



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 25 JANUARY 2017
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present:

Chris Lyttle MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Rosemary Barton MLA
Carla Lockhart MLA
Phillip Logan MLA
Colin McGrath MLA
Lord Morrow MLA
Sandra Overend MLA

In Attendance:

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

Apologies:

Barry McElduff MLA (Chairperson)
David Hilditch MLA
Catherine Seeley MLA

The meeting commenced in public session at 10:51am with the Deputy Chairperson acting as Chairperson.

1. Apologies

Apologies were as indicated above.

The order of agenda items was altered.

2. Minister for Education - oral evidence session

The Minister and Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10:51am.

Peter Weir MLA, Minister for Education; Gary Fair, Director of Finance, Department of Education; and Julie Thompson, Deputy Secretary, Department of Education provided oral evidence to the Committee.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Women's Resource and Development Agency on the Childcare Strategy.

The Committee noted embargoed correspondence from the Department in respect of the School Enhancement Programme.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Education Authority declining an invitation to give oral evidence.

Members expressed considerable disappointment that the Education Authority had declined to provide oral evidence on a wide range of important issues at the final meeting of the Education Committee.

Ms Carla Lockhart joined the meeting at 10:54am.

Mr Philip Logan joined the meeting at 10:55am.

The Minister and officials left the meeting at 12:01pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister thanking him for his attendances at the Committee during the present mandate.

3. Chairperson's Business

3.1 Tablet computers

The Chairperson reminded Members to arrange the return of their tablets and chargers before dissolution.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 18 January 2017.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Deputy Chairperson to approve the minutes from today's meeting.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6. Correspondence

6.1 The Committee noted an index of incoming correspondence.

6.2 The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding the Pupils' Voice report.

6.3 The Committee noted a response from the Department providing a revised list of participants in the Getting Ready to Learn Programme.

6.4 The Committee noted a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

6.5 The Committee noted an invitation to the Ulster Teachers' Union Annual Conference on 23 and 24 March 2017.

6.6 The Committee noted a copy of anonymous correspondence, forwarded by the Public Accounts Committee to the Department, on the administration and funding of Student Finance NI by the Education Authority.

6.7 The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding suggestions raised by stakeholders during the Committee's Education / Health Special Educational Needs co-operation event on 9 November 2016.

6.8 The Committee noted a response from the Education Authority regarding the planned review of the Education Welfare Service.

6.9 The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding the use of Computer-Based Assessment in schools.

6.10 The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding composite classes.

Ms Carla Lockhart left the meeting at 12:10pm.

6.11 The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding the key findings of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (2015) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (2015).

6.12 The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding public appointments.

6.13 The Committee noted a response from the Speaker in respect of the establishment of a Youth Assembly.

The Deputy Chairperson recorded his support for the establishment of a Youth Assembly.

7. Any Other Business

Members recorded their thanks to the Deputy Chairperson for chairing the Committee over recent weeks.

The Chairperson recorded his thanks to Committee Members, staff and members of the public for their contributions to the work of the Committee.

8. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The Chairperson advised Members that this was the final meeting of the Committee for Education in the current mandate.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:14pm.

Chris Lyttle
Deputy Chairperson, Committee for Education
25 January 2017