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

Sent: 05 June 2005 17:32

To: Parental Involvement Bill

Subject: 589

Response from the Parentzone - Parental Involvement questionnaire

Name: Andrew Dickson

Responding as: An individual

Individual: Yes

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

Behalf of groups: Yes

Sharing responses / future engagement: Yes

Question 1: Yes.

This involvement must take place at school level.

There should be guidelines and information on best practise for authorities to work from in order to promote involvement.

I can see nothing in the Draft Bill or Consultation which actually addresses the problems of getting parents involved.

A duty should be placed on the Scottish Executive to distribute and promote best practise throughout Scotland.

Question 2: Yes.

There should be strategy layers for all levels including The Scottish executive, Education Authorities, Schools and Parent Forums.

Exemplars and examples of best practise should be available to choose from.

Question 3: Yes.

This will give focus and continuity.

Question 4: No - Not as currently described in the draft bill and consultation.

School Boards do a good job at present and the bill makes no provision for carrying this forward into any new framework. There is a danger of losing the baby with the bath water.

There must be a framework in place which sets out the limits and responsibilities for Parent Forums and some process of selection which gives members some form of legitimacy.

Question 5: No.

There is a great danger that a school may end up two or more groups of parents all calling themselves Parent Forums. What legitimacy would a group have if they merely forms its self? Different groups with different agendas would be difficult to manage and indeed could be damaging to the school.

What stops a single agenda group or indeed a single parent deciding that it was a Parent Forum.

Question 6: Yes.

They should also seek to encourage individual school forums within their area to communicate with each other on a regular basis and facilitate combined meetings.

Question 7: Yes.

This would seem to suit several small schools in close geographic location.

Question 8: No.

In schools where there is already a School Board they should have the duty of forming the new forum. The Board should be the seed used to grow the new Parent Forum.

In schools where no Board is present then the Education Authority should assume the role of forming the new forum.

Question 9: No.

There should be a skeleton or framework from which parents can grow their own constitution. The framework should set out firm limits and defined areas of responsibility.

Question 10: Yes.

The status quo for School Boards as it is at present.

Question 11: Looked after children should be treated no differently from any other pupil with their carer or guardian having the same rights as a parent.

Question 12: Yes.

Members of Parent Forums, as with School Boards, should not be in close unsupervised contact with pupils and therefore disclosure is unnecessary.

Question 13: No.

The head teacher should have a right to attend. Any forum which is not working with the headteacher is not working in the best interests of the school.

Teachers and senior pupils should be encouraged to attend in order to promote a closer link with the life of the school.

Councillors should only be able to attend by invitation.

Question 14: Yes.

This list could have been endless.

The main role of the forums should be to "support the school" in all of its functions and never to take over the schools roles.

Question 15: Yes.

There will have to be certain functions that a forum must carry out such as;

Communicating with parents,

Allocation of school budgets,

Appointment of senior staff etc.

These should be set out in a framework which also allows for involvement in any area of the schools function.

Forums should not be allowed to take up individual cases, these should always be dealt with by the school with the parent/pupil involved.

Question 16: Yes.

Question 17: Yes.

Question 18: Yes.

A national rule for the allocation of funds should continue to be in place based on pupil numbers per school.

There should also be a duty placed on Education Authorities to provide training for Forum members or to fund training if it is obtained outwith the Authorities control.

Question 19: Yes.

I would be very surprised if this were not already the case.

Question 20: Yes.

Whatever modern process is adopted this should still involve the Parent Forum as active members.

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Question 21: Not applicable.

Question 22: Yes.

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