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

Sent: 07 June 2005 18:41

To: Parental Involvement Bill

Subject: 919

Response from the Parentzone - Parental Involvement questionnaire

Name: Tom Easson

Responding as: An individual

Individual: Yes

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

Behalf of groups:

Sharing responses / future engagement: Yes

Question 1: I thought there was one ! ... through consultations on educational issues and local events.

At a school level in our area it works well although support from area education is minimal if not non-existent.

The only real advantage to this major change seems to be to increase parental involvement. What other options to do this have been considered?

In our community, the school, school board, parents & Teachers association, parents committee, and other community groups work well together. Calling it something else wouldn't improve things. What is needed is more positive and supportive action from local authorities and government.

Question 2: I would suggest that there should not only be strategies but mutually agreed standards and policies. This, however, requires practical support (often in the evening) including finance which isn't obviously available.

Question 3: If you are committed to parental involvement using terms like " strategies in existing annual statements of education improvement objectives and school development plans.. etc" ... wouldn't entice me..... be realistic and set up simple local consultation processes.

Question 4: No.

This proposal seems to have a (hidden) agenda! In our area it seems to work where there is a reasonable support and the school board is elected and consults with the community. Where it falls down is the lack of response and finance from local authority. That's where I believe the apathy comes from.

Question 5: You can interpret mandatory actions in many ways to suit circumstances. I cannot see how calling it more informal will have more parents involved !

Persistent involvement is a by-product of progress and if you don't get practical support from local authority and Scottish Executive then it doesn't matter what you call it!

Question 6: No.

They should have a new duty, supported by clear budget, to support community involvement in ALL aspects relating to the local school.

Question 7: Yes.

Question 8: What involvement did they have in making the existing system work? and what would make any difference now?

Question 9: I don't think an informal group would be particularly interested in "constitutions" .. these don't exist in public life !

The relationship between a school and its local community is complex and shouldn't be left to the local whims or flavour of the day of the people interested at the time. It needs to be structured in some common fashion but flexible for local interests and priorities.

Question 10: I believe any school forum should have an appropriate mix of parents and non-parents. Just because someone doesn't have a child at the school doesn't mean that they cannot contribute highly to benefit the school.

Question 11: No

Question 12: Yes

Question 13: I cannot understand why you wouldn't make this approach as inclusive as possible. The terminology used is very formal and contrary to setting up what should be, in principle, a process for improving school performance through integrating positively and expansively with the local community.

It is essential that teaching staff and any other individual associated with the school/area have right of attendance.

Question 14: I'm loosing sight of what is the real purpose of a parents forum !

I cannot see any real advantage in this policy other than a clear objective to involve more parents !

However, by changing what is good with the present system could adversely impact the overall benefit of school boards, Parents committees, etc.

Question 15: No, there should be no restrictions on interests other than those of common sense and dignity.

Question 16: Ok if there are advantages. But, acting as 'agents' of the local authorities could have other connotations.

Again, the formality of School boards is being removed are we not just calling it something different ?

Question 17:

Question 18: Is there another budget stream for this now. We have tried with difficulty to resolve school issues and budgets are restricted. Would any support to this new 'committee' come from the already tight education budget ?

Question 19: Yes

Question 20: I think anyone would support 'more modern, flexible processes and procedures' in ALL parts of the education authority not just the selection of headteachers !

Question 21: This is a fairly formal process which requires a great deal of structure.... however, parents and local community involvement in head teacher appointments (and other senior roles) is appropriate.

Question 22: Yes.