



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 1 JUNE 2016
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present:

Barry McElduff MLA (Chairperson)
Chris Lyttle MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Rosemary Barton MLA
David Hilditch MLA
Carla Lockhart MLA
Philip Logan MLA
Colin McGrath MLA
Lord Morrow MLA
Sandra Overend MLA
Caitriona Ruane MLA
Catherine Seeley MLA

In Attendance:

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

Apologies:

None

The meeting commenced in closed session at 10:02am.

1. Committee Practices

Members discussed and informally agreed various Committee practices.

The Committee moved into public session at 10:28am.

2. Apologies

There were no apologies.

3. Committee Composition

The Chairperson formally welcomed the Deputy Chairperson and Members to the first meeting of the new Committee for Education.

Ms Caitríona Ruane joined the meeting at 10:30am.

4. Declaration of Interests

The Chairperson asked Members if they had any interests to declare.

Members declared the following interests:

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| Rosemary Barton – | Member of the Board of Governors of Lack Primary School;
Member of the Board of Governors of Belleek Primary School;
Member of the Northern Ireland Teachers’ Pension Scheme |
| Carla Lockhart – | Member of the Board of Governors of Maralin School;
Member of the Board of Governors of Lurgan Junior High School |
| Colin McGrath – | Member of the Board of Governors of St Mary’s High School;
Working notice as youth worker, Patrician Youth Centre;
Member of the Northern Ireland Local Government Superannuation Committee pension scheme |
| Chris Lyttle - | Member of Eastside Learning Partnership |
| Philip Logan - | Wife is a teacher at Longstone Primary School |

5. Committee Papers and Procedures

The following question was put and agreed by the Committee:

Agreed: That the Committee for Education agrees to access and publish as appropriate all unpublished papers obtained by the predecessor Committee.

The Committee noted the following guidance documents:

- Powers and operation of Statutory Committees for Chairpersons and Members;
- Powers and operation of Standing and Adhoc Committees;
- Role of the Chairperson;

- Role and function of the Education Committee office; and
- Committee interactions with the Department.

6. Treatment of Subordinate Legislation: Delegation of technical scrutiny to the Examiner of Statutory Rules

The Committee noted guidance on the consideration of Statutory Rules.

The following question was put and agreed by the Committee:

Agreed: That the Committee for Education, under Standing Order 43, resolves to delegate to the Examiner of Statutory Rules the technical scrutiny of statutory rules referred to the Committee under the above mentioned Standing Order. The Committee further resolves that in carrying out this function the Examiner shall be authorised to report her technical findings on each statutory rule to the Assembly, and to the relevant Department, as well as to the Committee itself and to publish her report.

The Committee noted the Education (1998 Order) (Commencement No.8) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016.

The Committee noted the Education (1998 Order) (Commencement No. 9) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016.

The following question was put and agreed by the Committee:

Agreed: That the Committee for Education has considered the Statutory Rule SR 2016/111 The Complaints Tribunal (Curriculum and Related Matters) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and has no objection to the rule.

7. 2011-2016 Legacy Report

The Committee noted the Legacy Report of the predecessor Education Committee.

The order of agenda items was altered.

8. Correspondence

8.1 The Committee considered an index of incoming correspondence.

8.2 The Committee noted correspondence from the Education Authority on travelling times and costs associated with children attending pre-school provision in Special Schools

The order of agenda items was altered.

9. Department of Education First Day briefing

The Minister and Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10:58am.

Peter Weir MLA, Minister of Education; Paul Sweeney, Permanent Secretary; Katrina Godfrey, Deputy Secretary; and Fiona Hepper, Deputy Secretary briefed the Committee.

A question and answer session followed the briefing.

The Minister and Departmental officials left the meeting at 12:19pm

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking information on its capital programme; the Schools Enhancement Programme and the Early Years Pathway Fund.

The Committee returned to its consideration of correspondence.

8. Correspondence (contd)

8.3 The Committee noted correspondence from the Education Authority on the numbers of parents, broken down by postcode, who do not engage with the pre-school allocation process to its conclusion.

8.4 The Committee noted correspondence from an individual referring to differences in recruitment practices for principals in the different school sectors.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Education Authority and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools regarding the issues raised.

8.5 The Committee noted an invitation from TorBank school to a Positive Partnerships for Integration Event on 7 June 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson to attend the event, diaries permitting.

8.6 The Committee noted correspondence from the Education Authority providing information on its new management structure.

8.7 The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Teaching Council regarding the withdrawal of AQE and Edexcel from the GCSE market in Northern Ireland.

8.8 The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum on Anti-Bullying week 2016.

8.9 The Committee noted correspondence from Royal Bank of Scotland providing information on the RBS Skills and Opportunities Fund.

8.10 The Committee noted correspondence from the Transferors' Representative Council seeking a meeting with the Chairperson.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson to meet with the Transferors' Representative Council, diary permitting.

8.11 The Committee noted correspondence from the Centre for Global Education seeking a meeting with the Chairperson.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson to meet with the Centre for Global Education, diary permitting.

8.12 The Committee noted correspondence from the Brain Tumour Charity seeking a meeting with the Chairperson.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson to meet with the Brain Tumour Charity, diary permitting.

8.13 The Committee noted correspondence from an individual referring to concerns relating to the oversight of voluntary grammar schools.

10. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its draft forward work programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Parents for Equal Education Coalition; the Strategic Leadership Forum for Special Schools and the Early Years Organisation to provide a briefing at its next meeting on 8 June 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education to provide a briefing at its meeting on 29 June 2016

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

11. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

12. Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 8 June 2016, at 10.00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:31 pm.

Barry McElduff
Chairperson, Committee for Education
8 June 2016