

CUMNOCK AREA LOCAL COMMITTEE - 29 MARCH 2007

SCOTTISH SCHOOLS (PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT) ACT 2006

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To inform the Local Committee of progress on the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Scottish Executive wish to improve parental involvement in children's education and a wide ranging consultation was carried out across Scotland in March-June 2005. The Scottish Executive produced a report on the consultation in July 2005 and, subsequently, the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 was approved by the Scottish Parliament. The Act requires education authorities to promote and support the engagement of parents within their children's education and learning; it also requires education authorities to promote and support the creation of Parent Councils in their schools.

- 2.2** Each school will have a parent body entitled the Parent Forum. All parents/carers/guardians will be a member of the Forum. Education authorities will be required to promote the Parent Forum and to promote parental involvement within schools. School Boards will cease from end-July 2007.

- 2.3** Each school will also create a Parent Council. The Parent Forum will decide upon the nature and type of Parent Council for their school and this will involve full consultation with all parents and interested bodies. The key aspects of the Parent Council are:

- The method of appointment to the Council will be decided by parents.
- The Head Teacher has a right and duty attend.
- The Head Teacher must make an annual report to the Council (and provide a summary to all parents).
- An authority-developed constitution will be offered for consideration but will not be mandatory nor imposed.
- The Council will be less restrictive or prescriptive as compared to the School Board.

- 2.4** The main functions and powers of the Parent Council will be as follows:

- Exercise functions with a view to raising standards and quality of education and to develop children's full potential.
- Promote contact between school, parents and community and with parents of prospective pupils and others.
- Ascertain views of parents on any matter of interest or concern and make representations to the Head Teacher or education authority (unresolved matters can be taken to Her Majesty's Inspector of Education).
- To be involved in the appointment processes of Head Teachers and Depute Head Teachers.

3. IMPLEMENTATION WITHIN EAST AYRSHIRE

- 3.1** The authority consulted widely on the initial proposals in April and May 2005 and responded formally via the Education Committee. We also made a formal response on consultation regarding the appointment processes of Head Teachers and Depute Head Teachers at the appropriate stages.
- 3.2** A Parent Strategy Group has been formed to take forward the implementation of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. This Strategy Group has a wide ranging representation of parents and educational interests in order to fully support implementation of the Act. The main tasks of the Strategy Group are to develop the authority's strategy to promote the involvement of parents in their children's learning; to promote and support the formation of the Parent Forum and Parent Council in each school; to develop the draft Constitution for the Parent Council.
- 3.3** Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS), on behalf of the Scottish Executive, are providing information, documentation and support to parents and education staff on the implementation of the Act. A number of events and activities have been run for parents and staff and we continue to work closely with LTS on this matter.
- 3.4** East Ayrshire Council has informed all parents/carers that they are now automatically members of the Parent Forum for their child's school. As a member of the Forum they will be informed about their child's learning and the ways in which they can become involved in the work of the school. All parents/carers have been issued with the Scottish Executive leaflet "*Making the Difference : A New Law to Support Parents*" which explains the main features of the Act in relation to the new Parent Forums and Parent Councils.
- 3.5** Every school within the authority held an open meeting for parents to raise awareness about the new Act and to promote parental involvement. These took place over the period October 2006 – January 2007. This consultation with parents has allowed each school to create its own working party to take forward implementation at school level; this has also confirmed that each establishment wishes to have a Parent Council for their school.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF PARENT COUNCIL AND CONSTITUTION

- 4.1** One of the first tasks to be carried out by the Parent Forum is to decide how to set up the school's Parent Council. To assist Parent Forums with this task, it is intended to distribute a draft Constitution for consideration and approval by parents.
- 4.2** The draft Constitution has been developed by the Parent Strategy Group in consultation with a wide range of interested parties. The intention is to provide support to the parents within each school in determining the nature of their Parent Council, while not imposing a standard model.
- 4.3** The draft Constitution is designed to assist parents/carers to establish a Parent Council for their school and to support their operation of the Parent Council. It sets out the objectives of the Parent Council and proposes a number of options for the operation of the Parent Council. These options should be discussed by parents within each school and their Constitution developed as they wish. The key points of the Constitution are as follows:
- A majority of parents (i.e the Parent Forum) must agree the format of the Constitution.

