

Committee Minutes

Consultative Committee with Parents

Edinburgh, 23 September 2008

Present:- Councillors MacLaren (Convener), Beckett and Henderson; Lesley McGoohan (Wester Hailes Education Centre), Mandy Gallacher (Craiglockhart Primary), Carol Telfer (Kaimes School), Raymond Simpson (Teacher Representative), Donald Craigie (Dean Park Primary), Judith Gillespie (Observer), Scottish Parent Teacher Council), Gordon Chrumka (Broughton Primary), Jeanna Brady (Bruntsfield Primary), Henrietta Forman (Braidburn School), Gus Meechan (Castlebrae High), Nick Crolla (Buckstone Primary), Anne Heggie (Prospect Bank School), Martin Southern (Bonaly Primary), Tina Woolnough (Royal High/Blackhall Primary), Susan Edwards (Victoria Primary), Julie-Ann Sime (Tollcross Primary), Karen Traill (Liberton High), Iain McGillivray (Firrhill High), Julia MacIntosh (Abbeyhill Primary), Patricia Aitchison (Balerno High), Meg Donaldson (Head Teacher Representative), Fiona Macarthur (Portobello High), Bruce Sherry (East Craigs Primary), Brian Davison (Leith Academy) and Nigel Goddard (James Gillespie's High).

Apologies for Absence:- Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Johnstone, Norma Devlin, Lynda Flex, Carolyn Girvan, John Walker and Lorna Whitefield.

1 Councillor Elizabeth Maginnis

The Convener paid tribute to Councillor Elizabeth Maginnis who had died on 7 September 2008. As a former Convener of Education, Councillor Maginnis had had a great respect for children and young people and had achieved a great deal for education in Edinburgh.

Judith Gillespie, Scottish Parent Teacher Council, also paid tribute to Councillor Maginnis and her commitment to forging close partnership with parents through the formation of the Consultative Committee with Parents.

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2 Minute

The minute of meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents of 13 May 2008 was approved as a correct record.

3 Matters Arising

3.1 Children and Families Revenue Budget 2008/09

Audrey Palmer, Devolved Resources and Support Manager, advised that in May 2008, Business Managers in all schools had been asked to provide details of resources (such as study guides and past papers) to which parents were asked to make a financial contribution. 18 Primary, two Special and four Secondary Schools had advised that they made no charges. Six Primary and 12 Secondary Schools had advised they made charges for:-

- Revision sheets and study guides
- Home economics and woodwork resources
- School trips
- Damaged/lost books and jotters
- Musical instruments

Charges ranged from 20p for lost jotters to £2.00 for revision sheets to £60.00 for musical instruments. Practices varied in each establishment with the charges being suggested but not compulsory in many cases. Information on expenditure per pupil in Edinburgh, in comparison to other authorities was provided.

The Committee noted the information.

3.2 National Body

The Scottish Parental Involvement Officer Network (SPION) were hoping to run two pilot events early in 2009 in Glasgow and Dundee. A couple of Parent Council members from each authority would be asked to attend. The events would concentrate on looking at the formation of a National Body and how it would operate for the benefit of Parent Councils. In addition, the Scottish Government were looking to appoint a consultant to compile and issue a questionnaire to Parent Councils throughout Scotland. The questionnaire would concentrate on "Support for Parent Councils at a national level".

Feedback received from Parent Councils within the City of Edinburgh, was that National Body should:-

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- Be robust
- Be representative
- Be independent
- Have a statutory advisory role with regard to national strategies and legislation
- Be parent led

Comments from Edinburgh Parent Councils would be forwarded to Lorraine Sanda, Learning and Teaching Scotland.

3.3 Revenue Budget 2008/09

Information on expenditure per pupil in Edinburgh in comparison to other Scottish authorities was provided.

It was agreed that a report be made back to the Committee on the impact of budget reduction to schools and the financial impact of e-Finance (Oracle). Comments from parents on budget issues should be forwarded to mike.rosendale@edinburgh.gov.uk .

