

Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Minutes of the forty-sixth meeting of the Council, held at 1000 hours on Wednesday 9 April 2003 in Room 111, 1st Floor, CCEA, 29 Clarendon Road, Belfast.

Present :	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	Ms B O'Neill
	Mr D Thompson	
	Mrs C Jendoubi	Assessor, Department of Education
	Mr H Mason	Assessor, Department for Employment and Learning
	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

Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the reconstituted Council. He congratulated new members on their appointments and thanked those who took part in the process.

Members then viewed a short information video on the work of CCEA.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs Dorothy Black; Mr David McKee; Dr Wilfred Mulryne; Mr Matt Murray; Mr Brian Turtle and Ms Mae Watson.

2 Chairman's business

The Chairman made a short presentation on each of the Council members.

Mrs Jendoubi informed members that she may not be continuing as assessor on the Council due to a reshuffle in the Department of Education. The Chairman and Chief Executive said that they had built up an excellent relationship through Mrs Jendoubi with the Department and thanked her for all of her support over the years.

The Chairman reminded members that an Induction Day had been arranged for Thursday 15 May in the Ramada Hotel, Belfast. Papers would be issued in advance.

He outlined the remit of each of the Council sub-committees and the membership requirements. He drew members' attention to the Schedule of Meetings for 2003/2004.

He also drew members attention to the joint meeting with NCCA (our counterparts in the Republic of Ireland) from 22 to 24 October in the City Hotel Armagh and asked members to put these dates in their diaries.

3 Minutes of previous meeting held on 19 February 2003

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2003, were approved by the Council and a copy signed by the Chairman.

Action points

The Chief Executive gave updates on :

- Curriculum Review – advice on Foundation and Primary Stages have been sent to the Minister; a letter outlining the direction on Key Stage 3 has also been sent; subject to today's discussions the Key Stage 4 advice will also be forwarded.
- A submission has been made to the Independent Enquiry on Teachers' Salary, Dr Walker will meet with them on 11 April. (Our submission was in line with the Tomlinson recommendations).
- Restructuring of Corporate Services is ongoing.
- Draft Operational Plan for 2003/2004 will go to Business Committee in May for approval before final approval by this Council in June 2003.

Mr Carlin asked for a list of the current industrial tribunals to be supplied to the Business Committee.

4 Committees

(a) Business Committee : 6 February 2003

The Chairman reported that the Business Committee had noted the concerns raised about CCEA's role in C2K and other e-enabling activities. It was agreed that an E-Learning Committee be set up to oversee these issues.

(b) Curriculum & Assessment Committee : 12 March 2003

In the absence of Dr Mulryne, the Chief Executive reported on :

- Primary Consultation - The feedback on consultation on the primary curriculum had been very positive. The committee is content with the work being done in this area.
- Work on Key Stage 3 is ongoing.
- Primary Modern Languages – committee asked for further work to be done before asking for Council approval.

5 TMT Update

The Chief Executive updated members on the following operational issues :

- Letter in the media suggesting downgrading of the Irish language : Languages are not under threat in the new curriculum proposals; and in particular we are working with the Irish Medium sector to improve service;
- Mr Breslin, a regular correspondent regarding History, has written to the Minister and has also threatened to go public. Mr Breslin's complaints have been referred to the Chief Executive of ACCAC. Wales. He will carry out an independent review and report to the Chief Executive. The Inspectorate is comfortable with our approach.
- Meetings with Stakeholders : we are now using various regional locations to meet as many principals and vice-principals as we can. To date we have met approximately 50 principals from Derry and 60 from Enniskillen and are currently setting up another trip to Coleraine to see another 30/40 principals. This is proving to be the best way of judging our performance on the support and services we give them.
- Provision of Examinations : Edexcel have been bought over by the Pearson Group. This will have major implications for running of examinations. Our priority is to ensure that standards over time are maintained, and the Chief Executives are meeting in London to provide a strategy and advice to Charles Clarke on the approach he will take over the next few weeks. Members were asked to keep this Confidential.

Mr Clarke stated that standards should not be tampered with to try to get better results and asked that the political issues surrounding this take-over be addressed appropriately.

The Chairman reminded members that Tomlinson was asked to consider standards in A Levels over time. CCEA will not compromise standards and asked that the Department be briefed on this issue and for them to express their view.

The Chief Executive agreed to take this forward.

Dr Walker reported that:

- the winter A and AS level results were issued in March; 161 requests for remarks against 58,000 units;
- entry level qualifications have started for the first time this year. No problems to report so far.
- We have signed a partnership agreement with NCFE to offer a wide range of occupational examinations under CCEA brand.

