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

Sent: 19 May 2005 13:00

To: Parental Involvement Bill

Subject: Parentzone Making the Difference Questionnaire

Response from the Parentzone - Parental Involvement questionnaire

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Responding as: An individual

Individual: Yes

Confidentially: Yes, make my response, name and address all available

Behalf of groups: Yes

Sharing responses / future engagement: Yes

Question 1: Yes

Question 2: Yes

Question 3: Yes

Question 4: Yes

Question 5: Yes

Question 6: Yes

Question 7: No. This sounds almost like a new version of the old "School Councils" of the pre-school board days. I feel that the the sole member, or the small number of parents, serving on such a body from each individual school in the cluster would be counter-productive to the overall aim of involving parents in their own school. One member or a small number of members per school is not likely to make a larger proportion of the parent body feel included.

Question 8: Yes, I agree.

Question 9: There are dangers, possibly unlikely to occur, in this. These dangers can be overcome if there are clearly understood parameters within which those drawing up the constitution must operate.

Question 10: Yes I agree broadly with this, but I think there should be a limit on the number of non-parent co-optees (perhaps expressed as a percentage of the membership numbers of the forum).

Question 11: No.

Question 12: Yes

Question 13: I agree that all non members should attend only by invitation. However, I also feel that the local councillor and the Head Teacher should be exceptions to this general rule, and should have a right to attend.

Question 14: I have no quibble with the desirability of these aspirations, only with the practical implications for those managing schools. At present, in a small school, there is 'nothing remotely like' the time available (to the headteacher with a teaching commitment and no other managerial support) to do all the many/varied/time consuming tasks which are required. Many activities which were considered part of the school calendar have fallen by the wayside as the executive has made more and more demands on out time without giving us any more time (or assistance). These suggestions could well be interpreted by some enthusiastic parents as an invitation to delve deeply into all kinds of areas (perhaps a different area per term) and require the head teacher to put together papers/presentations for them. This will add

considerably to the "initiative overload" from which many of us already suffer and add to stress levels which are intolerable. Is the executive aware that the headteacher in a small school has to be the co-ordinator for each and every one of it's initiatives for example (there's no-one else)? Every school, regardless of size should have a non-teaching HT. Small schools were not considered large enough to "qualify" for Senior Teacher posts and will not be large enough to qualify for the new principal teacher posts. To sum up, I think the functions are appropriate, but if the executive is going to raise parental expectations in this way, then those in the firing line will require the resources (time or help) to service these parental expectations/requirements.

Question 15: There should be more restriction.

Huge areas where parents should not go (especially in a small community).

Question 16: Yes I agree.

Question 17: Agree with these but there should not be a limitless call on the headteacher and staff of the school (we're supposed to have a life too). In a small school the parents expect their teachers (all of them) to be involved in every after school activity throughout the year (they look at it as part of the job in a way town and city parents do not. They seem happy to have some staff involved). In contrast to this expectation, the authorities view such involvement as voluntary and will not permit use of such time to count toward teachers additional working hours (this is of course exceptionally unfair as they do, of course, expect teachers to be involved in such activities, and look for them during HMIE inspections!) There will have to be some limit on the number of times the parent forum can require the attendance of staff. (Perhaps you might find some clues here that might help with the lack of understanding concerning retention of teaching staff who eventually burn out/have enough of the excessive demands which are made of them and their family lives).

Question 18: Agree.

Question 19: Yes.

Question 20: Yes, I agree.

Question 21:

Question 22: Yes.

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