

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC ED 1 (15) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

EDUCATION MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

25 MARCH 2015

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twentieth NSMC Education meeting was held at the NSMC Joint Secretariat Office in Armagh on 25 March 2015. The meeting was attended by John O'Dowd, MLA, Minister for Education, Jan O'Sullivan, TD, Minister for Education and Skills and Minister Storey, MLA, Minister for Social Development. Minister O'Dowd chaired the meeting.

EU FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

2. The NSMC noted the ongoing co-operation between the Education Departments on the shared education theme of the forthcoming Peace IV programme.
3. Ministers requested that officials from relevant departments and national agencies explore the potential for collaboration on the Erasmus+ programme and agreed a progress report on education sector collaboration on European Funding issues will be brought to the next NSMC Plenary Meeting as part of an update on European Funding issues.

EDUCATION UNDERACHIEVEMENT

4. The Council noted plans by the departments to have a model for a future cross jurisdiction engagement event on educational underachievement issues drawn up by 31 March 2015. This would subsequently be presented to the Education Ministers for agreement.

COOPERATION BETWEEN INSPECTORATES

5. Ministers noted the joint presentation covering the main conclusions from the continuing work of the Inspectorates on Literacy and Numeracy and welcomed the continuing work of the Inspectorates and their plans to:
 - (i) publish Joint North South work on Literacy and Numeracy - two separate reports;
 - (ii) continue with the programme of inspection exchanges and co-operation between management of both Inspectorates; and
 - (iii) have the Department of Education and Skills (DES) Inspectorate quality assure the Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI) review of the outcomes of its programme: 'Promoting Improvement in English and Mathematics'.

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

6. The Council noted the progress being made by the two departments and Middletown Centre in facilitating the expansion of the Centre's range of services since the commencement of the expansion in April 2013. They also noted the plans for the Centre to continue to deliver a similar range of services in each jurisdiction in 2015-16 as was delivered 2014-15.
7. The Ministers noted that the Centre recently successfully hosted a major international conference on the theme of "Enabling Education" targeted towards professional staff and parents of children with autism. Both Education Ministers had opened the event and over a thousand delegates attended and featured a range of eminent speakers from across the globe.
8. The Education Ministers will visit the Middletown Centre later today.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Teacher Mobility

9. Ministers noted that work on the professional accreditation of reconceptualised programmes of Initial Teacher Education has now been completed by the Teaching Council Ireland (TCI).
10. Ministers also noted that the "North South Teacher Qualifications Working Group" (NSTQWG) has asked both Councils to revisit the Teaching Council

Ireland (TCI) desk-based Qualifications Assessment process and provide an assessment of the issues impacting on mobility (including how these might be overcome) by the end September 2015.

Irish Language Requirement (ILR)

11. It was noted that the criteria encompassing guidelines for the ILR programme design has now been approved by the Teaching Council Ireland and they have recently invited St. Mary's University College Belfast to submit a formal programme proposal for approval.

North/South Irish Medium Programme of Work

12. The Council noted the progress made on the implementation of the 2014/15 programme plan developed by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) and the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS).

Independent Evaluation of the “North South Collaborative Programme of Work in Irish Medium Education”

13. Ministers noted the positive outcome of the independent evaluation of the North South Collaborative Programme of Work (2010/11 to 2013/14), the findings of which will inform future programmes of work.

Future North South Collaborative Programme of Work

14. It was noted that approval in principle has been given to a Collaborative Programme of Work over the next three academic years (2015/16 – 2017/18) based on Digital Literacy and History and that support services have been asked to develop a detailed proposal to include objectives, timelines and budgets for final approval of the NSTQWG in May 2015.

Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS)

15. The 12th Annual conference on the theme of ‘Always learning, always teaching: Making the journey’ took place in the Killyhevlin Hotel, Enniskillen on 21 and 22 October 2014 and work has commenced on organising the 13th Annual Conference on the theme of ‘Teacher Education for Social Justice’.

SCHOOL, YOUTH AND TEACHER EXCHANGES

16. Ministers noted the ongoing activities of the “North South Education and Training Standards (NSETS) Committee for Youth Work”, particularly in relation to the professional endorsement of higher education programmes in youth work.
17. They welcomed the development of a dedicated NSETS website and the introduction of an Annual Monitoring process to ensure that institutions comply with the basic criteria for professional endorsement.

18. The Council welcomed the work of the group established by the Youth Council for Northern Ireland and the National Youth Council of Ireland to consider the issue of youth work and ICT and its recent success in securing funding through the Erasmus+ programme to carry out further research with European partners.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

19. The Council agreed to hold the next NSMC Education meeting on 21 October 2015.

Joint Secretariat
25 March 2015

Website www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org