Education

6 Briefings from the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive gave detailed presentations on the following elements of the curriculum review:

- Early Years/Primary
- Key Stage 3
- Key Stage 4; and
- Assessment

Early Years/Primary

The Enriched Curriculum is now being piloted in of 80 schools throughout the province. The feedback is very good. However, some issues need to be resolved:

- Progress for children involved in pilots is excellent but after Year 2 they have not yet achieved the same attainment targets as those in the traditional programme. More data is required.
- The programme is very demanding of teachers and a classroom assistant is required in Year 2. This remains a major funding issue for the Department of Education.
- Children with different attitudes to learning emerge in Year 3 and there are issues that need to be resolved. The Shankill Road are starting to develop an enriched curriculum throughout the school but it is important to obtain the research and hard data going forward.

Dr Murray informed members that she had received notification of funding for a Classroom Assistant from the Department of Education. Mrs Jendoubi confirmed funding from the MAGS2 initiative promoting social inclusion and directed at schools in disadvantaged areas. Therefore some schools who received this funding coincided with those involved in the enriched curriculum pilot. For those not in receipt of the MAGS2 the Department of Education has provided enough money for classroom assistants in the pilot schools.

The Chairman welcomed this funding development but stated that the Council will only extend the project subject to good project management; proper funding and research data for the reading and writing outcomes. Once we receive the hard data we will push the case very strongly.

Key Stages 1&2

The Chief Executive reported that teachers strongly support the proposals for reducing content and devoting more time to problem solving; communication; personal development; citizenship and the development of skills.

Assessment

Work on assessment continues with the annual report being developed to pass through from primary to secondary school, covering skills and what the child has learned. It will inform parents on their child's progress in relation to the rest of the class.

Key Stage 3

The 2002 proposals were not well received. This has led to a further review to consider the linkage between skills and subjects; and will lead to more widespread consultation beginning in June 2003.

The Chairman said that it was important to give the Minister a steer on our thinking at Key Stage 3. We met with the Minister at the beginning of April and subsequently sent a briefing note explaining the detail of the feedback we have had so far on Key Stage 3 and an executive summary. We have informed her that it is our intention to have a widespread consultation throughout the summer before putting forward our formal proposals.

Mrs Jendoubi said that the Minister will want to respond on the totality of the proposals and expressed concerns about the feedback the department has received where schools are anticipating the implementation of the current council proposals. The Chairman stressed that face-to-face contact was a much better way of teasing out issues and asked all members for their support in taking this phase of the consultation forward.

The Chairman asked the Chief Executive to review the project management and manage the relationship with the CASS service carefully.

7 Proposals for the Key Stage 4 Curriculum

C/46/1

Dr Walker said that as a result of extensive consultation at Key Stage 4 in February 2003 a positive response to the proposed changes had been received. Following further informal consultation on the detail of the proposals, a list recommendations have been set out for approval by the Council.

Members discussed the recommendations in detail. The following points were made :

- Terminology to be changed as appropriate;
- In each of the areas a set of learning outcomes will be set out beginning with the words 'pupils should be able to.....';
- Language teaching to be approached differently in secondary schools;
- Contentious area PE: we need to ensure that all young people are encouraged to have a programme of exercise; additional guidance to health, exercise and diet to be provided;
- Sizes of post-primary schools to be taken into consideration;

- Emphasise that 'Life and Work' is not quite a GCSE but encourage active learning, the development of skills and competencies within the overall label of a GCSE;
- More encouragement for an appropriate assessment regime.

Dr Murray asked if it were possible to have sight of the curriculum models in terms of options and said that this should go to the Curriculum & Assessment Committee. Dr Walker confirmed that the planned release of these models would be Autumn this year, but it would be in the form of guidance for schools.

It was agreed that the curriculum models would be viewed by Council before release in the Autumn.

Mr Clarke asked that the area of life and work; subjects and skills be clarified to avoid confusion.

Members agreed that the advice be reviewed and sent to the Minister before Easter as requested.

8 Advice to the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) on Essential Skills at Levels 1 and 2 C/46/2

Dr Walker informed members that advice had already been provided to the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) on Essential Skills at Entry Level. This initial advice is now being offered on Essential Skills at Levels 1 and 2 following a request from DEL to provide formal advice by the end of May 2003.

Mr Lee welcomed the proposals particularly for adult learning and assessment.

Mr Mason agreed that the proposals had been well received in DEL but that there were still some areas that needed further clarification.

