

## **Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment**

Minutes of the forty-eighth meeting of the Council, held at 1000 hours on Wednesday 17 September 2003 in Room 111, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, CCEA, 29 Clarendon Road, Belfast.

<b>Present :</b>	Dr A Lennon (Chairman)	Mr B Carlin
	Mr J Collins	Mr J Ellison
	Dr A Murray	Ms P O'Farrell
	Miss J Bell	Mr J Clarke
	Mr J Lee	Mrs H McClenaghan
	Professor P Roebuck	Mr B Turtle
	Mr D Thompson	Mrs D Black
	Ms M Watson	
	Mr D Woods	Assessor, Department of Education
	Mr G Boyd	Chief Executive
	Dr A Walker	Head of Education Services
	Mr G Crossan	Head of Corporate Services
	Miss N Kennedy	Manager, Chief Executive's Office

### **1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mrs B O'Neill and Dr W Mulryne.

### **2 Chairman's Business**

The Chairman welcomed members to the first meeting of the Autumn term, in particular David Woods who has taken over from Christine Jendoubi as assessor from the Department of Education.

He informed members that they would have the opportunity to view the Key Stage 3 video and web-based consultation questionnaire during the meeting.

He reminded members to inform Miss Kennedy if they wished to be involved in the Vocational Qualifications Steering Group.

The Chairman said that Mr Walter Corbett, Examinations Manager would be retiring from CCEA in November 2003 and that Mr Gerry Crossan would be leaving at the end of September 2003 to take up post as Chief Executive of the Legal Services Commission. On behalf of the Council, the Chairman congratulated Mr Crossan and thanked him for his significant contribution to driving forward strategy and organisational changes which have contributed to making CCEA a quality organisation. Mr Crossan thanked members for their good wishes and wished the organisation well for the future.

He also informed members that Dr Walker would be retiring in 2004 and that succession planning, overseen by the Remuneration Committee had begun.

The Chairman informed members that he had recently been appointed of the Northern Ireland Business Education Partnership (NIBEP).

He updated members on all issues arising from the last meeting, in particular:

- the preparation of materials for the final consultation on key stage 3;
- awaiting Ministerial approval on Key Stages 1,2 and 4;
- the establishment of an E-Learning & Services Committee;
- CCEA's involvement in the Costello Committee;
- Issues arising out of Tomlinson;
- Primary Modern Languages; and
- Completion of the Summer Examinations.

The Chairman and members of Council congratulated TMT and all officers involved on an excellent performance in relation to the delivery of another successful examinations cycle.

He reminded members that a Policy Committee had been formed, (consisting of the Chairman, Vice-Chair of Council, Chairs of all Sub-Committees, the Chief Executive and Heads of Service) to ensure that the Council agenda reflects all the issues that need to be debated and discussed properly. Also, under the banner of continuous improvement the Chairman raised :

- The need to develop improved policy research processes and methodologies, and to improve the way in which decisions are developed and made to ensure maximum effectiveness.
- The need to define and refine the relationship between Council and its sub-committees to ensure that Council exercised effective control over policy development.

The Chairman agreed to put some initial thoughts together with the Chief Executive, for discussion at a future Council meeting.

### **3 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 June 2003**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2003, were approved by the Council and a copy signed by the Chairman.

#### *Action points*

The Chief Executive reported that the majority of the action points had been dealt with and informed members that those actions outstanding would be dealt with during the course of the agenda.

### **4 Committees**

#### *E-Learning & Services Committee*

Mr Ellison reported that an introductory meeting of this new committee was held on 30 June 2003 to agree work over the summer months. He said that he had met with the Chief Executive to discuss resources dedicated to e-learning. The initial resources would be found within the organisation.

The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for 22 September at which the remit would be agreed.

#### *Regulation & Qualifications Committee*

Mr Ellison (outgoing chair) reported that the remit of this committee had been broadened to include regulation. Issues arising from the meeting were mainly key skills and future structures for qualifications which will be looked at in detail at future meetings. He informed members that he had handed chairmanship of the committee to Professor Peter Roebuck.

The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for 12 November 2003.

#### *Curriculum & Assessment Committee*

Dr Walker reported that all of the issues considered at the last Curriculum & Assessment Committee meeting were on the Council agenda for discussion, with the exception of Primary Modern Languages. This advice has been amended to include the issues raised by the committee and would now go forward for agreement at the next Curriculum & Assessment Committee.

