

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF A BOARD MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY,
16 SEPTEMBER 2004 AT 2.30 PM IN THE BOARD ROOM**

1. PRESENT

Mrs M Alexander (Chairman)

Mr P H Aiken	Councillor P P McAleer
Councillor P Brannigan	Mrs D A McBride
Mrs S R Brownlee	Mrs C M McCaul
Rev J Byrne	Rev C D McClure
Mr M P Campbell	Councillor W J McIlwrath
Alderman F E Crowe	Very Rev L M McVeigh
Mrs M E Donnell	Very Rev S Rice
Alderman G A Hatch	Mr J W Saunders
Councillor W J Martin	Mr A G Sleator
Mr W Mayne	Rev Canon F D Swann
Mr P C McAleavey	

2. IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs H M McClenaghan, Messrs W Burke, T M Heron, J F Curran, B O'Hara and Mrs L Davidson.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor J Feehan, Mrs S M B Fitzpatrick, Councillor I E B Hanna, Mr C Mackin, Councillor P McGinn, Councillor S McRoberts, Councillor B Monteith and Rev Canon W R Twaddell.

4. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

On the proposal of Alderman Hatch, seconded by Mr Campbell, the report** (B/9/04/2) prepared by the Human Resources Manager was adopted.

5. MINUTES

On the proposal of Very Rev Fr Rice, seconded by Mr Saunders, the minutes* (B/9/04/3) of the meeting held on 29 July 2004 were approved as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

**6.1 LMS : COMMON FUNDING FORMULA – LETTER FROM DE OF
11 AUGUST 2004 (6.1)**

Mrs McClenaghan reported that a letter had been received from the Department confirming that the Common Funding Formula would be issued for consultation

with a view to implementing the new arrangements with effect from 1 April 2005.

6.2 REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING HANDBOOK : DE LETTER 5 JULY (6.3)

Mrs McClenaghan reported that a letter had been received from the Department confirming that opportunity would be given to Board members to consider the Draft School Building Handbooks.

6.3 STRATEGIC ADVISORY GROUP : REPRESENTATION OF ALL FIVE BOARDS – DE LETTER OF 9 JULY (6.4)

Mrs McClenaghan reported that schools and Governors were increasingly uneasy about the absence of information relating to the proposals for the restructuring of post-primary education. She said that she had spoken to Principals and Governors on an individual basis and that there had been three sessions of the Advisory Group held to date where specialist schools and the entitlement framework had been considered. Admission arrangements and criteria and local and regional bodies would be discussed at meetings from 19 October 2004 onwards. She advised that Department officials had been asked to urge the Minister to write to all schools, Boards and other Education partners setting out the issues on which he had sought views. She understood that it would be December before the Minister made any decision.

In reply to a question from Alderman Hatch, Mrs McClenaghan said that the remit of the Group was to consider proposals from the Department and to comment not on a constituency basis but to attempt to represent what the wider educational response might be.

Mr Sleator said that there was quite a bit of concern particularly in the Craigavon area about what were going to be the issues and their resolution and the fact that no-one would tell the schools what the outcome would be.

Mrs McClenaghan said that she had received a minute from a Craigavon post-primary school raising concerns based about the two-tier system and she had met the Principal and the Chairman to allay their fears.

(During the discussion of this item Rev C D McClure entered the meeting at 2.40 pm.)

6.4 RECEIPT OF LETTER FROM NIPSA (NORTHERN IRELAND PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE) (6.5)

Mrs McClenaghan reported that the threat of industrial action had been withdrawn and the issues were still being dealt with in correspondence.

(Mr P H Aiken entered the meeting at 2.42 pm and Rev C D McClure left the meeting at 2.43 pm.)

6.5 THIRTY YEARS SERVICE AWARDS (7.2)

Mrs McClenaghan reminded members of the celebratory event on Monday 4 October 2004 at Board Headquarters for employees with thirty years service.