Members were happy with the advice going forward and asked that the formal recommendations go to the next Council meeting.

9 Programme of Work for the Review of Vocational Qualifications C/46/3

Dr Walker informed members that the governments have collectively asked for a major strategic review to be undertaken for the provision of vocational qualifications across the United Kingdom. DEL have asked CCEA collaborate with the other regulatory authorities and agencies to draw up a programme of work. Both CCEA and DEL are represented

on the Steering Group which is developing the programme in 3 stages which will go through to full implementation in 2010.

He said that the detail of the review to be rolled out through the sub-committees of Council and that an update would be given at a future meeting.

Members welcomed the programme of work. The Chairman asked for a steering group of Council members to be set up to ensure that all parties contribute to the review.

10 Implementation of Tomlinson Recommendations

The Chairman informed members that CCEA have had very close connections with the various Tomlinson committees set up to take forward the recommendations arising out of the investigation on examinations last year.

Dr Walker said that Tomlinson has issued 3 reports:

- 1 Changes to ensure that successful examinations took place in 2003
- 2 Longer Term issues; and
- 3 Monitoring Report on the January 2003 examinations.

He said that we have been asked to endorse further recommendations relating to the A and AS resit and cash-in rules, either:

- 1 Simplify the resit and cash-in rules around A and AS examinations due to difficulties with schools; OR
- 2 Cash-in rules to remain the same, however additional restrictions may be made that schools will not welcome.

One recommendation is that : the resit rules be scraped and the cash-in rules remain the same.

Members were broadly content that this should go forward to the Minister.

The Chairman said we have been working particularly hard in the area of recruiting and retaining markers/examiners but that there was still a quality assurance issue. A more formal process should be put in place to deliver a well qualified examiner.

The Chief Executive said that CCEA's market share had increased this year at A level and GCSE. In addition we have over 30,000 GCSE candidates in England through our partnership arrangement.

Finance, accounts and other issues

11 Financial position year end 2003

C/46/4

Mr Crossan reported that there would be a deficit of 50K at the end of the financial year. This overspend is on an accruals basis and will be carried forward into 2003/2004. He reported that the cash targets had been achieved.

The Chairman informed members that the Business Committee reviews the finance papers in detail on a regular basis. He said that the financial position of the organization and the indepth understanding has improved radically over the last 2/3 years due to a lot of good, robust work by the Top Management Team.

Professor Roebuck asked the Chief Executive if he was content with the budgetary outcome of the NICATs transfer. The Chief Executive said that the funding had been agreed with DEL until the 30 September 2003; after which negotiations would take place for the next phase of the project.

12 Draft Operational Plan 2003/2004

C/46/5

The Chairman informed members of the mechanism for exception reporting to the business committee on a regular basis.

Mr Crossan said that the draft plan outlines the extent of our activities, how we measure performance against these activities and for the first time this operational plan has been produced as part of the budgetary control process. Performance Management has been linked into the operational plan to show the cost against each activity.

Mr Carlin sought assurance that cost outcomes would be reported in due course. Mr Crossan confirmed that this would be done.

Mr Thompson asked if any consideration had been given to franchises with publishing houses. The Chief Executive confirmed that we have done deals with publishing houses for publishing text books and cd roms; and we have a number of commercial sponsorship for the art exhibition and the SCORE music concert. He stated that if we achieve our objectives in terms of market share then this will significantly improve the overall funding of the organization.

13 Presentation of Draft Budget 2003/2004

Mr Crossan drew members' attention to the tabled paper on the draft budget for 2003/2004. He explained that :

- We are 90% sure that examinations income would increase by £500K;
- Multi media target income will be achieved through several partnerships;
- The current baseline figure has been confirmed;
- Income for ALTA will come through the Invest to Save budget and a substantial amount of funding from DEL is currently being negotiated for various other projects.

He confirmed that a detailed draft budget together with significant changes will go to the Business Committee in May for approval before coming through to Council at its June meeting.

Members noted the information given.

14 Any other business

The Chairman reminded members of the Induction Day scheduled for Thursday 15 May.

He said that by the next Council meeting we will have a clear view on the membership of Committees and their Chairs and asked for a process to be set up for members to indicate their preferences.

He confirmed that the existing chairs of the qualifications and curriculum and assessment committee would meet with him and the Vice-Chair of Council and TMT to discuss any issues going forward to the next Council meeting.

15 Date of next meeting

The next meeting has been confirmed for **Tuesday 17 June 2003 at 10.00 am.**