

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2009 AT 2.30 PM IN THE BOARD ROOM

1. PRESENT Mrs M E Donnell (Chairperson)

Mr P H Aiken	Mr W Mayne
Councillor Brannigan	Councillor P P McAleer
Mrs S R Brownlee	Very Rev L M McVeigh
Rev J Byrne	Councillor R Mulligan
Mr M P Campbell	Councillor M Murphy
Councillor C Casey	Professor P Murphy
Mr P Gildea	Councillor S Rogers
Councillor J Hanna	Mr A G Sleator
Mr C Mackin	Mr J K Twyble

2. IN ATTENDANCE

Mr A P Murphy, Ms L Ayling, Mr R Bullick, Mr G Butler, Mr J Curran, Mr P Keating, Mr P Mackey, Dr C Mangan and Mrs L McCall.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor J Cavanagh, Councillor I E B Hanna, Councillor R A Harkness, Dr M Hollinger, Mrs C M McCaul, Rev Canon J McKeaney, Councillor S McRoberts, Councillor Dr P A Weir and Mrs E Wright.

4. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

Mr Murphy drew attention to funding arrangements for posts contained within the report. It was agreed that the report** (B/11/09/2) prepared by the Head of Human Resources be adopted.

5. BOARD MEETING : MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2009

Mr Aiken referred to discussion which had taken place within the Joint Education Committee minutes on the date for schools to submit their implementation plans to DE if they wished to access funding under the collaboration element. He had expressed concern that some Boards of Governors might not have had the opportunity to review their plans by DE's deadline of 30 October 2009. He understood that the Board had agreed to raise with DE that some flexibility on the deadline should be given to schools, particularly in the Craigavon area, on account of area planning issues.

It was agreed that the Chief Executive would write to DE to request flexibility in relation to this deadline on account of area planning reasons. On the proposal of Councillor Murphy, seconded by Mr Twyble, the minutes* (B/10/09/3) of the meeting held on 14 October 2009, subject to the above amendment, were approved as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairperson and the Chief Executive.

6. MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

JOINT EDUCATION COMMITTEE : MINUTES (10)

Mr Butler undertook to forward information on the Craigavon Area Learning Community in due course.

7. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

7.1 CONGRATULATIONS

The Chairperson congratulated Mr Mackin on his appointment as principal teacher of St Patrick's Primary School, Newry, subject to CCMS ratification. She also congratulated Mr Gildea on his appointment as principal teacher of Mount St Catherine's Primary School, Armagh.

7.2 TRANSITION BOARD : UPDATE

Mr Murphy advised that the last meeting of the Transition Board had taken place on 9 November 2009. He outlined discussion which had taken place on the legislation, voluntary severance arrangements, vacancy control issues, the staff transfer scheme, consultation meetings with staff, a staff survey, the work being undertaken to align systems and procedures and the appointment process for the Director of Strategic Planning, ESA.

Councillor Hanna expressed concern that senior staff, ie those most at risk, had still not been made aware of their individual circumstances post 31 December 2009.

It was proposed by Mr Aiken, seconded by Councillor Murphy, and agreed that the Chairperson should write to staff to express the Board's gratitude and appreciation for their services to the Board.

(Councillor Mulligan entered the meeting at 2.48 pm and Councillor Hanna entered at 2.50 pm.)

Mr Mayne enquired if the job evaluation arrears to Classroom Assistants would be finalised prior to the establishment of ESA. Mr Keating outlined the job evaluation process and highlighted the complexity of the work when dealing with approximately 2,000 employees whose career histories had to be examined individually as they moved between various Classroom Assistant posts. He advised that the detail of the job evaluation process had been communicated to NIPSA to enable its officers to have a better understanding of the complexities involved and the timescale. Mr Keating pointed out that all responsibilities and liabilities for undertaking this work would transfer to ESA.

8. JOINT YOUTH COMMITTEE : MINUTES

Mr Aiken drew attention to the letter received from DE in relation to the Community Relations Scheme. The letter had stated that DE was giving consideration to the transitional arrangements that could be put in place to avoid creating a vacuum in the transfer from the existing policy to a new policy. It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on 24 November 2009.