6.6 SCHOOL BUDGETS : LETTER FROM THE MINISTER, MR B GARDINER MP (8)

Members were referred to the paper** (B/9/04/4.3) which highlighted two issues emanating from the Minister's letter including requiring schools in an overspend or underspend situation of more than 20% of their budget at 31 March 2004 to submit revised plans to reduce the figure to 5% by 31 March 2008.

(Rev C D McClure re-entered the meeting at 2.45 pm.)

Mrs McClenaghan reported that to date only two schools in the overspend category had submitted plans to meet the Minister's requirement. Discussions were continuing with the other controlled schools and she paid tribute to the understanding of the issues shown by Boards of Governors.

Members spoke of the impact on a community where declining enrolments and financial pressures undermined the viability of the local school and repeated their commitment to a network of strong rural and village schools.

Mr Heron described the process whereby the Secretary of State would publish draft budgetary proposals for all Northern Ireland departments on 4 October 2004 to initiate widespread consultation which would include three public meetings. He pointed out that the percentage increase the Board received did not always closely reflect the increase in the Education block amount which for 2004/2005 had been 8.1% whereas the Board received an increase of 1.45%.

The revised Assessment of Relative Needs Exercise determines the budget for school centre costs, transport and many other services. Instead of the full application of ARNE the Board received only 35% additional funding this year so it was important the Department was convinced that ARNE should apply in full in 2005/2006 which would yield an additional £2m.

Alderman Hatch inquired about how support could be galvanised. Mr Heron advocated a case should be put to the Department.

Members were also concerned about the timescale for informing schools of their budget allocations. Mr Heron understood the Board and schools would receive their allocations in February which would provide limited time for Boards of Governors to initiate redundancy procedures if teacher numbers had to be reduced. Governors had been advised to review their financial situations urgently and arrange for redundancy notices to be issued where it appeared necessary.

Members then discussed the Common Funding Formula under which the minister would determine school allocations.

6.7 PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION : CONSULTATION (9)

Mrs McClenaghan reported that the Department had refused a request for an extension to the consultation period beyond 15 October 2004.

6.8 PROPOSED NEW STAFF STRUCTURE (16.1)

Mr Aiken enquired as to the current position and was advised that the structure was being put in place.

6.9 ANNUAL REPORT 2003-04

Mr Aiken referred to the decrease in book issues and to media coverage stating that two Boards had stopped buying books this year.

Mrs McClenaghan said that papers on the budgetary position would be brought to the Library Committee for its consideration.

6.10 PORTADOWN (16.2)

Alderman Hatch asked if a display celebrating Alexander Walker's achievements could be mounted in the Board's libraries. Mrs McClenaghan said thought had been given to this but there were practical problems. It was decided not to pursue the matter.

7. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

7.1 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 188

Mrs McClenaghan reported that a letter had been received from the Department dated 10 September 2004 which confirmed that Armagh Integrated College had achieved grant-maintained controlled status with effect from 1 September 2004, having met the requirement of an enrolment of 50 pupils. The Board would now be responsible for transport and other services to the College.

7.2 DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR BOARD MEMBERS

Mrs McClenaghan drew attention to the following documents which were available for Board members: "The Response to the Consultation of the Draft Order, The Special Educational Needs and Disability Northern Ireland Order", "Suspension and Expulsion Procedures", "Common Funding Formula", the Board's submission on "Steps to Excellence" and the General Consumer Council Calendar for 2004/05.

8. RESIGNATION FROM THE BOARD : MRS E GILL

The Chairman advised that a letter of thanks would be sent to Mrs E Gill for her contribution as a member of the Board. Mrs McClenaghan explained that Mrs Gill served on both the Education and Special Business Committees and it was proposed by

Mr Aiken, seconded by Rev Canon Swann, that no action be taken to fill her seat on these Committees until a successor had been appointed.

9. LOCAL STRATEGY PARTNERSHIP BOARDS : BOARD OFFICERS ACTING AS DIRECTORS

Mrs McClenaghan drew members' attention to the letter* (B/9/04/7) from the Department dated 18 August 2004 which was for noting.

