



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE 2015
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present:

Peter Weir MLA (Chairperson)
Sandra Overend MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Jonathan Craig MLA
Chris Hazzard MLA
Trevor Lunn MLA
Robin Newton 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:

Nelson McCausland MLA

The meeting commenced in private session at 9.34am.

1. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – draft report - written briefing

The Committee considered the draft report on its Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

9.35am Chris Hazzard joined the meeting.

9.43am Seán Rogers joined the meeting.

9.47am Sandra Overend joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to re-consider the report in greater detail on 24 June 2015.

The meeting moved into public session at 10.10am.

10.10am Robin Newton left the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies are as indicated above.

3. Chairperson's Business

3.1 Condolences

The Committee expressed its deep regret and sympathy following the tragic deaths of a number of students in Berkeley, California.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write offering its condolences to the relevant families, care of the Mayor of Berkeley.

3.2 New Deputy Chairperson

The Chairperson congratulated Sandra Overend MLA on becoming the new Deputy Chairperson of the Education Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Danny Kinahan MP MLA, thanking him for his service to the Committee.

3.3 Informal meeting with Minister

The Chairperson informed Members that he had met informally with the Minister on 15 June 2015 to discuss the passage of the SEND Bill and other matters.

The Chairperson advised Members of the anticipated progress of the Anti-Bullying Bill and the Shared Education Bill.

The Chairperson also noted the reported decision by the Department of Education to withdraw funding for the summer scheme for teachers organised by the Regional Training Unit (RTU).

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarification on funding for Continued Professional Development for teachers.

3.4 Meeting with Women's Aid

The Chairperson informed Members that he, Robin Newton MLA and Sandra Overend MLA had met informally with Women's Aid (Belfast and Lisburn) to discuss issues regarding the Early Years Budget.

3.5 Twitter

The Chairperson reminded Members that the Committee has its own Twitter account and urged them to issue tweets relating to the Committee's deliberations.

10.18am Chris Hazzard left the meeting.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 10 June 2015.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

10.19am Chris Hazzard re-joined the meeting.

6. Committee Stage – Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Bill – Northern Ireland Commission for Children and Young People (NICCY)

The witnesses joined the meeting at 10.19am.

Koulla Yiasouma, Commissioner, Northern Ireland Commission for Children and Young People and Mairéad McCaffrey, Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Commission for Children and Young People briefed the Committee as part of the Committee Stage of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill.

A question and answer session followed the briefing.

11.00am Seán Rogers left the meeting.

11.04am Jonathan Craig left the meeting.

11.05am Chris Hazzard left the meeting. The Committee consequently lost its decision-making quorum but, under Standing Order 49(5) continued to hear evidence.

11.08am Jonathan Craig re-joined the meeting. The Committee regained its decision making quorum.

11.10am Chris Hazzard re-joined the meeting.

11.13am Seán Rogers re-joined the meeting.

The witnesses left the meeting at 11.13am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to NICCY seeking its views in respect of the addition of constraints relating to the regulation-making powers in the SEND Bill.

7. Committee Stage – Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Bill – Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) and National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)

The witnesses joined the meeting at 11.14am.

Caroline McCarthy, INTO Northern Committee representative, BELB area; Mary Dorman, INTO Northern Committee representative, SELB area; Darren Northcott, National Official, NASUWT and Seán McElhinney, Organising Official, NASUWT briefed the Committee as part of the Committee Stage of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill.

A question and answer session followed the briefing.

11.34am Pat Sheehan left the meeting.

11.43am Seán Rogers left the meeting.

Jonathan Craig declared an interest as a member of the Boards of Governors of two schools.

11.59am Jonathan Craig left the meeting. The Committee consequently lost its decision-making quorum but, under Standing Order 49(5) continued to hear evidence.

12.05pm Robin Newton re-joined the meeting. The Committee regained its decision making quorum.

The witnesses left the meeting at 12.06pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to INTO and NASUWT seeking their views in respect of the addition of constraints relating to the regulation-making powers in the SEND Bill.

12.06pm Jonathan Craig re-joined the meeting.

The Committee revised the order of the items in the agenda.

8. Correspondence

8.1 The Committee noted an index of incoming correspondence.

8.2 The Committee noted an Invitation from the School of Education Queen's University Belfast to attend the 'Promoting Health and Wellbeing – The Role of Schools' event on Wednesday 24 June 2015 in the Great Hall, Queen's University Belfast.

8.3 The Committee noted an Invitation from the School of Sociology and Applied Science, University of Ulster to attend the 'Commemoration and Conflict in Northern Ireland: The Public Sector, Risk and Resilience' on Tuesday 22 September 2015 in the Riddle Hall, Queen's University Belfast, at 9.30am.

8.4 The Committee noted an invitation to the Chairperson to meet with GL Assessment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to organise an informal meeting for Members with GL Assessment, diaries permitting.

8.5 The Committee noted correspondence from the Speaker to the Committee enclosing a copy of the public petition regarding the Early Years Fund that was laid in the Assembly on Monday 8 June 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the sponsor of the petition in respect of the Committee's views and actions relating to the Early Years Fund.

8.6 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education advising that the consultation on the future of the Youth Council has been extended until Friday 3 July 2015.

8.7 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister enclosing a copy of briefing information on a meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee (2 March 2015) on the European Union.

8.8 The Committee noted an invitation to the Chairperson to visit Ligoniel Primary School.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson to visit Ligoniel Primary School, diaries permitting.

8.9 The Committee noted an invitation to attend the Sentinus Young Innovators event on Tuesday 23 June 2015 at Ulster University, Jordanstown from 10.00am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson to attend the Sentinus Young Innovators event, subject to plenary business.

8.10 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to Committee queries in respect of the budget process for Special Schools.

8.11 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to Committee queries in respect of redundancies and the June Monitoring Round 2015.

9. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its draft forward work programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek a briefing from Blind Children UK regarding the SEND Bill at its meeting on 24 June 2015.

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

10. Any Other Business

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking comment regarding reported significant school budget adjustments associated with errors or corrections to projected enrolment levels.

12.14pm Sandra Overend left the meeting.

12.14pm Chris Hazzard left the meeting. The Committee consequently lost its decision-making quorum but, under Standing Order 49(5) continued to hear evidence.

11. Committee Stage – Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Bill – Autism NI

The witnesses joined the meeting at 12.14pm.

Arlene Cassidy, Chief Executive; Pamela McCrossan, Family Support Project Officer; Donna McWhirter, Family Support Manager; and Audrey Mullan, Project Coordinator, Autism NI briefed the Committee as part of the Committee Stage of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill.

12.19pm Sandra Overend re-joined the meeting. The Committee regained its decision making quorum.

A question and answer session followed the briefing.

Jonathan Craig declared an interest as the Vice Chairperson of the All Party Group on Autism.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Autism NI seeking its views in respect of the addition of constraints relating to the regulation-making powers in the SEND Bill.

The witnesses left the meeting at 12.59pm.

12. Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 24 June 2015, at 9.30am in Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.00pm.

Peter Weir
Chairperson, Committee for Education
24 June 2015