



PAPER NSMC ED 2 (09) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

EDUCATION SECTORAL FORMAT

DUBLIN

25 NOVEMBER 2009

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The 9th NSMC meeting in Education Sectoral format was held in Dublin on 25 November 2009.
2. The meeting was attended by Batt O’Keeffe TD, Minister for Education and Science, Caitríona Ruane, MLA, Minister of Education and Sir Reg Empey, MLA, Minister for Employment and Learning. Minister O’Keeffe chaired the meeting.

EDUCATIONAL UNDERACHIEVEMENT

3. The Council noted progress made in a number of areas in relation to educational underachievement, including work on a joint publication on best practice in the teaching of literacy and numeracy in schools in disadvantaged areas, arrangements for a joint conference on numeracy to be held in February 2010 and work within the Task Force on Traveller Education.
4. Ministers agreed that the focus of an all-island Children’s Book Week, to be held in 2010, should be primarily on children with little or no tradition of

reading at home, those with little access to reading materials and those at risk of falling behind.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS & TEACHERS' SUPERANNUATION

5. Ministers welcomed the closer liaison between the professional development services for teachers in both jurisdictions relating to in-service education for teachers in Irish medium education and looked forward to receiving a report on progress at the next meeting. They also welcomed the progress on re-constituting a Working Group to examine cooperation on teacher education issues generally.
6. The Council noted that further exchanges are planned for the 2009-2010 school year between the Inspectorates of both Departments of Education aimed at supporting the continuing development of inspection practice in both jurisdictions.
7. The Council welcomed a presentation by the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS) outlining its teacher education work and noted the report of the recent 2009 annual conference.
8. The Council noted that measures are being taken to provide information on pension issues for teachers who wish to transfer to work in the other jurisdiction.

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

9. The Council welcomed the continuing progress of the services available at the Middletown Centre for Autism. They noted and supported the ongoing active review by, and communications between, the Departments in relation to the current situation at the Middletown Centre.
10. The Council also noted and welcomed the success of the recent Autistic Spectrum Disorders Conference held on 13 November 2009 on Enabling Communication.

SCHOOL YOUTH AND TEACHER EXCHANGES

11. The Council noted the progress made to date in developing a framework for a proposed joint programme for the future management and funding of North South educational exchanges.

12. The Council welcomed and thanked the European Studies Project for its presentation on its activities, achievements and future plans. The overall aim of the European Studies Project is to encourage co-operation between participating students and staff; and to contribute to educational development in the wider dimension of the European Community through informing students about current social economic and political issues and structures at national and European level.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13. The Council agreed to meet again in Education sectoral format in Spring 2010.

**Joint Secretariat
25 November 2009**