

# Steering Committee

## Policy on Irish-medium Education outside of the Gaeltacht

### Minutes of Meeting 2

**Date:** Tuesday, 18 October 2022

**Location:** Room G13/14, Department of Education, Marlborough Street

**Time of Meeting:** 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

### Attendance

Gavan O’Leary (Chair) – *Assistant Secretary, Department of Education*

Lisa Nic Dhoinnléibhe – *Principal Officer, Gaeltacht Education Unit, Department of Education*

Muireann Tóibín, Michael Devane, Finín Ó Murchú – *Gaeltacht Education Unit (GEU), Department of Education*

Martin Whyte – *Inspectorate, Department of Education*

Toby Wolfe – *Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)*

Aislinn Duffy – *Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS)*

Aodán Mac an Mhíle – *Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (DTCAGSM)*

Jacqueline Ní Fhearghusa – *An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta (COGG)*

Edel Ní Chorráin – *Foras na Gaeilge*

Arlene Forster – *National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)*

Cáit Ní Chonghaile – *National Council for Special Education (NCSE)*

Stella Ní Shé – *National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)*

### Apologies

Phil Fox – *The Teaching Council*

#### 1. Fáilteú/Welcome

The Chair welcomed members to the second meeting of the Steering Committee. It was agreed that the meeting would be conducted bilingually.

#### 2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

Minutes of meeting 1, held on Wednesday, 13 April 2022, were shared with the Committee prior to the meeting and some amendments had been suggested via email. Updated minutes were approved.

### **3. Draft Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee**

Updated Terms of Reference (ToR) had been circulated before the meeting, including amendments from the group. GO'L thanked members for their input, and asked that any further suggested amendments be sent via email. A final version of the ToR will be circulated in due course.

### **4. Update on the work of the Intradepartmental Working Group**

GO'L invited LNicD to update the Committee on the work of the Intradepartmental Working Group.

#### **Report on current Irish-medium education provision**

LNicD stated that the report on current Irish-medium education provision contained baseline data against which future progress could be measured. She noted that the data in the report was presented without conclusions in order to allow the data speak for itself. The report will be available to download on the landing page of the public consultation process with the intention that those responding to the consultation will read the report before completing the questionnaire or making a written submission. She also stated that a Partner Pack would be shared with schools and stakeholders to facilitate them in raising awareness of the consultation. She then asked for feedback from the Committee.

JNíF congratulated the GEU and the Working Group on their work, and asked when the report would be published. LNicD stated that approval from the Minister had been sought, and that it would be launched in conjunction with the public consultation process. JNíF stated that public "town hall" style meetings, as part of the public consultation, might be worthwhile as they were effective while drafting the Policy on Gaeltacht Education.

TW stated that the section of the report on early learning and care was excellent, but queried the use of the term "naíonra". It was agreed that a bilateral discussion would be held to agree on terminology.

AF welcomed the document, stating that it would be useful to the NCCA.

JNíF made recommendations regarding Aonaid/Sruthanna. GO'L stated that research, commissioned by COGG, on Aonaid/Sruthanna was currently underway. LNicD said that there had been a lot of discussion on this matter in the Working Group, and further edits would be made to the section of the report relating to Aonaid/Sruthanna prior to publication.

#### **Public Consultation Process**

LNicD advised the group that there will be four aspects to the public consultation: an online consultation (including questionnaires and written submissions), focus groups, a policy forum for stakeholders, and bilateral meetings if required. She then gave an overview of the online questionnaire, stating that it would focus on gathering information that would be useful in the policy development process. She then asked for obs from the Committee while also saying that written observations on the draft could be submitted by members of the Committee.

SNíS asked if there was another survey targeted at children and young people as some of the language would be too complicated, particularly for younger children. LNicD advised that

the questionnaire had been designed with post-primary students in mind, and that younger children's views would be sought through focus groups.

LNicD discussed the list of external stakeholders which was distributed at the meeting, asking for obs/additions from the Committee.

### **Review of national and international research**

The contract for the review of national and international literature on minority language teaching and learning has been awarded to Sealbhú, DCU. As well as the review of minority language research, literature and policies, Sealbhú will also undertake the analysis of submissions received from the public consultation process. They will provide interim reports which will feed into policy development and will also be asked to present findings to stakeholders at a policy forum.

### **Research on Aonaid/Sruthanna**

LNicD discussed the research being carried out on Aonaid/Sruthanna by T.J. Ó Ceallaigh, UCC; Máire Ní Chonghaile, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick; and Muiris Ó Laoire, Munster Technological University. COGG has commissioned this research and it is expected to be completed by December 2022.

## **5. Actions and next steps**

GO'L advised that the final draft of the Report on Irish-medium education provision would be circulated to the Committee. He asked that any obs from the Committee on the survey and the stakeholder list be emailed to GEU. The location and date for the next meeting are to be confirmed in due course.

*Gaeltacht Education Unit*

*Department of Education*

*October 2022*