4 Estate Rationalisation

Lindsay Glasgow, Asset Planning Manager, outlined the three main criteria for Children and Families estate rationalisation: Educational Outcomes, Parental Choice and Value for Money. As part of the consultation, papers had been issued to schools, parents and interested parties and made available on the Council's website. Exhibitions were being set up to encourage parents to look at the proposals. Public meetings were also being held, with minutes taken of the discussions and written submissions were invited. The consultation papers would be pulled together before being submitted to the full Council. A Cross Party Forum would be held on 10 November before recommendations would be made to the Council meeting on 20 November 2008.

The Committee noted the up-to-date position.

5 Children and Families Department – Service Plan 2008-2011

Nancy Henderson, Service Planning Manager, presented details of the Children and Families Service Plan. The Plan set the focus for the work of Children and Families and aimed to set the direction for the Children and Families service over the next few years with objectives to improve the outcomes for all children, young people and their families in Edinburgh. Details of the Service Plan could be found on the Council website:

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/internet/Council/Council_publications/Council_policies_and_plans/children_and_families_service_plan

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During discussion, the following questions and issues were raised:-

- The summary document on the Service Plan which had been circulated to members of the CCwP had not included any information on support for learning.
- It was suggested that the summary leaflet should include a website link.
- The summary sheet had no mention of the role of parents in helping the department achieve its objectives.
- Guidance was needed for Head Teachers in working towards two hours PE per week.

The Committee:

- 1) **Noted details of the Service Plan 2008-2011.**
- 2) **Noted that, in relation to target-setting, a report on attainment would be brought back to the Consultative Committee.**

6 Provision for Children with Additional Support Needs

Martin Vallely, Service Manager Professional Services, gave up-to-date information on the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004. The Act had been a major area of work for the Department over the last three years.

A report to the Council's Education, Children and Families Committee on 18 March 2008 had provided:

- An analysis of how the Act was being implemented and the timescale involved.
- An audit of current provision for additional support needs for the whole school estate.
- What the implementation of the Act meant for co-location of services, extra resource requirements and the development of integrated service provision.
- Details of how parents would be consulted throughout the process.

An information pack for parents entitled 'In on the Act' contained leaflets on:

- 1) What Does the ASL Act Mean for Your Child?
- 2) Starting School and Changing School
- 3) Planning for Your Child's Learning and the Coordinated Support Plan

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- 4) Resolving Disagreements
- 5) Preparing to Leave (School Students aged 16 and Over)

During discussion, the following questions and issues were raised:

- Had the Council an audit of need of the number of children and young people who were service users?
- Was the funding allocation keeping up with the increase in the number of children needing additional support each year?
- The need to be more efficient with statistics for funding received. The Council had to evidence the increase in additional support needs to support this.
- The impact of efficiency savings on identifying additional support needs in mainstream schools.
- Information from the Additional Support for Learning Forum was requested.

The Committee noted the up-to-date information on Additional Support for Learning.

7 Placing In Schools Appeal Committee – Appointments

Nominations were sought for two members of the Consultative Committee to serve on Panel 2 (parents of pupils of school age) of the Council's Placing In Schools Appeal Committee.

The Committee noted that further information would be provided by the Council Secretary on the work of the Placing In Schools Appeal Committee to parents who had expressed an interest.

8 Other Business

8.1 Children and Families Electronic Newsletter for Parents

The first edition of an electronic newsletter with latest news in Children and Families would be sent to Parent Council Chairs on 28th October 2008. Further information on the newsletter could be obtained from jen.robson@edinburgh.gov.uk

8.2 Edinburgh Parent Councils Network

The first meeting of the Edinburgh Parent Councils Network was to be held at 7pm on 2 October 2008 in St Thomas of Aquins High School.

This new parent-led network had been set up to help parent councils and other parent bodies share information and learn from each other. Further

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information could be obtained from Gavin Corbett at karenandgavin@blueyonder.co.uk , tel: 07847 504011.

8.3 Appointment of Head Teachers

An article had appeared in the Evening News on 22 September about the appointment of Head Teachers in Edinburgh schools.

John Fraser, Neighbourhood Manager, outlined the various reasons why, at any given time, there would be a number of Acting Head Teachers in schools. He was encouraged by the number of applicants who were currently applying for vacancies and reassured the Committee that the situation was far more positive than reported.

9 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 4 November 2008 at 6.30pm in the City Chambers, Edinburgh.