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**Piaskowski K (Karen)**

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**From:** Parker, Richard [rparker@eastlothian.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 07 June 2005 11:27  
**To:** Parental Involvement Bill  
**Subject:** 842

**Importance:** High



Parental involvement Bill.doc

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Please find attached the Response to the Parental Involvement Bill consultation which I am submitting on behalf of the School Board Officers Network

<<Parental Involvement Bill.doc>>

Richard Parker  
Principal Officer, Schools Support Division  
Department of Education & Children's Services  
Tel: 01620 827494  
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Please complete the details below to ensure we handle your response appropriately:

Name:

Richard Parker

E-mail:

rparker@eastlothian.gov.uk

Postal address:

Department of Education & Children's Services,

Are you responding as:

an individual

on behalf of a group  
or organisation

Individuals:

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

Yes

No

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Yes, make my response, name and address all available

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

On behalf of groups or organisations:

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Yes

No

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

No

Our ref :rp/sbon/parinvbill

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6 June 2005

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

Dear Sir

**Response to the Draft Parental Involvement Bill Consultation**

I hereby submit, on behalf of the School Board Officers Network (SBON), a general response to the consultation on the Draft Parental Involvement Bill. A decision was taken by this Group not to respond to the 22 prepared questions, as there were concerns at their closed nature.

We have welcomed the opportunity to discuss and debate the proposals contained within the Draft Bill and we continue to support and promote the sharing of good practice of parental involvement in children's education.

We recognise that the Bill does offer the opportunity to modernize and update current arrangements for involving parents in their children's education and to broaden strategies for such involvement. However, we are aware that there has been a strong reaction to the repeal of the School Board Act and we do not imagine that changes to legislation will result in an upsurge in parental involvement.

We feel that there needs to be recognition that the current formal structure of School Boards has allowed a significant number of parents to make a valuable contribution to the work of schools and Education Authorities and that positive partnerships have developed. We would therefore recommend that the positive aspects of the current legislation be retained in the new Bill.

The Group proposes that we formalise a partnership with the Scottish Executive in the future to assist in taking forward the proposals contained within the draft Bill. We ask that the Scottish Executive recognises the knowledge and experience of this Group and would suggest that there is an

important role for SBON to be involved in the next stage of the process in terms of regulations and guidance.

At operational level, we suggest that some form of national structured framework would be welcomed to enable authorities to support parents. A national model is what we propose and we ask that the Scottish Executive involves representatives of this Group in shaping that national model. The remit and responsibilities of a Parent Forum need to be clearly set out and we feel that there needs to be parity across local authorities for this to be implemented efficiently and effectively.

Based on SBON members' experiences we feel there is a need to build on existing good/best practice and this has formed the basis of our proposed model.

We further welcome the removal of the formal election procedures for parents however in order to ensure equality and fairness there does need to be a system put in place for the appointment of members to the Forum. A simplified nomination/election process for parents is required. There must be a clear and valid mechanism in the new parental nomination/election process that is democratic.

The notion of a Parent/Partnership Forum existing without the involvement of the Head Teacher and indeed staff, pupils, local community members and Councillors is unthinkable. The Forum needs to be inclusive and therefore a Partnership Forum rather than a Parents Forum would be worthy of consideration. There needs to be more emphasis on Head Teacher involvement, which is absolutely crucial. Currently, effective School Boards are those that have Head Teacher involvement/partnership and Head Teachers need to be given appropriate training to emphasise how important this is. We support this as being a key and critical standard for the SQH qualification.

It should be recognised that parents, school staff, the local community, local elected members and officers of the Authority all have a part to play in the life of the school. Therefore, the notion of a Parent's Forum and its composition needs very careful consideration to ensure that it works for the benefit of the school, its pupils and the whole community.

There are many parents who want to be involved in their children's education and to contribute to the life of their local school but do not wish to serve on a committee. Many parents also want to influence what happens in their child's school and to accomplish change and improvement in partnership with the school, the community and the Education Authority.

It is important that members of a Forum are very clear as to what their roles and responsibilities are and there is a need for certain restrictions to be put in place relating to matters of confidentiality, especially where these involve individual pupils and members of staff.

Yours sincerely

**Richard Parker**  
**On behalf of School Board Officers Network**