10. LOCAL MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS : CONSULTATION ON COMMON FORMULA

Mr Heron referred to the News Release* (B/9/04/8) and to the paper** (B/9/04/8) and outlined the contents of the paper. Mr Heron said that four consultation sessions for all schools had been arranged and invited Board members to attend. He explained that the purpose of this was for the schools to obtain sufficient information to form their own opinions and to complete consultation forms in order for the Board to forward them to the Department. In reply to a question from Mr Sleator, Mr Heron said that there were a number of causes behind the movement of resources between schools eg previously the Chancellor's money was distributed in a specified manner, now it was part of the formula; premises money was previously distributed on weighted pupil numbers, now it is proposed to use un-weighted numbers; schools with low percentages of free school meals will lose resources to those with high percentages.

Mr McAleavey said that within this Board primary schools would gain £730,000 and post-primary schools would lose £300,000. He welcomed the additional money for primary schools. Mr McAleavey further said that he hoped that this Board would not take more money from post-primary schools. The Chairman said that some of the movements were huge but the gain to primary schools should not have been to the loss of post-primary schools and that there was not enough money in the system to run every type of school.

In reply to a question from Alderman Hatch, Mr Heron said that the overall amount being distributed under TSN was increasing from 5% to 5¹/₂%; in addition the distribution of TSN funding between schools was changing with more being skewed towards those schools with higher than average numbers of free school meals.

11. EDUCATION ACTION ZONES : LETTER OF 12 AUGUST 2004 FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Mr Burke referred to the letter* (B/9/04/9) from the Department and explained that the objective of Education Action Zones was to improve children's educational attainment and life chances through community capacity-building using schools as a community resource. He explained that the Board had been invited to bid for one or more projects up to a maximum of £200,000 per project per annum over a three year period and Stage 1 bids had to be submitted to the Department by 30 September 2004. He said that the officers would look at developing two bids. The bids would address under achievement issues.

In reply to a question from Mr Aiken, Mr Burke said that the funding would not allow the Board to propose Education Action Zones covering all the Board's area and explained that the bids would not be based on geographical areas but rather on themes. The Department expected the Board to work in partnership with Councils and Health Boards.

In reply to a further question from Mr Aiken, Mr Burke said that a number of themes would be looked at initially: under achievement, ethnic minority groups, children who have special needs and young people excluded from school.

In reply to a question from Mrs McCaul, Mr Burke confirmed that he understood that the Western Board was putting forward a project from a rural area and the Board would not want to compete against another Board on a similar project but wanted to get at least one funded project.

On the proposal of Councillor McAleer, seconded by Alderman Crowe it was agreed to accept Mr Burke's proposals.

12. 2004 PAY AWARD : LETTER DATED 10 SEPTEMBER 2004 TO ALL STAFF

Mr Curran referred to the letter* (B/9/04/10) and explained that normally staff would have received a 2.75% pay increase but until a Business Case was provided to the Department this would not be the case. He said that detailed discussions had taken place with the Department and with the Department of Finance and Personnel and that the Board was legally obliged to honour the pay commitment which had been accepted by Trade Unions including the Unions with which the Board negotiates. The letter was noted.

(Very Rev S Rice left the meeting at 4.00 pm.)

13. EDUCATION COMMITTEE : MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 7 SEPTEMBER 2004

13.1 INSET BUDGET 2004-2005 (12)

Mr McAleavey referred to the third paragraph of this minute. He said that the allocation represented significant losses for post-primary schools. Mr McAleavey said that more money should be made available for these schools and asked that the Secondary and Primary Teachers' Consultative Committees should be invited to offer views on the allocating of money to schools on the basis of school sizes. Mr McAleavey expressed concern at the fact that schools were told in the middle of the financial year that their budgets were cut by 50% and asked that this issue be revisited and concerns addressed. He also said that unfortunately it was not the only area in which the budgets were affected.

Mr Burke said that it was difficult to try to get a formula that was equitable but it was an attempt to give schools an equitable share. He said the allocation represented a transfer of £80,000 from post-primary schools to primary schools. He was prepared to look at individual post-primary school cases.