It was proposed by Mr Aiken, seconded by Mr Twyble, and agreed that the minutes* (Y/11/09/6) of the meeting held on 3 November 2009 be adopted.

9. JOINT EDUCATION COMMITTEE : MINUTES

Mr Campbell referred to the minutes of the SELB PEAG meeting held on 1 October 2009 and the Extended Schools' Project Management Board held on 25 August 2009. He advised that the next meeting of the Joint Education Committee, on 26 November 2009, would take place at 10.00 am in WELB and that the Joint Children & Young People's Committee would take place at approximately 1.00 pm on that day. He drew attention to the visit to the AMMA Centre, following the meeting on 22 October 2009, and to the presentation given on the role of the Centre which catered for pupils interested in creative arts and media studies. Councillor Hanna, in praising the facility, queried its promotion across schools and its future role within ESA. Mr Mackey confirmed that the Centre was well promoted in schools and was operating to full capacity. Mr Murphy stated that he understood, from discussions at Transition Board meetings, that current facilities such as the AMMA Centre would continue. It was agreed to record the Board's concern in relation to the future funding of the AMMA Centre, ie that it should remain at its current level under ESA.

Mr Campbell drew attention to the recommendation to allocate £146k to schools which had met the criteria of the Curriculum Reserve Support Fund and to transfer the remaining £139k to the Centre Schools' budget. It was proposed by Mr Campbell, seconded by Councillor Murphy, and agreed to adopt this recommendation.

Mr Campbell referred to the response to The School Admissions (Exceptional Circumstances) Regulations 2010 which had been forwarded to DE by the due date of 23 October 2009. The Committee had submitted the response subject to its ratification by the Board. It was proposed by Mr Campbell, seconded by Councillor Mulligan, and agreed to approve the response.

Mr Aiken referred to the assistance given by Board officers to a group of schools, which were not included in the Extended Schools' Programme, to submit a bid to DE for funding. He enquired if such assistance could be offered to other schools. Mr Campbell advised that these schools had come together and had asked the assistance of the Project Board Officers. He stated that this was the first occasion for schools to work together in a cluster to seek funding from another source.

It was proposed by Mr Campbell, seconded by Very Rev Fr McVeigh, and agreed that the minutes* (E/11/09/7) of the meeting held on 22 October 2009 be adopted.

(Councillor McAleer left the meeting at 3.40 pm.)

10. JOINT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE : MINUTES

Councillor Casey referred to the response to Every School A Good School – The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion which had been considered by the Committee. It was noted that difficulties had been encountered in preparing a response on account of the lack of detail in the consultation document.

Councillor Casey outlined discussion which had taken place in relation to Special Schools' care needs support and, in particular, to the staffing resources at Foyle View

School. The Board noted that any decision on the nursing provision at Foyle View School would be delayed to enable the matter to be fully considered by the principal, the Health Trust and WELB.

It was proposed by Mrs McCaul, seconded by Councillor Casey, and agreed that the minutes* (CYPS/11/08/10) of the meeting held on 27 November 2008 be adopted.

11. FINANCE COMMITTEE

11.1 MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON 23 OCTOBER 2009

(Councillor Brannigan declared a non-pecuniary interest in St Brigid's Boys' High School, Armagh.)

Mr Sleator drew attention to the financial and curricular concerns raised by each of the three schools, the clarification sought by the Committee on various issues and the subsequent recommendations being presented for adoption by the Board. He wished an amendment to be incorporated into the minute relating to St Brigid's High School, as set out below. This was agreed.

“Mr Campbell stated that it would be prudent for the two schools & CCMS to be in communication with SELB and ESAIT on the proposed federation.”

Mr Aiken referred to the financial concerns of the principal of Cookstown High School and in particular to the increase in staffing levels within the current year. He advised that the increase in staffing levels related to the cost-effectiveness of the school employing a teacher rather than facilitating the particular subject through the South West Regional College. A second member of staff had also been employed during the year for RE.

