

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday 8 March 2006

Session 2

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EDUCATION COMMITTEE

6th Meeting 2006, Session 2

CONVENER

*Iain Smith (North East Fife) (LD)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ms Wendy Alexander (Paisley North) (Lab)

*Ms Rosemary Byrne (South of Scotland) (SSP)

*Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP)

Mr Adam Ingram (South of Scotland) (SNP)

*Mr Kenneth Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab)

*Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)

*Dr Elaine Murray (Dumfries) (Lab)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Lab)

Rosie Kane (Glasgow) (SSP)

Mr Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)

*Mr Andrew Welsh (Angus) (SNP)

*attended

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Eugene Windsor

SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Mark Roberts

ASSISTANT CLERK

Ian Cowan

LOCATION

Committee Room 4

Scottish Parliament Education Committee

Wednesday 8 March 2006

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 10:00*]

Items in Private

The Convener (Iain Smith): Good morning and welcome to the sixth meeting of the Education Committee in 2006. I welcome Andrew Welsh, who is here as a substitute for Adam Ingram. Andrew, is this the first time you have been here as a substitute member?

Mr Andrew Welsh (Angus) (SNP): It is indeed.

The Convener: For the record, I ask you to declare any specific interests that may be relevant.

Mr Welsh: Apart from having been a secondary school teacher and a senior lecturer in further education more years ago than I care to think about, I have no interests to declare.

The Convener: Thank you.

Item 1 is to decide whether to take items 3 and 4 in private. We have already agreed to take item 5 in private, as that item is consideration of the draft report on our early years inquiry. Item 3 is consideration of the appointment of an adviser for our scrutiny of the proposed adoption bill, as agreed at our meeting last week. We thought that it would be appropriate to conduct that discussion in private, not least because the bill has not yet been formally introduced or referred to the committee. Item 4 is the forward work programme, which it is normal practice to give members an opportunity to consider in private first. Obviously, we will make the work programme known once it is agreed by the committee.

Are members content for items 3 and 4 to be taken in private?

Members *indicated agreement.*

Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Bill

10:02

The Convener: A paper has been prepared by the clerks on my behalf suggesting a timetable for dealing with the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Bill at stage 2. Do members have any comments on the timetable?

Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP): How many sessions are we scheduling for stage 2?

The Convener: At the moment, just two: one at our last meeting before the Easter recess and one at our first meeting after Easter. In fact, we will probably manage to do everything in one meeting, but we wanted to allow extra time for the information on head teachers to come in.

Fiona Hyslop: I am pleased to see that we will not start on section 14 until we have a response from the Scottish Executive on the appointment of head teachers. Ordinarily, we would have moved on to stage 2 quite quickly, but the point has been made and we can proceed accordingly.

Do we know whether the Executive is likely to lodge many amendments? We know that some have already been lodged, but will there be an avalanche of amendments?

The Convener: I am not aware that there will be a large number of amendments, so two sessions should do it. Obviously, if we find that there are more amendments than we have scheduled time for on 26 March, we can hold some of them over until the second meeting. At the moment, however, the intended timetable is as set out in the paper.

Fiona Hyslop: That makes sense.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con): I would like to make a small point. I think that the Executive has pledged to send us a response on the complex and detailed question of insurance. I hope that it will do so before stage 2.

The Convener: I hope so.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Could the Executive be tactfully reminded of that?

The Convener: Yes. After this meeting, the Executive will be aware of the intended timetable and will, I am sure, try to give us the information that it agreed to provide before stage 2.

Do members agree to the proposed timetable?

Members *indicated agreement.*

The Convener: I remind members that the closing date for lodging amendments to be

considered at the second meeting is Thursday 30 March, which is before the recess. There is not a great deal of time available, but I hope that the time allowed will be sufficient to allow us to take account of the Executive's proposals on head teachers.

10:04

Meeting continued in private until 10:44.

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Wednesday 15 March 2006

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