

Piaskowski K (Karen)

632
additional info,

From: Trifkovic A (Alexandra) on behalf of Minister for Education and Young People
Sent: 08 June 2005 16:50
To: Parental Involvement Bill
Subject: FW: Parental Involvement

Not sure if Colin has fed this into the consultation...

Alex Trifkovic
APS/Minister for Education and Young People
x47821

-----Original Message-----

From: Richard.Welsh@scottish.parliament.uk [mailto:Richard.Welsh@scottish.parliament.uk] **On Behalf Of** Peter.Peacock.msp@scottish.parliament.uk
Sent: 07 June 2005 08:56
To: Minister for Education and Young People
Subject: FW: Parental Involvement

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-----Original Message-----

From: Chris Hall [mailto:chris@chrisnannahall.freemove.co.uk]
Sent: Monday, June 06, 2005 11:49 PM
To: Colin.Reeves@scotland.gov.uk
Cc: Peacock P (Peter), MSP
Subject: Parental Involvement

Dear Colin

I was glad to meet you at the recent roadshow in Musselburgh for the Parental Involvement Bill Consultation, and as a result some of my initial misgivings about the draft bill were allayed. Since then we have given the matter real consideration, and have submitted a response to the consultation via the Parentzone website.

As well as responding to the content of the proposed bill I also wanted to make a suggestion relating to the broader issue of parental involvement. The problem we are facing is not School Boards or the lack of Parent Forums; the problem is a lack of parental involvement in the education process.

I believe a primary cause of that care-less-ness is the message that has long been broadcast by the institutions, both explicitly and by implication, that education is the task of the professionals; Parents, KEEP OUT!

That message has been received loud and clear by the large majority of parents in Scotland today. And by and large we have done as we have been told.

Tesco may provide excellent food, and understand far more about nutrition than the average parent. But we do not blame Tesco if our children are not fed; we know as parents it is our responsibility to feed our children. And Tesco serve as an excellent resource in performing that task. Likewise we do not blame BHS if our children are not properly clothed. If they have no clothes, we know it is our own negligence as parents that is to blame.

But when it comes to education, well... 'that's someone else's job. It's up to the school to teach my children. That's why I pay my taxes. What do I know about teaching? I leave that to the professionals'. And it's so convenient for the professionals not to have parents interfering in their job. Only... it's not their job.

It is true that the teaching professions and the public education systems offer tremendous resources to the parent. But the primary responsibility for the child's education belongs to the parent, not the school and not the state. Does not all the relevant legislation, both national and international, uphold that which from common sense we know to be true? So why have we parents fallen for the " 'sno ma job " line?

As parents, education is our job. Just like feeding and clothing. That is why we have the choice (something many parents are practically unaware of) whether or not to use the public education system. If we understood that as a choice, we might not feel so helpless and uninvolved. We might find we have something to say about the amount of PE or the content of sex education or the dress code or who will be the next head teacher.

Whilst I welcome and am grateful for the great efforts being made to improve the framework of parental involvement, I do not believe it will change the underlying problem. Somehow the message must be clearly sounded, through teachers, schools, education authorities, scottish executive, websites, media and all possible means: 'PARENTS, IT'S YOUR JOB. We are hear to help, encourage and resource, but the education of your child is your responsibility. You have permission to get involved again.'

And when that message has been received loud and clear, then we may reasonably expect to see an army of parents filling the Parent Forums, Partnership Forum, PTA's and whatever other framework may result from this proposed legislation.

with best wishes

Chris Hall

(Member of two school boards and parent of three school-age children)

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-----Original Message-----

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

Sent: 06 June 2005 07:39

To: Parental Involvement Bill

Subject: 632

Response from the Parentzone - Parental Involvement questionnaire

Name: Chris Hall

E-mail: chris@chrisnannhall.freerve.co.uk

Postal address: 2 Rosehall Gardens, Haddington EH41 4EA

Responding as: An individual

Individual: Yes

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

Behalf of groups:

Sharing responses / future engagement: Yes

Question 1: (I do not think that the question framework provided for responses is helpful and so have included my whole response in the first box)

1. EMPHASISE IMPROVING RATHER THAN REPLACING

"Don't throw the baby out with the bath water"

- Emphasis in the new legislation should be on improving and supplementing, rather than replacing, the current arrangements. We should build on strengths rather than start again.

- There is still a need for a formal body, led by parents, that addresses school policy, administration and management issues.

- This is best accomplished through a regular, chaired and minuted meeting of parent, teacher and pupil representatives.

- Beyond this, we welcome an increased flexibility, particularly in the following areas which could be decided locally:

. The method of appointing members

. The prescribed numbers of parent and teacher members

2. EMPHASISE PARTNERSHIP FORUMS RATHER THAN PARENT FORUMS

"Work together, not in isolation"

- Consider using a description other than 'Parent Forum' in the legislation. This suggests a toothless talking shop. The term 'Partnership Forum' would strike a much better tone, which suggests a dynamic working together to effect fruitful change.

- Whilst the lead should properly be taken by the parents, representatives of all stakeholder groups should also be a part of the forum, including school staff, students and local authority and community representatives.

- The head teacher must be present, otherwise how can there be meaningful dialogue leading to real change? We suggest this be not simply in an advisory capacity but as a full member of the forum.

3. CLARIFY THE STATUTORY POWERS

"Give it teeth"

- The bill should clearly enumerate the areas in which this new body can have influence and effect change. These should include:

- . Appointment of head teacher and school management team
 - . Development Plan
 - . Curriculum
 - . Policy (including dress code, discipline and homework)
 - . Budget
 - . Materials and resources
 - . Communications (within and outwith the school community)
 - . Actioning of local and national government initiatives
- Parents should be represented at the local authority Education Committee.

4. BE MORE PRESCRIPTIVE

"Tell us what you mean"

- Whilst the move to greater flexibility is welcome, the draft bill is so woolly that it is hard to envisage what it will look like in practice. It would be helpful to at least describe, if not prescribe, some preferred scenarios.

- Parents are more likely to engage with something that is clearly defined than something that is vague and amorphous.

Question 2:

Question 3:

Question 4:

Question 5:

Question 6:

Question 7:

Question 8:

Question 9:

Question 10:

Question 11:

Question 12:

Question 13:

Question 14:

Question 15:

Question 16:

Question 17:

Question 18:

Question 19:

Question 20:

Question 21:

Question 22:

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