rule: SR 2015/151 The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (Registration of Teachers) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

12.15pm Danny Kinahan left the meeting.

12.22pm Robin Newton left the meeting.

12.26pm Nelson McCausland left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the following motion:

“That the Committee for Education has considered: SR 2015/151 The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (Registration of Teachers) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules has no objections to the rule.”

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The officials left the meeting at 12.27pm.

12.27pm Nelson McCausland re-joined the meeting.

9. Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry – Brookborough Primary School and St Mary’s Primary School

The witnesses joined the meeting at 12.27pm.

Hazel Gardiner, Principal, Brookeborough Primary School; Dermot Finlay, Principal, St Mary's Primary School, Brookeborough; Iris Barker, Western Education and Library Board (WELB); and Mary Hampsey, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

12.31pm Danny Kinahan re-joined the meeting.

1.12pm Seán Rogers left the meeting.

1.14pm Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.

The witnesses left the meeting at 1.22pm

10. Correspondence

10.1 The Committee noted an index of incoming correspondence.

10.2 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel in respect of the Northern Ireland Civil Service Voluntary Exit Scheme.

10.3 The Committee noted an invitation from Queen's University to attend the ILiAD Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation Presentation on Tuesday 31 March 2015 in Lecture Room 3, Riddel Hall, Stranmillis Road, Belfast from 4.00-5.30pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk would attend this presentation on behalf of the Committee.

10.4 The Committee noted correspondence from Sentinus in respect of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) debate in the Assembly on Monday 2 March 2015. The correspondence also highlighted concerns regarding a cut in Departmental funding.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Minister highlighting its concerns in respect of the impact on the teaching of STEM in schools.

10.5 The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister regarding the teaching of computer coding in schools and the portability of Applied A-Levels.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to CCEA seeking information on the level of acceptance by employers of Applied A-Levels as compared with similar Further Education qualifications and the level of acceptance of Applied A-Levels by universities in the rest of the UK. The Committee also agreed to seek an update on CCEA's review of exam specifications and its implications for qualification portability.

10.6 The Committee noted an invitation to the Chairperson to meet with the new Commissioner for Children and Young People.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson to meet with the new NICCY Commissioner.

10.7 The Committee noted correspondence to the Chairperson in respect of the Big Lottery Fund's new programme 'Empowering Young People'

10.8 The Committee noted correspondence from Carrickfergus College regarding reductions in the in-year growth contingency fund. Members indicated that they had been lobbied by a number of schools on this issue.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department seeking clarification regarding the changes to the in-year contingency fund.

The Committee noted that the following information was available in the Committee Office for Members' perusal:

- resource material from NICIE relating to the Delving Deeper Religious Education Programme; and
- Departmental resource material for Children with Special Educational Needs in the Irish Medium Sector.

1.28pm Sandra Overend left the meeting.

11. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to meet with concerned parents regarding the designation of St Ronan's College, Lurgan on Monday 23 March 2015 at 1.00pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for Ulster Bank to film the Committee-sponsored Money Sense event on Tuesday 24 March 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 25 March 2015 at 11.00am in Limavady High School.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.30pm.

Michelle McIlveen
Chairperson, Committee for Education
24 March 2015