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764

Piaskowski K (Karen)

From:
Sent: 06 June 2005 19:41
To: Parental Involvement Bill
Subject: 764: C. Findlay (Parent) RESPONSE.
Importance: High

This email has been received from an external party and
has been swept for the presence of computer viruses.

Please find attached my response to the Draft Parental Involvement Bill Consultation.

Regards,
Colin Findlay,

PLEASE NOTE: THE ABOVE MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED FROM THE INTERNET.

On entering the GSi, this email was scanned for viruses by the Government Secure Intranet (GSI) virus scanning service supplied exclusively by Energis in partnership with MessageLabs.

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No virus found in this outgoing message.
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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: COLIN FINDLAY, Parent.

Address:

Title of consultation: **MAKING THE DIFFERENCE –
INVOLVING PARENTS BETTER IN SCHOOLS**

1. Are you responding as:

an individual?	YES
on behalf of a group or organisation?	NO

2a. INDIVIDUALS:

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

Yes	YES
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	NO
Yes, make my response available, but not my name or address	NO
Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address	YES

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?

N/A

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 Scottish Executive to contact you again in the future in relation to this consultation response?

Yes	YES
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No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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MAKING THE DIFFERENCE – INVOLVING PARENTS BETTER IN SCHOOLS

CONSULTATION QUESTION TEMPLATE [FOR PARENTZONE]

Question 1: Do you agree with the placing of a new duty on education authorities to promote parental involvement?

- 1.1 I do not believe that there is a need to repeal the School Boards (Scotland) act.
1.2 I think that the existing arrangements are generally satisfactory & that they could be improved by minor amendments.

Question 2: Do you agree that education authorities should be required to prepare new Strategies for Parental Involvement (SPIs)?

No.
I find that the existing North Lanarkshire arrangements to be satisfactory.
The existing arrangements encourage Parental Involvement & offer training for School Boards.

Question 3: Do you agree that incorporating these Strategies in existing Annual Statements of Education Improvement Objectives and School Development Plans (as set out in the 2000 Act) is the right way for education authorities to set out their intentions? Or should this be done in some other way?

The existing arrangements are generally satisfactory.

Question 4: Do you agree that the current system of parental representation i.e. School Boards should be replaced by a more flexible system of parent forum, as decided locally by the parents, in a way which best suits them and their school best?

No.
The current system has flexibility and structure.
The proposed arrangements lack structure, order & accountability and could result in such a variety of arrangements that the education authorities would find interfacing with them to be unmanageable.

The current system is also democratic and accountable
There are no guarantees that the proposed forums would either.

Question 5: The Bill does not prescribe the means of appointment to the new forums (elections to Boards are mandatory) but provides for parents to decide this locally. Do you agree?

No.
I believe that there needs to be some consistent & democratic means of appointing representatives.
My experience has been that there are rarely elections due to the difficulty in getting parents involved.
In practice the difficulty is not made worse by the thought of elections. The difficulty is in getting parents involved due to the pressures & competing priorities of modern living.

“Parental Involvement” has not been clearly identified or defined in the Draft Bill.

Question 6: Do you agree that education authorities should have a new duty to promote the establishment of a parent forum in each school and to support their operation?

The existing arrangements are generally satisfactory.
North Lanarkshire Education Authority currently promotes & supports School Boards.

Question 7: Should the Bill provide for 'composite' parent forums where this is the preferred option of parents in each school in a combined school or cluster of schools?

No.

Each school should have the right to its own identity in a School Board.

Some modifications to the existing arrangements may be appropriate in cases of rural Schools with a very low pupil headcount.

Question 8: Do you agree with the proposal for the involvement of education authorities to get the initial parent forum off the ground? If not, what alternative would you suggest?

I believe that the existing arrangements are generally satisfactory & that the North Lanarkshire authority is already involved & supportive of these existing arrangements.

Note that this question is poorly stated.

The question assumes that the Draft Bill arrangements are inevitable.

Question 9: The draft Bill leaves the forum's 'constitution' to be determined locally, either by the parents or initially under the education authority scheme. Do you agree with this approach? If not, what alternative would you suggest and why?

I believe that the existing arrangements are satisfactory.

Local constitutions will lead to a chaotic situation that will be difficult for the education authority to work with.

Note: As before the question assumes that the Draft Bill arrangements are inevitable and is closed to the existing arrangements or a minor modification of them.

Question 10: Do you agree that membership of a parent forum should be confined to parents (the broad definition) of children attending the school or individuals co-opted by the parent forum? Should parents always be in the majority?

The existing arrangements are generally satisfactory.
Parent members are in the majority under these arrangements and should remain so.

Question 11: Do you have a view as to how the needs of looked-after children should be addressed and catered for in the Bill?

This is a technical question over legal arrangements.
I do not feel qualified to respond on the existing versus the Draft Bill.

Note that this question is poorly stated.

The question assumes that the Draft Bill arrangements are inevitable.

Question 12: Do you agree that the Bill should not result in parent forum members being subject to automatic disclosure checks but that members, like any other parent, should only be checked when engaging in activities defined under the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003?

This is a technical question over legal arrangements.
I do not feel qualified to respond on the existing versus the Draft Bill.

Note that this question is poorly stated.

The question assumes that the Draft Bill arrangements are inevitable.

Question 13: *On balance, do you agree that 'rights of attendance' for certain non-members of a parent forum should not be a part of the new arrangements? In other words do you agree that non-members of the parent forum should attend only by invitation or do you believe the headteacher should have the right to attend, with the councillor or other individual by invitation?*

The existing arrangements are generally satisfactory.

