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From: Mailer-Daemon@scotland.gov.uk [mailto:Mailer-Daemon@scotland.gov.uk]

Sent: 12 May 2005 22:32

To: Parental Involvement Bill

Subject: Parentzone Making the Difference Questionnaire

Response from the Parentzone - Parental Involvement questionnaire

Name: Dr Nick Edmunds

Responding as: An individual

Individual: Yes

Confidentiality: Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

Behalf of groups:

Sharing responses / future engagement: Yes

Question 1: Yes, but I would not have thought it was new, and understood School Boards to have had guaranteed support from education authorities

Question 2: Yes, but only if they don't have clear ones already

Question 3: yes, [and see 2 above]

Question 4: This is a loaded question: less effective School Boards might need revision/improvement to achieve the same ends. Replacement of a tried and developed [and developing] structure such as School Boards for the sake of it, is like throwing the baby out with the bath water. However, by all means improving access to advice and information for parents from schools is desirable and parental representation should certainly be encouraged.

Question 5: I feel strongly that any body that is to be effective must have an authorised 'executive' to act on its behalf, and such a forum should have elected 'office bearers' with the forum's authority to act and report.

Question 6: if forums have to replace School Boards, then yes, Education Authorities should support them or they will falter very quickly.

Question 7: Only if there is an adequate prescribed structure ensuring representation of small schools or schools in less affluent areas. an amorphous clubbing together of self-interest groups, or pressure lobbies from one area, will not be helpful.

Question 8: Yes, and parents should be enabled to decide to carry on with the existing structures if they wish to. Education Authorities should be given the opportunity to explain the various proposed models/choices so that parents can make informed decisions. A seminar inviting interested parents, School Boards, PTA, Head Teachers, etc would be a good way of allowing a school to decide on their preferred structure. [There must be some structure].

Question 9: This is OK as long as there IS a constitution, otherwise forums would have no purpose, function, result or influence.

As in 8 above, a coming together to develop a constitution as a consensus would be a good start.

Question 10: Yes.
re majority: ideally. The constitution could define quorum?

Question 11: If any parent can attend forum meetings, then so should be allowed a legal guardian. The forum could be kept informed by the school / education authority if there are looked-after children being represented.

Question 12: Absolutely.

Question 13: The Head Teacher should always be in attendance as an advisor, except in exceptional circumstances.
Councillors should attend by invitation only, unless there is a strict constitution allowing the Chair to exclude or ignore 'party political' issues which could easily intrude.

Question 14: Broadly, yes, but without elected office bearers with clear authority the forum would be unable to meaningfully represent views of parents or promote them.

Question 15: a forum would require considerable resources to actively consult all parents on any issue, and should not be made to consult. Rather, the Forum/Board should be a channel for communication of issues brought to and considered by it.

Question 16: Insurance should be considered.

Question 17: largely, but for the last point regarding the Head Teacher's representations to the authority: it need not be obligatory for the replies to the HT to be copied to Forums: the HT should report relevant matters to the Forum as per the present arrangements with the School Board.

Question 18: Yes, as they do for School Boards

Question 19: Yes: a request should be answered.

Question 20: I am not qualified to comment on HR issues, but would hope Forum/Boards would be consulted on appointments.

Question 21: n/a

Question 22: only as part of their wider pre-existing complaints procedure which must already suffice.

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