

Notes of the Amalgamation Review Committee Meeting in St. Mary's Rosary Hall, Thursday the 28th of May 2009

Attendance: Frankie Berry (Chairperson), Brenda Egan, Paula Keenan, Simon Quinn, Declan Keane, Barry Glennon, Catherine Troy, Janet O'Shaughnessy, Eoin O'Mahony, Loretta Wynn, Mark O'Leary, Laura Behan, Shirley Wolverson, Miriam McNally, Regina O'Connell and Liam O'Dwyer

Apologies: Maura Buckley, Nora Duggan and Jason Maguire

Agenda

The agenda as circulated was agreed.

Notes of the meeting of the 18th of May 09

The notes as circulated were agreed as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Draft recommendations of Amalgamation Review Committee

As agreed at the previous meeting of the Committee a proposed set of recommendations would be formulated and circulated to the Committee for discussion at the meeting of the 28th of May.

The Committee was largely in agreement with the proposed recommendations once a number of changes were incorporated namely:

- Trade unions to be actively involved from the beginning of the next stage in the process since they could also add expert knowledge of the system and process.
- The Department of Education and Science not to be involved until the end of the next stage in the process i.e. following the agreement of the model of education to be offered in any new scenario.

The revised recommendations are to be circulated to the Committee with the notes of the meeting, to facilitate discussion with all stakeholders in the interim and will be brought to a further meeting of the Committee on the 28th of September for finalisation.

Discussion

The Committee discussed the role of the Department of Education and Science and the Trade Unions. It was felt that the mood in the country had changed in respect of education and budgets so engagement with the Department of Education and Science now was not advisable since the currently agreed procedures could if implemented mean a significant reduction in staff numbers, a corresponding loss of expertise and subject choices for the students and a possible undermining of the role of the SNA's. The

involvement of the Trade Unions on the other hand would be welcomed especially in respect of their expertise in these matters.

While there was concern expressed that some staff feel that CIDP is rushing the process, it was acknowledged that action was needed to ensure that best practice, and specialist and resourced Deaf education remains in the Deaf schools and that the Department of Education and Science might itself become proactive in the area of amalgamation if action was not taken by the schools.

It was also pointed out any new educational model should reflect the newly designed education policy document and be linked to the development of the Centre for Deaf Education and the proposed new outreach approach for the Deaf schools. These developments will also enable some current staff develop new roles given their expertise.

Finally in the light of changes in personnel, the loss of some senior teachers, including St. Joseph's Principal who is retiring and the publication of the Ryan Commission report, it was agreed to give more time and space to the process and move the finalising of the recommendations of the Committee to the CIDP Board till late September 09.

Eoin's Report

The report as circulated was not the newly edited version due to a transmission error. The edited version will be circulated immediately after the meeting. Both Liam and Eoin confirmed to the Committee that the edited version reflected the changes agreed at the last meeting together with some changes in emphasis sought from St. Joseph's staff. There were two further changes agreed at the meeting itself namely:

- The reference to ISL in the second bullet of the executive summary proposals needs the addition of the word 'together' to clarify the emphasis.
- The sixth bullet of the executive summary proposals concerning location should be adjusted by the addition of the word 'decision' before 'to amalgamate the schools'.

It was agreed that once these and the earlier changes were incorporated, the report was completed. Finally it was suggested that the parents would be consulted again in respect of the proposed amalgamation at the next parent teacher meetings, which will be brought forward to October 09 to facilitate the sharing of information and consultation in a timely manner. The St. Mary's Board of Management asked to see Eoin's report prior to any decision being taken, and Liam confirmed that copies should be circulated to them.

The meeting finished and the Committee wished Val Quinn well in his retirement and thanked him for his work in St. Joseph's and on this Committee.

Next meeting of the Amalgamation Review Committee is Monday the 28th of September 09 in St. Mary's Rosary School at 2.00pm

