



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2016
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present:

Barry McElduff MLA (Chairperson)
Chris Lyttle MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Rosemary Barton MLA
Carla Lockhart MLA
Jennifer McCann MLA
Colin McGrath 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:

David Hilditch MLA
Phillip Logan MLA

The meeting commenced in public session at 10:06am.

1. Apologies

Apologies were as indicated above.

2. Chairperson's Business

2.1 Holocaust Educational Trust

The Chairperson advised the Committee of recent informal contacts with the chief executive of the Holocaust Educational Trust

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Deputy Chairperson to meet with the Holocaust Educational Trust, diary permitting.

2.2 Stakeholder Events and Visits

The Chairperson thanked Members for their participation in the Committee's stakeholder event on Wednesday 16 November 2016 supporting its scrutiny of the Programme for Government.

The Chairperson also thanked Members for their participation in informal meetings on Monday 21 and Tuesday 22 November with school principals and with Volunteer Now, respectively.

The Chairperson noted the warm welcomes provided by the principals, staff and pupils during recent Committee visits to Ashfield Boys High School and St Ita's Primary School.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the principals of both schools, thanking them for hosting the Committee visits.

2.3 Area Planning

The Committee discussed the plenary debate on Area Planning on Monday 21 November 2016

Mrs Sandra Overend joined the meeting at 10:12am.

Mr Colin McGrath joined the meeting at 10.13am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarification on the current definition of a rural school for Area Planning purposes.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek an oral briefing from the Education Authority and the Department on the responses to the Area Planning consultation and the Year One Action Plan and to then give further consideration to a suitable stakeholder event.

2.4 Jennifer McCann MLA

Ms Jennifer McCann joined the meeting at 10.16am.

The Committee noted that Jennifer McCann was resigning as an MLA.

The Chairperson conveyed the Committee's best wishes to her for her future endeavours.

3. Draft Minutes

The Committee deferred consideration of the minutes of its meeting held on 16 November 2016, to its next meeting.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Correspondence

5.1 The Committee noted an index of incoming correspondence.

5.2 The Committee noted correspondence from PTA-NI relating to the recent Committee Special Educational Needs stakeholder event.

5.3 The Committee noted an invitation to the Chairperson to attend the National Association of Schoolmaster and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) Annual Conference on 14-17 April 2017.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson to attend, diary permitting.

5.4 The Committee noted correspondence from the Children's Law Centre relating to the UNCRC Youth Engagement event on 27 October 2016.

5.5 The Committee noted correspondence from a concerned individual regarding reported reductions to the Music Service budget by the Education Authority.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Education Authority seeking confirmation on its budget plans for the Music Service and to forward related questions for response.

5.6 The Committee noted a response from the Department in respect of the Extended Schools programme and counselling arrangements for primary schools.

5.7 The Committee noted a response from the Department in respect of delayed Major Works and the provision of reusable mobile classrooms.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write again to the Department seeking clarity on the use of mobile classrooms when Major Works in schools are delayed.

5.8 The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office providing an update on the Investigating Links in Attainment and Deprivation (ILiAD) report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office seeking information on the final stage of the related research.

5.9 The Committee noted an invitation to the Chairperson from Volunteer Now to the Awards of Excellence Ceremony, Wednesday 7 December 2016, 6:30pm Crumlin Road Gaol.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson to attend, diary permitting.

5.10 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office seeking the Education Committee's views on its European priorities for the year ahead and a summary of its European Union scrutiny work in 2015-16.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk should prepare a draft submission for its consideration, at its next meeting.

5.11 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the Department of Finance Supply Division and explaining changes to the monitoring round process. The Committee also noted that it had recently written to the Department seeking quarterly financial updates.

5.12 The Committee noted a statistical bulletin on 2006-16 Children and Young People's Strategic Indicators (November 2016).

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek an oral briefing from Assembly Research on the relevant strategic indicators.

The order of agenda items was altered.

6. Ministerial oral briefing on Teachers' Salary Negotiations

The Minister and Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10:27am.

Peter Weir MLA, Minister for Education; La'Verne Montgomery, Director of Education Workforce Development; and Geraldine Quinn, Head of Teacher Negotiating Team provided oral evidence to the Committee.

Ms Catherine Seeley made a declaration of interest that she is a former teacher and that members of her family are teachers.

Mrs Rosemary Barton made a declaration of interest that she is a former teacher.

Ms Carla Lockhart made a declaration of interest that a family member is a teacher.

Ms Jennifer McCann left the meeting at 11:38am

The Minister and Departmental officials left the meeting at 11:38am

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking an updated breakdown of teachers' salaries and information on the number of teachers expected to receive increments, during the relevant salary period.

Ms Jennifer McCann rejoined the meeting at 11:45am.

7. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed to meet informally with the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council.

Mr Colin McGrath left the meeting at 11.48am

Agreed: The Committee agreed to take oral evidence from Unison on the Education Authority's proposed rationalisation of Outdoor Education Centres.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to undertake a short visit to one of the Outdoor Education Centres on Wednesday 30 November 2016, if possible.

Mr Colin McGrath rejoined the meeting at 11.51am

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Education Authority seeking a timeline for its review of the Youth Estate provision excluding the Outdoor Education Centres.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold an additional meeting on Wednesday 14 December 2016 and to seek to take evidence on nurture provision from Queen's University Belfast at that meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to arrange a Committee visit to Aghnacloy College in the new year.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Forward Work Programme, as amended.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the letter to stakeholders and suggested mailing list for the Committee's inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for Members to advise the Clerk of further additions to the inquiry mailing list

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content to undertake Facebook or other social media advertisements, in respect of the inquiry.

8. Department of Education – oral evidence session on the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) Chief Inspector's 2014-16 Report

Officials from the Education and Training Inspectorate, Department of Education (DE) joined the meeting at 11:59am.

Noelle Buick, Chief Inspector, Education and Training Inspectorate, DE; Raymond Caldwell, Assistant Chief Inspector, Education and Training Inspectorate, DE; and Heather Jackson, Managing Inspector, Education and Training Inspectorate, DE provided oral evidence to the Committee.

Mr Colin McGrath left the meeting at 12:46pm.

Mrs Sandra Overend left the meeting at 1:10pm.

Officials left the meeting at 1:10pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarity on reported changes to school inspection which are to be introduced from January 2017.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to put down a motion in plenary calling on the Assembly to take note of the ETI Chief Inspector's 2014-16 Report.

9. Any Other Business

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk should add Area Learning Communities to the mailing list for the inquiry into educational underachievement.

10. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 30 November 2016, at 10.00am in Down High School, Downpatrick.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:11pm.

Barry McElduff
Chairperson, Committee for Education
30 November 2016