

## Committee Minutes

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### Consultative Committee with Parents

Edinburgh, 15 September 2009

**Elected Members Present:-** Councillors MacLaren (Convener), Balfour, Beckett and Blacklock.

**Parent/School Members Present:-** as detailed on the appendix to this minute.

**Apologies:-** Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Henderson and Johnstone, Ken Aitken, Jeanna Brady, Susan Edwards, Willie French, Judith Gillespie, Carolyn Girvan, Rory Mackenzie, David Martin, Bruce Sherry, Paul Smart, Allan Todd and John Walker.

#### 1 Carol Telfer

Councillor MacLaren had been saddened to hear of the passing of Carol Telfer from Kaimes School Parent Council. Carol had been a parent representative on the Consultative Committee with Parents representing special schools from 2002 to 2005. Carol had also attended other meetings after this time when required and had been a member of the Council's Placing in Schools Appeal Committee over the same period, contributing her much valued experience as a parent of children of school age. Councillor MacLaren paid tribute to the work and commitment of Carol towards improving the educational experience of children and young people in Edinburgh.

#### 2 Minute

The minute of meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents of 12 May 2009 was approved as a correct record.

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### 3 Convener and Director's Update

The Convener noted that the Department's budget had balanced for the year end 2008/09 which was a tribute to the Director and Department. The Director of Finance had requested future discussion however on £14m cuts required and future priorities for the Children and Families Department. This year's budget had been balanced with the exception of £2.4 million budget pressure for an extra 50 children in foster care, compared to the previous year. Significant pressures would be experienced UK wide on local authority budget planning. Currently, cuts were expected of between 4-5% across the Council as a whole. The Consultative Committee would meet to discuss budget issues before the Council set its budget next February.

The Director outlined details of forthcoming reports, including the Single Outcome Agreements and the Children and Families Service Plan and Department's targets. Progress issues for children's social work services were also outlined. Inspections of child protection/social work services would be undertaken in the near future. The Director gave examples of some outcomes, including:-

- 85% of child protection case conferences were now dealt with within 28 days.
- the timescale for arranging conference cases had dropped from 119 to 26 days.
- The number of children adopted had risen from 26 last year to 41.

On performance, the undernoted improvements had been made despite the challenging context of budget issues:-

- school attendance at secondary schools had improved.
- exclusions had been reduced from 55 to 22.
- Duke of Edinburgh Awards were up from 201 to 283.
- health promoting schools had increased from 81% to 93%.
- uptake of school meals had increased.
- arrangements for two hours of PE in schools had increased.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) was due to inspect the Council's education service in April 2010. The authority would undertake a self-evaluation (validated self assessment), following which inspectors would make their assessment. Engagement would be sought between now and next April with parents to establish what the authority did well and areas for development.

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A future meeting would discuss Getting It Right For Every Child In Edinburgh, which was a key development for the Department and involved a substantial amount of joined up working.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- the capping of numbers for the Duke of Edinburgh Awards was currently an issue across the authority, however the Department was keen to encourage as much participation as possible and further discussion would be required on this.
- The increase in school meals uptake created problems for some schools with limited dining space.
- The reasons for reduced exclusions – it was noted that this subject would be discussed at a future meeting.
- Timescales for rolling out proposed budget cuts.

#### **Decision**

- 0) To note the update from the Convener and Director.
- 0) To note that future reports and information would be provided on these issues to the Consultative Committee.
- 0) To note that a dedicated meeting of the Consultative Committee would be held to discuss the forthcoming budget.

#### **4 ICT in Support for Learning**

Anne Swap, ICT/ASL Development Officer, presented details of the ICT Support Service for learning. Pupils with a wide range of support needs could benefit from technology that could facilitate access to the curriculum and enhance learning and attainment.

Anne outlined details of the remit of the ICT in Support for Learning Team, the services offered, and details of reasons for referrals during 2008/09. Details were also provided of resources, training, information sharing and the GLOW project (national intranet for education).

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- The majority of referrals for the service were from primary schools.

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- Information on the service would be made available on the FACE newsletter.
- Further trials were being undertaken for use of Text help before being introduced to all schools.
- The pilot for GLOW would finish at the end of September. It was hoped GLOW would be gradually rolled out to secondary schools after Christmas.