- The Constitution may be changed after obtaining consent from the annual meeting of the Parent Forum.
- The number of members of the Parent Council should be decided by parents in drawing up the Constitution.
- The number of co-opted members of the Parent Council should be decided by parents in drawing up the Constitution.
- The Parent Council must be chaired by a parent of a child attending the school.
- Meetings of the Parent Council will be open to the public, unless the Council is discussing an issue which it considers should be dealt with on a confidential basis.
- The local elected member(s) for the ward in which the school is located have the right to attend and speak at any Parent Council or Parent Forum meeting.

The draft Constitution is attached as Appendix 1. To assist parents in this development, a leaflet outlining the key differences between School Boards and Parent Councils has been prepared and is attached as Appendix 2.

4.4 Each school will receive a copy of the draft Constitution and each working party will consider its adoption for their school. Consultation will then take place with all parents/carers for that school in order to approve the proposed Constitution. It is intended that each school will have adopted its Constitution by the end of April 2007.

4.5 Following the adoption of an appropriate Constitution for each school, the authority will inform parents/carers of the outcome of this process and for the arrangements for establishing a Parent Council. It is intended that the Parent Councils will commence operation from August 2007.

5. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

5.1 It is proposed that East Ayrshire Council continue to support parental involvement and engagement through the Parent Forum and the Parent Council. The authority will also develop its parental involvement strategy and submit this for consideration by the Education Committee in due course.

5.2 Training and support for parents/carers will be put in place to assist and support Parent Councils to carry out their functions. The authority will work with national bodies such as LTS on these matters.

5.3 The Parents Steering Group will continue to operate at authority level and continue to involve as wide-ranging parental representation as possible from schools. The Steering Group will continue to take forward initiatives at authority level to support parents.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The developments outlined in this paper have been funded from the Scottish Executive 2006-07 funding allocated to local authorities to assist them in preparation for the implementation of the Parental Involvement Act. Additional funding for 2007-08 of £28,000 has been allocated to East Ayrshire to further support parental involvement.

7. LEGAL/POLICY/RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Nil.

8. COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 These developments promote the themes of Community Learning and Improving Opportunities.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 It is recommended that members:

- (i) note the developments in the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006
- (ii) approve the further steps proposed to promote parental involvement in schools, and
- (iii) otherwise, note the contents of this report

Graham Short
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

JMcC/EO'N
2 March 2007

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Progress Report on Parental Involvement Bill – Education Committee, 31 January 2006.
2. Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 - Scottish Executive, September 2006

Members requiring further information should contact John McCarney, Head of Service: Schools Support (01563 576126) or Muriel Reid, Quality Improvement Officer (01563 555650)

Implementation Officer: John McCarney, Head of Service: Schools Support

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL:
Department of Educational and Social Services

Name of School: _____-

Parent Council Constitution

This draft Constitution is based on the guidance given in the Scottish Executive document 'Parents as Partners in their Children's learning Toolkit'

1. This is the constitution for *Anytown* School Parent¹ Council (or alternative name).
2. The Parent Forum will consist of all parents with children in attendance at *Anytown* School.
3. The objectives of the Parent Council are:
 - To work in partnership with the school to create a welcoming school which is inclusive for all parents
 - To promote partnership between the school, its pupils and all its parents
 - To develop and engage in activities which support the education and welfare of the pupils
 - To identify and represent the views of parents on the education provided by the school and other matters affecting the education and welfare of the pupils
 - To ensure confidentiality is respected in relation to the individual pupil, staff and parent.
4. The membership will be a minimum of three parents of children attending the school plus the Headteacher (or her or his representative). The Headteacher has a duty and a right to attend and to act as an adviser to the Council. The maximum size is *[insert a figure according to size of school and as agreed by members of the Parent Forum]*. The meeting will be quorate with *[insert a figure according to size of school and as agreed by members of the Parent Forum]* members attending. Parent members must remain in the majority at all meetings.
5. Members of the Parent Council will be selected for a period of *[insert one/two/three school session (s)]*, after which they may put themselves forward for re-selection if they wish. All the parents of children at the school can take part in the selection by post, text or email. Parents will have *[insert figure agreed by Parent Forum]* weeks to select their representatives. The Parent Council will be in place by the end of August in all schools in East Ayrshire.

or

Any parents of a child at the school can volunteer to be a member of the Parent Council. In the event that the number of volunteers exceeds the number of places set out in the constitution, members will be selected by *[insert chosen method of selection]*. Anyone not selected to be a member of the Parent Council may be offered the opportunity to be part of any sub-groups set up by the Council. The Parent Council will be in place by the end of August in all schools in East Ayrshire.

