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respondee information form

Please complete the details below and attach it with your response. This will help ensure we handle your response appropriately:

Name: VICTOR BOURNE

Postal Address: _____

Consultation title: **Making the difference – Improving parents' involvement in schools**

1. Are you responding as: (please tick one box)

(a) an individual?

(go to 2a/b)

(b) **on behalf of** a group or organisation?

(go to 2c)

2a. INDIVIDUALS:

Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in SE library and/or on SE website)?

Yes (go to 2b below)

No, not at all

2b. Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your response available to the public on the following basis (**please tick one** of the following boxes)

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

Yes, make my response available, but not my name or address

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



2c. ON BEHALF OF GROUPS OR ORGANISATIONS:

Your name and address as respondees **will be** made available to the public (in the SE library and/or on SE website). Are you content for your response to be made available also?

Yes

No

3. SHARING RESPONSES/FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

We will share your response internally with other SE policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for the SE to contact you again in the future in relation to this consultation response?

Yes

No

MAKING THE DIFFERENCE - IMPROVING PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS

I comment as someone who has been a member of a School Council and who is currently a member of a School Board. While I do recognise the need for some change, it should be said that these two bodies have in general served us well. With this in mind, I see no need to abolish School Boards as I feel that this is "throwing the baby out with the bathwater".

My major concerns with the proposed Forums are as follows:

1. They could be established and disbanded with ease. As such they could be open to pressure groups who may have an interest in one issue and not necessarily in the welfare of the school as a whole.
2. I strongly believe that teachers have a key role to play in any such body. In my experience they provide accurate information when required and their role has always been valued by parents.
3. I do not believe that these proposed Forums will generate active participation by more parents in school. I do agree that School Boards have in general not communicated well to the general body of parents in schools and this is a matter which needs to be addressed.
4. The existing School Boards have status. They often take up important issues with the Director of Education and his/her staff on behalf of the school. This is a role which will be less clear with the Forums.
5. I am unclear as to the financial arrangements for the Forums.
6. The key proposals contained in the draft Bill (Page 9) could be achieved by the existing School Boards.
7. PTAs play an important role in many of our schools and I think it is recognised that they have been and are successful. What will their role be vis-a-vis the Forum? I regret to say that I would anticipate that many of them would be disbanded.
8. I recognise that the present teacher appointment system requires some change but I do believe that parents have an important part to play in this process. The nature of this role is very unclear in the draft Bill.
9. The thought of 'composite' parent forums really is beyond my comprehension. Who ever suggested this has obviously never been involved with a School Board.
10. The draft Bill removes the current provision whereby the Catholic Church has the right to be represented by a co-opted member when the School Board of a Catholic school wishes to do so. Much the same case could be made for the current representative from the Community.

I make no apology for sounding very negative but I think that this draft Bill has major defects. I would propose the retention of School Boards and PTAs with some changes to their roles and operations.

Victor H Boume