The head teacher is expected to attend as "adviser" and his attendance, experience & general contribution is always a key element of meetings and the exchange of information to Parents.

Note that this question is poorly stated.

The question assumes that the Draft Bill arrangements are inevitable.

Question 14: *Do you consider these functions appropriate to parent forums? Would you suggest removing or adding any, or making some obligatory and others optional?*

The existing arrangements are generally satisfactory.

These functions are already key & integral to the existing school Boards.

Question 15: The Bill has been drafted to allow the parent forum to find out and report the views of parents in the school on any matters which are of interest or concern to them. Do you agree with this open-ended provision or would you suggest defining the areas of interest more restrictively?

The existing arrangements are generally satisfactory.

The existing arrangements allow for this.

Note that this question is poorly stated.

The question assumes that the Draft Bill arrangements are inevitable.

The question infers that School Boards and the existing arrangements do not find out & report the views of parents.

Question 16: Do you agree that the Bill should designate parent forums as 'agents' of the education authority for the purpose of their dealings with third parties, and that the issue of insurance should be looked into further? Or do you take an alternative view?

The existing arrangements are generally satisfactory.

Some of the matters regarding insurance arrangements are technical and could be resolved by modifications to the existing arrangements.

Question 17: Are these the appropriate obligations to place on education authorities in relation to their working with parent forums?

The existing arrangements are generally satisfactory.

Note: The question assumes that the draft Bill is the only option to the existing arrangements.

Question 18: Do you agree with the provisions requiring education authorities to provide financial support or support in kind to parent forums or would you suggest alternative arrangements?

The existing arrangements are generally satisfactory.

The local authorities already provide financial support.

Question 19: Do you agree with the proposed duty on education authorities to provide advice and information to individual parents on request, on matters relating to the education of their children?

Yes I agree with this proposal.

I do not agree that this can only be achieved by abolishing School Boards.

Question 20: Do you agree that education authorities should be enabled to replace the current system of appointing headteachers and deputy headteachers with more modern, flexible processes and procedures?

The existing arrangements are generally satisfactory.

Training for any interviewing panel members is vital & exists under the existing arrangements.
There is room to improve appointment/selection skills training without abolishing the School Boards.

Question 21: If you do not agree that the principle of parental involvement should be retained by the involvement of parent forums in the new senior appointments processes, please give your reasons.

The existing arrangements are generally satisfactory.

I do agree that parents should **continue** to be involved in the senior appointment selection process.

Question 22: Do you agree with the proposal to require education authorities to establish complaints procedures in relation to the way they exercise their functions under the Bill?

The existing arrangements are generally satisfactory.

North Lanarkshire already has a complaints procedure.

PLEASE ALSO SEE RESPONSE LETTER BELOW.

DRAFT SCOTTISH SCHOOLS (PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT) BILL 2005

Other concerns regarding the draft Bill included the perception that:

- parent forums required only one parent
- neither staff nor community members would be involved unless co-opted. I believe that this would be a weakening of the existing statutory rights of Catholic schools to have a co-opted Church member.
- forums would regulate their own proceedings – which could lead to individuals remaining for an unspecified period of time thereby facilitating the development of cliques
- the removal of a legal requirement to declare a self interest could allow individuals to promote their own personal self interest
- meetings would be devalued by the absence of a requirement to keep minutes or to set agendas
- the removal of the provision for a Clerk would help to undermine the effectiveness of 'Board-type' forum
- unlike the existing school Board there would be no 'duty' to raise the standards of education in the school
- the involvement of parents in senior management appointments would be diluted
- parents would no longer be able to act as check or balance to the way in which a school was managed
- the provision for an overarching parent forum in combined schools or clusters could result in parents having an undue influence on the development of a school where they have no children in attendance.

To conclude, I believe that the proposed legislation is fatally flawed. Furthermore I hope that the views expressed by parents such as I are addressed and that our future input into the education of my children is not diminished as a result of adherence to a proposed Bill that, even if, well intentioned is likely to affect my children adversely.

Yours

Colin Findlay

If you wish to reply electronically, please email your response by **Tuesday 7 June** to parentalinvolvementbill@scotland.qsi.gov.uk

Or please return it to the following address:

Parental Involvement Bill

Schools Division

Area 2B

Victoria Quay

Edinburgh

EH6 6QQ

The Scottish Executive Consultation Process

Consultation is an essential and important aspect of Scottish Executive working methods. Given the wide-ranging areas of work of the Scottish Executive, there are many varied types of consultation. However, in general Scottish Executive consultation exercises aim to provide opportunities for all those who wish to express their opinions on a proposed area of work to do so in ways which will inform and enhance that work.

While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant public body. Consultation exercises may involve seeking views in a number of different ways, such as public meetings, focus groups or questionnaire exercises.

Typically, Scottish Executive consultations involve a written paper inviting answers to specific questions or more general views about the material presented. Written papers are distributed to organisations and individuals with an interest in the area of consultation, and they are also placed on the Scottish Executive web site enabling a wider audience to access the paper and submit their responses¹. Copies of all the responses received to consultation exercises (except those where the individual or organisation requested confidentiality) are placed in the Scottish Executive library at Saughton House, Edinburgh (K Spur, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD, telephone 0131 244 4552).

The views and suggestions detailed in consultation responses are analysed and used as part of the decision making process. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review
- inform the development of a particular policy
- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented

If you have any comment about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to:

Name: Karen Piaskowski
Address: Schools Division
2-B
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

E-mail: karen.piaskowski@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