Subject to the above being incorporated into the minutes, it was proposed by Mr Sleator, seconded by Mr Campbell, and agreed that the minutes* (F/11/09/9.1) of the meeting held on 23 October 2009 be adopted.

11.2 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 30 OCTOBER 2009

Mr Sleator referred to the report given on the breach of Standing Orders in a post-primary school which had also been reported to the Audit Committee. He outlined the update provided on ESAIT transitional issues particularly the impact of the change in arrangements for schools from cash to accruals accounting. Attention was drawn to the DE letter dated 14 October 2009 that Boards should not enter into any further discretionary commitments in the current financial year in order to assist in addressing the balance of the swine flu pressure within DHSSPS. Mr Sleator pointed out the action taken by Ms Ayling to withdraw the bid for additional Maintenance monies and the recommendation that the Board would reaffirm its position that schools' delegated EYF funds would remain accessible and be preserved for SELB schools in future years.

Mr Sleator drew attention to the commentary on the recurrent position at 30 September 2009. A request had been made for schools' delegated EYF for £3m. He highlighted areas of pressure and areas where savings had been identified which had been reallocated to Maintenance to allow a final budget of £4,962k.

Councillor Hanna referred to recent publicity stating that the Board had spent £6m on taxis and queried the breakdown of this figure. Mr Butler advised that this figure accounted for taxi costs for the previous three years and that the majority of this amount related to transporting children with special educational needs. Due to the rural nature of much of SELB, and the location of special needs provisions throughout the area, SELB incurred higher taxi costs than other Boards. He stated that the special needs provision for a child or young person was dictated by a medical professional and all costs were properly and statutorily incurred.

Mr Mackin paid tribute to Ms Ayling and LMS officers for their support to schools and for recent assistance in the change from cash to accruals accounting. As a principal teacher, he highlighted the importance of the LMS Section to schools and hoped that this assistance would remain within ESA. Ms Ayling reported that the first meeting with the ESAIT Finance Director had taken place with the five Boards and LMS issues had been raised. Mr Sleator stated that the Finance Committee acknowledged the high level of support provided by LMS officers to schools and stressed that this support should not be diminished after 31 December 2009.

Mr Aiken stated that his apology had not been recorded in the minutes. Subject to this amendment, it was proposed by Mr Sleator, seconded by Mr Twyble, and agreed that the minutes* (F/11/09/9.1) of the meeting held on 30 October 2009 be adopted.

12. AUDIT COMMITTEE : MINUTES

Professor Murphy drew attention to the two new risks in the Corporate Risk Register, namely the impact of Swine Flu on school and Board services and ESAIT financial systems. He pointed out that ESAIT had advised that Boards would not have to produce a 9 month set of accounts and that a 12 month set of accounts would be produced by ESA. He also advised that the live ledger, to be operational in January 2010, would only provide for a high level of budgetary reporting on a monthly basis.

Attention was also drawn to the Internal Audit Progress Report and the Annual Report and Accounts 2008/09 – Draft Governance Letter. Professor Murphy highlighted that the Comptroller and Auditor General had provided an unqualified opinion on the Board's Annual Accounts on 2 October 2009. He referred to the comments made by Mr Glavin at the meeting that the low level of issues arising reflected well on the Board's procedures and staff. He commended Ms Ayling and her team on preparing the Accounts to such a standard.

It was proposed by Professor Murphy, seconded by Mr Twyble, and agreed that the minutes* (A/12/08/11.1) of the meeting held on 2 November 2009 be adopted.

Mr Aiken enquired if any mechanism existed to allow principal teachers to be able to identify if a substitute teacher had been deemed as unsatisfactory in their teaching duties on a previous occasion. He queried if this risk could be examined. This was agreed.

13. TEACHING APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE : MINUTES

The minutes* (TAC/10/09/11) of the meeting held on 23 October 2009 were noted.

14. MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE : MINUTES

The minutes* (M/10/09/12) of the meeting held on 14 October 2009 were noted.

The meeting ended at 4.20 pm.

CHAIRPERSON

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DATE

* Paper circulated
12 November 2009

** Paper tabled
LMcC