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1st June, 2005

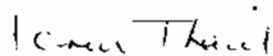
Parental Involvement Bill Consultation
Scottish Executive Education Department
Schools Division
Area 2-B North
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

Dear Sir,

Making the Difference – improving parents' involvement in schools (a consultation on a draft bill)

Please find enclosed the response from the Consultative Committee with Parents (Edinburgh).

Yours faithfully,



Dr Karen Traill
Member of the Consultative Committee with Parents

Home address:

61 Lasswade Road
Edinburgh
EH16 6SZ

0131 664 7584

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CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WITH PARENTS (Edinburgh)

Response to 'Making the Difference- improving parents' involvement in schools (a consultation on a draft bill)

Bearing in mind that the specific focus and agenda is the child, we, the Consultative Committee with Parents, representing the wider parent body in Edinburgh, are committed to strategies which encourage and improve parental involvement. We firmly believe that strategies to improve parental involvement should be devised by drawing on the experience and best practice in schools, where the current system is working extremely effectively, as recognised by the HMIE. However, to achieve improved parental involvement in Scotland, we need evolution not revolution. There are significant strengths in the existing systems and a wholesale removal of the provisions of the legislation will weaken, not strengthen, parental involvement.

The current school board system provides a clear, Scotland wide, working framework while allowing local flexibility. There is a real risk that those who are already involved would become disheartened and we would actually have fewer parents involved than before.

The current election process gives every parent/carer a voice, however some parents may find this process intimidating. A possible solution could be to support parents by utilising the current adult education resources more fully.

Our representatives from the Special School sectors have expressed some serious concerns. Repeal of the School Boards (Scotland) Act 1988 would be a detrimental step for Special Schools, particularly following the Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004, which abolished the Records of Needs. Parental involvement in Special Schools is required with an annual review of placement suitability involving many representatives from various service providers. In such schools, the School Board, because of its legal status, can work with confidence and authority for the good of the entire school community.

The proposed Parental Involvement Bill attempts to bring together what is best about PTA's and School Boards, and there is much reference to an ideal arrangement being the merger of the two groups. However, people join these two groups for completely different reasons and participate in the group that suits the individual's skills, talents, abilities and interests. A 'forced marriage' of the two risks a 'lose-lose', lowest common denominator solution.

We believe the Parental Involvement Bill is unlikely to meet its stated aims of improving parental involvement because it muddles the separate issues of parental involvement and parental representation. What we need is a clear statutory framework of expectation on the education authorities and empowerment of all parties with roles and responsibilities based on current best practice.

CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WITH PARENTS

Background Information

In line with the City of Edinburgh Council's commitment to forging a close partnership with parents, an Education Consultative Committee with Parents was formed in 1996.

Meetings are held on a 6-weekly cycle, and representatives meet with Ewan Aitken, Executive Member for Youth and Education and Roy Jobson, Director of Children and Families. Current practices and future Children and Families policies are discussed and the Consultative Committee with Parents is consulted on major items including the Revenue Budget and Session Dates.

For each of the 4 Neighbourhoods, there are 2 secondary representatives and 6 primary cluster representatives (5 for the North West Area). There are also 3 special school representatives together with a representative from the Special Education Needs Forum and the Childcare Strategy Group. There are 3 Head Teacher representatives and 2 nursery representatives.

Items discussed, reports and presentations have covered a wide range of topics. Some of these have included Public Private Partnerships, School Meals and Session Dates.

Meetings are held on a Tuesday evening at the City Chambers. Coffee and sandwiches are available from 6.00pm and meetings commence at 6.30pm.

The Consultative Committee with Parents has made an important contribution to improving communications across the Education service.

CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WITH PARENTS

School Board Representatives:

NORTH WEST NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUP

- Vacancy, Craigroyston Community High School Cluster
- Vacancy, Queensferry High School Cluster
- Ms Anna Beynon, Stockbridge Primary School
- Mr Mark Baird, The Royal High School
- Mrs Rona Fraser, Broughton High School
- Mr Nigel Jeynes, Roseburn Primary School
- Mr Kevin Davidson, Davidson's Mains Primary School

SOUTH EAST NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUP

- Mrs Gillian Pia, James Gillespie's Primary School
- Mr Stephen Preston, Bonaly Primary School
- Mrs Patricia O'Neil, St Mary's (Edin) RC Primary School
- Mr Tony Carbery, Sciennes Primary School
- Dr Karen Traill, Liberton Primary School
- Mrs Anne Crawley, Boroughmuir High School
- Mr Vic Summers/Mr Tom Bringham, Liberton High School
- Mr Ian McGillivray, Firhill High School
- Mrs Norma Devlin, Tollcross Primary School
- Mrs Tracey Lackie/Mrs Morag Clarke, Gracemount High School

SOUTH WEST NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUP

- Vacancy, Wester Hailes Education Centre Cluster
- Mr George Preston, Nether Currie Primary School
- Mrs Marcial Martin/Mr Graham Newton, Carrick Knowe/Gylemuir Primary School
- Vacancy, Tynecastle/Forrester/St Augustine's High School
- Mr Robert Mann/Mrs Carol Wilson/ Mrs Jennifer Nelson, Currie/WHEC/ Balerno High School
- Mr Peter Allan, St Cuthbert's Primary School
- Mr Kevin Marshall, Stenhouse Primary School
- Mrs Patricia Aitchison, Dean Park Primary School

NORTH EAST NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUP

- Ms Ainan Groat, Fort Primary School
- Mr Joe Greenan, St John Vianney Primary School
- Mrs Jacqueline Cavallaro, Niddrie Mill Primary School
- Mrs Donna Caldwell, Abbeyhill Primary School
- Vacancy, Portobello High School Cluster
- Mrs Sandra Walker, Leith Academy
- Mr Colin Brown, Trinity Academy
- Dr Andrew Fraser, Portobello High School
- Ms Margaret Wilson, Leith Primary School

CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WITH PARENTS

Representatives:

NURSERY SCHOOLS

Ms Katharine Spence, Balgreen Nursery School
Mrs Angela Bonnar, Calderglen Nursery School

SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Mrs Carol Telefer, Kaimes School
Mr Jack Calder, Pilrig Park School
Mr Roy Mackay, Willowpark School
Mrs Pru Irvine, Kingsinch School

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS FORUM

Dr Susan Hardman Moore
(Broughton Primary School Board)

CHILDCARE STRATEGY GROUP

Vacancy

HEAD TEACHERS

- Primary:** Mr William French
Head Teacher
Murrayburn Primary
- Secondary:** Mr Andy Gray,
Head Teacher,
St Augustine's High School
- Special:** Mrs Meg Donaldson,
Head Teacher,
Prospect Bank School
- Teacher Representatives:** George Rubiensi,
Craigroyston CHS
- Parents As Partners:** Vacancy
- Observer:** Judith Gillespie, SPTC

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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: DR KAREN TRAILL

Postal Address: 61 LASSWADE ROAD

EDINBURGH

EH16 6JZ

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