

Committee Minutes

Consultative Committee with Parents

Edinburgh, 11 May 2010

Elected Members Present:- Councillors MacLaren (Convener) and Henderson.

Parent/School Members Present:- As detailed in the appendix to this minute.

Apologies:- Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Willie French, Martin Southern, Julie-Ann Sime and Kevin O'Donnell.

1 Minute

The minute of meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents of 23 February 2010 was approved as a correct record, subject to:-

- i) noting Councillor Beckett's attendance; and
- ii) noting that the Budget Focus Group had met (item 4). To also include a reference to a proposal by Tina Woolnough that a parent representative be invited to participate in any joint working group prior to the setting of the Council's budget.

2 GLOW/Curriculum for Excellence

Karen Prophet, Interim Head of Schools, gave a presentation on Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), and the GLOW initiative. She referred to:-

- recognising the learner as the centre of coherent and complementary activity
- Council priorities for 09/10
- curriculum planning – achievements/next steps
- learning and teaching – achievements/next steps
- the culture for change

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- Literacy Across Learning – achievements/next steps
- GLOW – achievements/next steps
- wider ICT development
- parental engagement
- partnership working
- the classroom of the future

She noted that a key focus for CfE was parental involvement. A national Parents' Forum had been established to help implement CfE, and an Edinburgh Learning Festival had been programmed for 28/29 May 2010 to which all Parent Councils were welcome. Also, the 2nd Parents' Conference was to be held in September 2010. In conjunction with parent representatives, a booklet had been prepared explaining CfE. This had been published online, and paper copies had been provided to Parent Council chairs and elected members. Further copies could be purchased on request. Tina Woolnough had assisted with the parental input into the booklet. She commended it as a jargon-free and attractive publication. In discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- each Secondary School had an allowance of BT service ("BT pounds") which should help facilitate the roll-out of GLOW and other ICT initiatives.
- discussions were ongoing with BT about refreshing the school IT estate – appropriate access safeguards would continue to be in place.
- a range of ICT courses were being considered for senior pupils, including Open University courses.
- the position papers referred to in the presentation could now be published on the Council's website.
- schools would continue to be responsible for maintaining their own websites, although using "BT pounds" might indirectly free up resources to allow schools to upgrade these.
- funding for GLOW, including project management, was secure for this year. Discussions about future years' funding were ongoing with the Scottish Government.
- roll-out required significant training and support, hence the two-year phased approach (although all teachers could access it now, if they wished).

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Gillian Tee paid tribute to the work of the implementation team including the contribution from Parent Council representatives. She noted that the success of CfE (and GLOW) in Edinburgh had attracted significant national interest.

Decision

To note the presentation, and agree that the CfE position papers referred to be published online.

3 Director's Report

A report summarising some of the achievements of the Children and Families Department over the year, together with areas for development, had been circulated. Gillian Tee explained this had been produced in written form following representations from CCwP members. She welcomed any comments on its format. She then highlighted the key areas, including:-

- Satisfaction with schools
- Primary/secondary attainment
- Exclusions
- Children looked after
- Positive destinations
- Wider achievement
- Growing confidence programme
- Face/GLOW
- Child protection
- Curriculum for Excellence
- Class sizes
- Getting it Right for Every Child
- New schools
- Early Years
- Free school meals

She also pointed to areas for further improvement in the coming year. The priorities would be taken forward through the implementation of a number of initiatives, namely:-

- Curriculum for Excellence
- Early Years Strategy
- Getting it Right for Every Child
- More Choices, More Chances

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Committee members raised a number of questions on issues identified in the report, referring to:-

- Information on Primary 1 deferrals
- Including reference to actions taken in response to concerns raised by parents
- Positive destinations
- The impact on attendance of reductions in bus allowances, especially in more deprived areas

Decision

- 1) To welcome the report and the intention to circulate it to all Parent Councils.
- 2) To request a presentation to a future meeting on the Early Years service, including the issue of Primary 1 deferrals.
- 3) To note that future versions of the report would make mention of action taken in response to significant issues and complaints raised by parents.
- 4) To note that detailed information on positive destinations would be made available to the CCwP.

4 Feedback from CCwP Focus Group

The Parental Engagement Focus Group had met on 27 April 2010 to discuss comments from the last CCwP and also written submissions from CCwP and Parent Council members. A summary of the main issues addressed by the Focus Group was provided.

Councillor MacLaren noted the key consultative role of the Committee in providing a sounding board to assist officers and Education etc Committee members develop policy. Some degree of formality was necessary, she felt, to ensure fairness and transparency, allowing the Committee to undertake a role which was much wider than simply that of a pressure group. While she was keen to conclude the discussions on the future remit of the Committee, she was clear that some formal structures should be retained.

In discussion, it was suggested that the main structures of the CCwP were fundamentally fit for purpose. Links with all Parent Councils could be better developed, and induction training for new representatives would be useful eg regarding the cluster arrangements. In this connection, the scope to enhance the role of the Parental Involvement Unit should be explored. Recognising that a top-down approach was not appropriate, and that there was some concern that the CCwP model was outmoded, Mike Rosendale proposed that a draft

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paper pulling together all the feedback observations be widely circulated for comment (including the Parental Engagement Focus Group) and that final options be considered at the next CCwP meeting.

Decision

- 1) To agree the circulation of a draft paper for comments, with a view to a final appraisal being submitted to the next CCwP meeting.
- 2) To note the large number of outstanding requests for presentations to the CCwP. The officials were asked to review this list, removing those which had either been reported on, or had been superseded.

5 Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed.

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Appendix

Parent/School Members Present

NAME	REPRESENTING
Avril Elliott	Oaklands Special School
Marie Sheerin	Fox Covert RC Primary School
Donald Craigie	Dean Park Primary school Cluster
Karen Traill	Liberton & Gracemount High Schools Cluster Group
Gordon Chrumka	Broughton Primary School
Lisa Mackenzie	Stockbridge Primary School & Cluster
Ann Henderson	James Gillespie's High School
Jeanna Brady	Bruntsfield & SW Cluster
Paul McLaughlin	James Gillespie's Primary School
C Marks	Leith Primary School
Susan Edwards	Victoria Primary School
Tracy Rendall	Craigentenny Primary School
Norma Lynn Devlin	St Thomas of Aquin's High School
Arlene Mooney	Braidburn School
Anne McGowan	St Peter's Primary School
Rory Mackenzie	Secondary Head Teacher
David Martin	Broughton High School Cluster
Alison Walker	Tynecastle High School
Andrea Bracher	Kaimes School
Tina Woolnough	Royal High School
Iain McGillivray	Firrhill High School
Paul Iannetta	Holy Rood High School