Further details of the service could be found in the Additional Support for Learning area of Edinburgh Grid for Learning under the heading 'Partner Services and Agencies' [egfl.net/ASL/index.html](http://egfl.net/ASL/index.html) .

### Decision

To note the information and thank Anne Swap for her presentation.

## 5 **Attainment in City of Edinburgh Primary and Secondary Schools 2008-2009**

John Fraser, Head of Schools, presented details of the annual audit of 5-14 attainment in primary and secondary schools for 2008-2009, and National Qualifications (SQA) Attainment for 2009.

For 5-14 attainment:-

- attainment in reading, writing and mathematics increased in City of Edinburgh Primary and Secondary schools.
- the P3, P4, P6 and P7 group of pupils continued to build on previous good performance.
- P7 pupils attaining level D or better improved upon the previous year.
- Improvements were made by S2 pupils attaining or exceeding level E.

The various issues affecting attainment were outlined. Quality Improvement Officers within the Department would work closely with schools and hold discussions with Head Teachers on attainment for this year. Further information could be obtained from Joanne Burns/ Maureen Brice, Tel: 0131 469 6122/ 3020.

During discussion, the following information was confirmed:-

- Information could be made available on attainment figures for the gaelic unit.

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- Information on attainment in special schools was gathered, but not compared with other schools.
- There were areas which could be measured in terms of children reaching full potential.

**Decision**

- 1) To note the information and thank John Fraser for his presentation.
- 2) To note that a copy of the presentation would be circulated to members of the CCWP for information.
- 3) To request information on which schools made early presentation for examinations.

**6 Placing in Schools Appeal Committee - Nominations**

Vacancies had arisen for parents of children of school age on the Council's Placing in Schools Appeal Committee.

**Decision**

To note that Gordon Chrumka, Donna McNeill and Tina Woolnough had noted their interest in becoming members of the Placing in Schools Appeal Committee.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Services 25 August 2009, submitted.)

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## **7 Swine Flu Update**

Regular information on swine flu had been sent to schools. The latest information from the Scottish Government had been that the vaccination programme would be delivered from October onwards. Monitoring of "flu like" symptoms, had been undertaken from the start of the school session. It was noted that school closure would only be considered as a last option. A further letter giving advice on the Department's contingency arrangements would be issued to schools.

### **Decision**

To note the updated information.

## **8 Parents as Partners Conference**

### **Decision**

To note details of the Parents as Partners Conference being held from 9.30am to 12.30 pm on Saturday 26 September 2009. The Conference would focus on developments in Curriculum for Excellence within the City of Edinburgh.

## **9 Future Agenda Items**

To note the current draft list of future agenda items as follows:-

School Lets – janitorial services and accessibility.

Increase in uptake of School Meals – impact on dining facilities.

Increase in uptake of Duke of Edinburgh Award – lack of volunteers.

Oracle e-Business Suite – Financial Savings.

Draft School Session dates 2011/12 (including consultation on St Andrew's Day being a public holiday).

VASE (Validated Self Evaluation).

## **10 Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday, 3 November 2009 at 6.30 pm in the City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh.

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**Appendix**

**Parent/ School Members Present**

Patricia Aitchison	Balerno High School
Andrea Bracher	Kaimes School
Gordon Chrumka	Broughton Primary School
Donald Craigie	Dean Park Primary School
Jerry Forde	Boroughmuir High and Bruntsfield and South Morningside Primary Schools
Henrietta Forman	Braidburn School
Katie Hardie	Craiglockhart Primary School
Paul Iannetta	Holyrood High School
Chris Marks	Leith Primary School
Iain McGillivray	Firrhill High School
Lesley McGoohan	Wester Hailes Education Centre
Anne McGowan	St Peter's Primary School
Donna McNeill	Gylemuir Primary School
Kevin O'Donnell	Trinity Academy
Kristy Ramage	East Craigs Primary School
Lawrence Rea	Fox Covert RC Primary School
Tracy Rendall	Craigentenny Primary School
Julie-Ann Sime	Tollcross Primary School
Martin Southern	Bonaly Primary School
Karen Traill	Liberton High School
Alison Walker	Tynecastle High School
Tina Woolnough	Royal High School/ Blackhall Primary School