The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for 1 October 2003.

#### *Business Committee*

Dr Lennon (Chairman of the Committee) reported that the Remuneration Committee had met to discuss various remuneration issues. The membership of both committees is the same. Remuneration committee meets on an ad hoc basis and members will be kept fully informed.

The next meeting of the Business Committee is scheduled for 8 October 2003.

#### *Audit Committee*

Mr Collins, chair of the committee reported that:

- excellent financial controls have been put in place;
- 20 out of the 31 G50 recommendations have been implemented and work continues on the remainder;
- there has been a significant reduction in the number of non-compliant purchases, showing tighter control;
- measures of performance : full compliance in 8 out of 10 areas with most of the issues being resolved.
- an audit of TMT expenses has taken place showing no issues of concern in this area.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for 8 October 2003.

The Chief Executive said that members had been identified for Investigative Interviewing and that anyone else wishing to avail of the training should contact Miss Kennedy. Dates range from 30 January to 20 February 2004 and will take place in CCEA.

## **5 TMT Update**

The Chief Executive reported that:

- Mark of Excellence Submission (paper C/48/1) has been distributed together with the DVD to Council members. A target score of 500 points has been set for this year.

Mr Collins asked that consideration be given to using the submission as a promotional tool. Mr Ellison suggested drafting a synopsis document of the submission for marketing purposes. The Chief Executive agreed to take this forward.

- Joint Conference with NCCA will take place from 22 to 24 October in the Armagh City Hotel. Full details will follow.

Mr Carlin asked for 'the role of parents within the framework in the south' to be put on the agenda for discussion.

### *Organisation Issues*

Corporate Services restructuring was now complete. The new structure has resulted in 30 new positions with 19 promotions and 12 redundancies. Wide spread consultation took place with staff and all of the sensitive issues have been managed very carefully.

Mr Clarke raised the sensitivities surrounding redundancies and asked about Council policy. Mr Crossan confirmed that CCEA had a redundancy policy and that this had been strictly adhered to. He assured members that if the policy is modified, then Council ratification is required.

### *Examinations 2003*

- Market share at A Level and GCSE has increased for the first time in a number of years;
- Detailed analysis of NI results and national results will be presented at the next meeting.

### *Other Awarding Bodies*

The Chief Executive informed members that he had chaired a meeting of the Regulatory Authorities and Awarding Bodies on 12 September 2003. PWC have been called in to carry out further checks on the systems of the 3 English Awarding Bodies. The Chief Executive reported that yet again one of the Awarding Bodies had failed to mark all the scripts.

The Chairman sought assurances that the Chief Executive would take the necessary steps to find out if the Northern Ireland scripts had been marked.

Professor Roebuck asked for the necessary plans to be put in place should CCEA in appropriately receive adverse publicity. The Chairman asked the Chief Executive to take this issue forward.

The Chief Executive confirmed that he had sought assurances from each of the Chief Executives in the 3 major English awarding bodies that all Northern Ireland candidates' scripts would be marked. He assured members that this issue would be dealt with appropriately.

Members expressed concern over the lack of clarity in the public domain of CCEA's dual role as an Awarding Body and a Regulator. It was agreed that these two roles should be explained and placed on the CCEA website.

Mr Carlin asked that once the analysis of awarding body performances countrywide has been completed for this year that it be made available to the public to ensure that they are aware of CCEA's success.

### *Costello*

The Chief Executive asked members to note that Dr Murray and Mr Clarke were members of the working party. The work of the group remains confidential.

## 6 Qualifications

### *Key Skills*

Dr Walker made a presentation to set out the present stage of development of Key Skills. In particular he outlined the nature of the Key Skills Qualifications :

The following issues were discussed :

- The need for validation and credibility of Key Skills qualifications;
- The need to deliver and develop essential skills to ensure currency and recognition by higher education institutions and employers;
- The need to influence a change in recruitment procedures and how employers/HE demonstrate the importance of Key and Essential Skills;
- The vital need for people to demonstrate competence in the subjects they have qualifications;
- Employers and further and higher education institutions need to be involved in Key Skills development to ensure consistency and understanding across the board;
- Marketing the skills qualifications as reliable, credible and consistent is essential for success;
- The need for an appropriate, feasible assessment regime.

