



Northern Ireland  
Assembly  
Committee for Education  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2016  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

**Present:**

Barry McElduff MLA (Chairperson)  
Chris Lyttle MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Rosemary Barton MLA  
David Hilditch MLA  
Carla Lockhart MLA  
Phillip Logan MLA  
Lord Morrow MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Catherine Seeley MLA

**In Attendance:**

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)  
Bronagh Irwin (Clerical Supervisor)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:**

Colin McGrath MLA  
Jennifer McCann MLA

*The meeting commenced in public session at 10:08am.*

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were as indicated above.

**2. Chairperson's Business**

The Committee noted a written Assembly answer regarding the practice among some schools of seeking cash donations from parents.

*Mrs Rosemary Barton left the meeting at 10:11am.*

*Ms Carla Lockhart joined the meeting at 10:14am.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarity on the procedures for schools seeking financial contributions from parents and schools' compliance with those procedures.

### 3. Draft Minutes

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 14 September 2016.

### 4. Matters Arising

*Mrs Rosemary Barton rejoined the meeting at 10:17am.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department for the Economy:

- seeking information on the number of 3<sup>rd</sup> level students from Northern Ireland studying in the Republic of Ireland and the number of students from that jurisdiction studying in Northern Ireland;
- indicating concerns in respect of the phasing of grants paid to students from Northern Ireland studying in the Republic of Ireland and the impact of changing exchange rates;
- seeking clarification regarding the relationship between the Education Authority and the Student Loans Company; and
- requesting enhanced access to advice and information by the Student Loans Company.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to invite Save the Children and Community Relations in Schools to its stakeholder event on the Programme for Government on 19 October 2016.

### 5. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme.

#### 5.1 Ministerial briefing post-primary transfer

The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister indicating that on 12 October 2016 – the scheduled briefing on pre-school Special School provision - he will also brief Members on post-primary transfer guidance.

## **5.2 October Monitoring Round**

The Committee noted that the Department has indicated that it was unable to confirm if it could provide an oral briefing on its October Monitoring Round bids on 28 September 2016.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that in the event of the briefing not taking place, it would write to the Department asking for a full explanation.

## **5.3 Special Educational Needs – Health / Education co-operation**

The Committee discussed Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision and co-operation between the Departments of Health and Education.

**Agreed:** The Committee that, in line with Standing Order 64A, the Chairperson would write to the Chairperson of the Committee for Health seeking their agreement for the scrutiny of issues relating to SEN co-operation, to be undertaken by the Committee for Education.

**Agreed:** The Committee further agreed that following its Departmental briefing on 12 October 2016, it would undertake a stakeholder event in order to inform a further formal Committee scrutiny session including simultaneously (if possible) officials from the Department of Education, Education Authority, Public Health Agency and the Health and Social Care Board.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking, for the briefing on 12 October 2016, further information as to the extent to which schools are successfully dealing with additional SEN demands including particularly behaviour-related conditions.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to hold a stakeholder event, in the New Year, for parents and principals of Special Schools in order to inform its understanding of the pre-school Special School review.

## **5.4 Other briefings / visits**

The Committee noted that the Department has informally advised that it cannot provide briefings on either the Investment Strategy or the multi-year capital programme.

The Committee noted that its visit to Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre was scheduled for Wednesday 26 October 2016.

The Committee noted that the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum will brief the Committee during anti-bullying week 14-18 November and that some Members would provide social media contributions on 2 November 2016.

The Committee noted that an oral briefing on Home to School Transport would take place on Wednesday 9 November 2016.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarification, at the briefing, on: differing practices in respect of the allocation of vacant seating on school buses and the impact of school designation on eligibility for free home to school transport.

The Committee noted that the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson would meet informally with the Education and Training Inspectorate chief inspector on Tuesday 15 November 2016, prior to the launch of her biennial report.