(During the discussion of this item Councillor W J Martin left the meeting at 4.01 pm.)

**13.2 REVIEW OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND:
PREPARATION OF RESPONSE (10)**

Mr Sleator asked if a draft Board response would be available to members before the October meeting as it was very difficult to read something quickly at a meeting or a few days before a meeting. He felt that it was a significant issue which caused a great deal of concern in the nursery sector. Mr Burke advised that it was hoped that the draft response would be issued with the agenda for the October meeting of the Board.

On the proposal of Mrs McBride, seconded by Mr McLeavey, the minutes* (E/9/04/11) of the meeting held on 7 September 2004 were adopted on the understanding that the reservations expressed by Mr McLeavey were noted.

**14. SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE : MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON
29 JULY 2004**

14.1 HEALTH CARE ASSISTANCE

Mrs McCaul drew attention to this minute.

On the proposal of Mrs McCaul, seconded by Mrs McBride, the minutes* (SE/7/04/12) of the meeting held on 29 July 2004 were adopted.

**15. SUB-COMMITTEE FOR EXPLUSIONS FROM CONROLLED SCHOOLS :
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 20 AUGUST 2004**

Mrs McBride drew attention to the second paragraph on page 104 and Alderman Hatch confirmed that the minute should read "There was also a complaint when pupil EXCS42 was attending a local Further Education College as part of a link course". The minutes* (B/9/04/13) of the meeting held on 20 August 2004 were noted.

**16. TEACHERS' STAFFING COMMITTEE : MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON
23 JUNE 2004**

The minutes* (TSC/6/04/14) of the meeting held on 23 June 2004 were noted.

17. ASSOCIATION OF NI EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARDS : EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

17.1 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2004

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2004 – UPDATE BY EDDIE FERGUSON (2822)

Mrs McClenaghan drew attention to this minute, particularly the part of the minute recorded on page 114. She updated members on the current position. Mrs McBride congratulated Mrs McClenaghan on the work she had carried out. The minutes* (B/9/04/15.2) of the meeting held on 1 September 2004 were noted.

18. PREMATURE RETIREMENTS

The Board agreed on the proposal of Mr Aiken, seconded by Rev Canon Swann, to discuss this item in committee.

18.1 PREMATURE RETIREMENT ON THE GROUNDS OF EFFICIENT DISCHARGE OF THE EMPLOYER'S FUNCTION

When the meeting resumed Mrs McClenaghan reported that the Board had agreed that Mr D Flannigan, Transport Officer, should be granted premature retirement on the grounds of efficient discharge of the employer's function. Her report was adopted on the proposal of Alderman Crowe, seconded by Mrs McBride.

In reply to a question from Mr McAleavey, Mrs McClenaghan said that the duties attached to the post would have to be considered before a successor was appointed. Mr McAleavey referred to the difficulties associated with this post and wished Mr Flannigan well.

18.2 PREMATURE RETIREMENTS ON THE GROUNDS OF VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY

Mrs McClenaghan reported that the Board had agreed to offer voluntary redundancy to Mrs R Moffett, Catering Assistant, Windsor Hill Primary School. Her report was adopted on the proposal of Mr Campbell, seconded by Mrs Donnell.

Mrs McClenaghan reported that the Board had agreed to offer voluntary redundancy to Mrs M B Fegan, Domestic/Catering Assistant, Rathore School. Her report was adopted on the proposal of Rev Canon Swann, seconded by Rev Fr Byrne.

(Alderman F E Crowe and Alderman G A Hatch left the meeting at 4.28 pm.)

Mrs McClenaghan reported that the Board had agreed to offer voluntary redundancy to Miss M A Magee, Catering Assistant, Rathore School. Her report was adopted on the proposal of Councillor McAleer, seconded by Mrs Brownlee.

The meeting ended at 4.30 pm.

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DATE

* Paper circulated

** Paper tabled

/LD
13 October 2004