The Chairman asked that a bullet point summary of key principles be drawn up as a check list to ensure that all the critical issues are dealt with and reported back to Council at future meetings.

*Future Structures for Qualifications to include post-qualification entry for university*

**C/48/2**

Dr Walker briefly updated members on the work of the 14-19 development group on addressing the issue of a Northern Ireland qualifications model. The group's initial proposals were agreed by the Qualifications Committee at its meeting in January 2003 and since then have been disseminated in England for consultation.

He outlined issues on:

- Reforming the 14-19 Curriculum and Qualifications proposals in light of the Tomlinson recommendations; and
- The place of GCSE within 14-19.

He said that the 14-19 development group would be meeting to discuss the Tomlinson proposals with a view to responding by 31 October 2003.

Members discussed the issues raised and agreed:

- that breadth should be encouraged and recognised within a set of qualifications which would operate effectively in Northern Ireland and in the current environment in the UK;
- to consider the implications of abandoning assessment at 16 or not; and
- to consider all the options and report back in a structured way.

## 7 Curriculum & Assessment

### *Ministerial Responses*

**C/48/3**

Dr Walker addressed the issues raised by the Minister in relation to Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4. He stressed that all the issues raised at Key Stage 3 had been taken into account before the beginning of the consultation process; and that the lack of continuity between Key Stages 3 and 4 was being looked at to ensure that the further advice is complete and delivered by 31 December 2003.

He informed members that a group, (PICS) comprising of the ELBs, CCEA and other agencies had been established to draw up a comprehensive, fully costed plan, also to be presented by 31 December this year.

Schools have been granted an additional closure day specifically for the Key Stage 3 consultation.

### *Literacy and Numeracy*

Dr Walker informed members that the impact of the pilot foundation stage continued to be very positive:

- teachers are enthusiastic that the pilot continues;
- data shows that childrens' oracy; confidence and behaviour have improved with positive indicators coming through from year 2.

Although there has been no official expansion of the pilot, 2 of the boards are continuing with the pilot using their own resources.

Dr Murray expressed concern that the pilot has not been officially extended, she said that this was an excellent scheme and should continue. The Chairman agreed, but stated that it was essential that we review data, make conclusions and recommendations to ensure a proper roll out throughout the primary school sector. He said that CCEA were accountable for the pilot and had to be clear on all of the changes required including resource implications before recommending that the pilot continues.

Mrs Black asked that the implications for initial teacher education be taken into consideration as this was needed for planning for future developments.

The Chief Executive said that the decision on whether the pilot is expanded and whether we roll this out will be in the recommendations going forward. Dr Walker confirmed that a full evaluation report would be available for Council to review the data at a future meeting.

### *Key Stage 3*

Dr Walker said that the consultation process would involve 3 main elements :

- Seminars
- Focus Groups
- Web-based and paper questionnaires

He sought members' support through attending some of the seminars and promotion events organised and said that briefings would be provided. The Chairman welcomed Council members' support on promoting the consultation as this would be our last attempt to sell the correct message.

Dr Walker informed members that the leaflet would go out in the Belfast Telegraph over the next few weeks.

Members viewed the Key Stage 3 video and the web-based questionnaire.

**8 Financial position**

**C/48/4**

Mr Crossan informed members that we are on target to achieve the budgets for this year, having completed successful rounds of bids with the department. He said that the level of work in delivering the services was substantial to achieve the operational plan.

**9 Any other business**

Council Members wished to place on record their thanks to Gerry for his valuable contributions during his 3 ½ years at CCEA.

**10 Dates of future meetings**

The Chairman reminded members that the next meeting would take place in the City Hotel, Armagh on Wednesday 22 October 2003, starting at 2pm, followed by the Joint Conference with NCCA on Thursday 23 and ending with Lunch on Friday 24 October.

Further dates have been agreed as follows :

WEDNESDAY	17 DECEMBER 2003(followed by Christmas Lunch)
WEDNESDAY	21 JANUARY 2004
WEDNESDAY	3 MARCH 2004
WEDNESDAY	21 APRIL 2004
WEDNESDAY	9 JUNE 2004

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Chairman

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Date