The Committee noted that Members of the Youth Parliament would provide a briefing on Wednesday 16 November 2016.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to visit the BT Young Scientist Exhibition in Dublin in January 2017.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to visit Stranmillis University College with a view to publicising (and enhancing Members' understanding of) issues relating to access to computer coding opportunities in schools

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to undertake an effective questioning training session.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with the forward work programme, as amended.

## **6. Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) - Introductory Briefing**

Witnesses joined the meeting at 10:40am.

Justin Edwards, Chief Executive, CCEA; Richard Hanna, Director of Education Strategy, CCEA; and Roger McCune, Head of Regulation, CCEA briefed the Committee.

*Mr David Hilditch joined the meeting at 11:00am*

*Ms Catherine Seeley made a declaration of interest that she was an examiner for CCEA.*

*Mrs Rosemary Barton left the meeting at 11:45am.*

Witnesses left the meeting at 11:53am.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to CCEA seeking:

- information on the progress of students attaining grades D to G at GCSE; and

- details of CCEA's new Ulster Scots resources.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarification in respect of the reported de-specification of Computer Based Assessment obligations on primary schools.

*Mrs Rosemary Barton rejoined the meeting at 11:54am.*

## **7. Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC)- Introductory Briefing**

Witnesses joined the meeting at 11:54am.

Dr Peter Hamill; Reverend Colin McClure; Reverend Dr Fred Munce; and Gavin Norris briefed the Committee.

*Mrs Rosemary Barton made a declaration of interest that she is a transferor governor of a school..*

Witnesses left the meeting at 12:31pm.

## **8. Controlled Schools' Support Council - Introductory Briefing**

Witnesses joined the meeting at 12:32pm.

Uel McCrea, Chairperson; Heather Murray, Director; Barry Mulholland, Chief Executive Officer; and David Canning, Director briefed the Committee.

*Mr Phillip Logan left the meeting at 12:47pm.*

*Mrs Rosemary Barton made a declaration of interest that she is a school governor.*

*Ms Catherine Seeley left the meeting at 1:13pm.*

Witnesses left the meeting at 1:24pm.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the Clerk should circulate a recent academic study on the impact of different school sectors on the promotion of societal mutual understanding.

## **9. Correspondence**

**9.1** The Committee noted an index of incoming correspondence.

**9.2** The Committee noted correspondence from an individual undertaking research into underachievement by boys.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to refer the correspondent to the School of Education at Queen's University, Belfast.

**9.3** The Committee noted correspondence to the Education Authority regarding a statement of Special Educational Needs.

**9.4** The Committee noted correspondence regarding serious unresolved allegations in respect of a teacher.

**9.5** The Committee noted an invitation from the Alzheimer's Society to the Dementia Resources for Schools launch at Bangor Grammar School on Wednesday 16 November 2016.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to decline the invitation, as it clashed with a Committee meeting.

**9.6** The Committee noted notice of the launch of the Education and Training Inspectorate Chief Inspector's Report, on Wednesday 16 November 2016.

**9.7** The Committee noted an invitation from Queen's University Belfast to a research seminar entitled "Leadership, trust, and school improvement: Lessons from England" on Friday 7th October 2016.

**9.8** The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding budget scrutiny.

**9.9** The Committee noted Delivering Social Change stakeholder updates for June, July and August 2016 from the Committee for the Executive Office.

**9.10** The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office on the Together: Building a United Community Summer Camps Programme.

**9.11** The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office on consultation feedback on the draft Programme for Government Framework

**9.12** The Committee noted correspondence from St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School regarding procurement issues relating to the purchase of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and including an invitation to hold the Committee's meeting at the school.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to decline the invitation.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarity on ICT procurement policy for schools.

**9.13** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding the 3<sup>rd</sup> call for projects for the Shared Education campuses programme.

## **10. Any Other Business**

The Committee discussed the launch of the NSPCC Keeping Safe Programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking information as how it was to support this programme.

**11. Date, Time, Place of next meeting**

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 28 September 2016, at 10.00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting was adjourned at 1:29pm.*

**Barry McElduff**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Education**  
**28 September 2016**