The Parent Council will be made up of two representatives from each year group who will be chosen by the parents of children in those year groups. The Parent

¹ Throughout this Constitution the term "parent" is used as shorthand for all adults who have a caring role for children and who are responsible for a child's education.

Council will be in place by the end of August in all schools in East Ayrshire.

or

Any parents of a child at the school can volunteer to be a member of the Parent Council. The Parent Council will be made up of two representatives from each year group who will be chosen by the parents of children in those year groups. The Parent Council will be in place by the end of August in all schools in East Ayrshire. Places can be held for new parents in Primary 1/Secondary 1.

6. In respect of a denominational school, at least one member of the church or denominational body in whose interest the school is conducted will also serve on the Parent Council.
7. The Parent Council may co-opt up to *[insert figure as agreed by members of the Parent Forum*]* to assist it with carrying out its functions.

or

Two-thirds of the Parent Council will be made up of Parent Forum members and one-third of the membership will be reserved for other co-opted members including teaching and support staff in the school, pupils, young people, business representatives etc. The number of parent members on the Parent Council must always be greater than co-opted members.

Co-opted members will be invited to serve for a period of *[insert one/two/three year(s)]* after which time the Parent Council will review and consider requirements for co-opted membership.

8. The Chair, Secretary and Treasurer of the Council will be agreed by the Parent Council members immediately following its formation.

Office bearers will be re-selected by the Parent Council on an annual basis (at the annual meeting of the Parent Forum). The Parent Council will be chaired by a parent of a child attending Anytown School. If the child ceases to be a pupil, a new Chair will be agreed at the next meeting.

or

If the Parent Forum decides to have a Chair:
The Parent Council will be chaired by a parent of a child attending *Anytown* School. If the child ceases to be a pupil, a new Chair will be agreed at the next meeting.

or

If the child ceases to be a pupil, the role of the Chair will be rotated around the parent members of the Parent Council until a new Chair is appointed at the annual meeting.

9. The Parent Council is accountable to the Parent Forum for *Anytown* School and will make a report to it at least once each year on its activities on behalf of all the

parents.

If [x] number [or %] of members of the Parent Forum request a special general meeting to discuss issues falling within the Council's remit, the Parent Council shall arrange this. The Parent Council shall give all members of the Forum at least 2 weeks notice of the meeting and, at the same time circulate notice of the matter, or matters, to be discussed at the meeting.

10. The annual meeting will be held in April/May/June of each year. The first Annual meeting will take place by end of June 2008. A notice of the meeting including, date, time, and place will be sent to all members of the Parent Forum at least 2 weeks in advance. The Act requires that the meeting will include:
 - a report of the work of the Parent Council and its committee(s)
 - re-selection/confirmation of office bearers as appropriate
 - where appropriate, the selection of the new Parent Council members as required
 - discussion of issues that members of the Parent Forum may wish to raise
 - approval of the accounts and appointment of the auditor, where necessary.
11. The Parent Council will meet at least once in every school term.

Any two members of the Parent Council can request that an additional meeting be held, and all members of the parent Council will be given at least one week's notice of date, time and place of the meeting.

12. Should a vote be necessary to make a decision, each parent member at the meeting will have one vote², with the Chair having a casting vote in the event of a tie.
13. If a Parent Council member acts in a way that is considered by other members to undermine the objectives of the Parent Council, their membership of the Parent Council shall be terminated if the majority of parent members agree. Termination of membership would be confirmed in writing to the member.
14. Copies of the minutes of all meetings will be available to all parents of children at *Anytown* School and to all staff at the school, and the local authority. Copies will be available from the Secretary of the Parent Council/Clerk to the Parent Council and from the school office, web sites etc.
15. Meetings of the Parent Council shall normally be open to the public, unless the Parent Council is discussing an issue which is considered should be dealt with on a confidential basis. In such circumstances, only members of the Parent Council and the Headteacher, or his or her representative, can attend.
16. The Treasurer will, if appropriate, open a bank or building society account in the name of the Parent Council for all Parent Council funds. Withdrawals will require the signature of the Treasurer and one other Parent Council member. The Treasurer will keep an accurate record of all income and expenditure, and will provide a summary of this for each Parent Council meeting and a full account for the Annual Meeting. The Parent Council accounts will be audited by the auditor appointed at the previous Annual Meeting.

The Parent Council shall be responsible for ensuring that all monies are used in accordance with the objectives of the Parent Council.

² If the Council wishes co-opted members to have a vote then this must be stated in the constitution

- 17.** The Parent Council may change its Constitution after obtaining consent from members of the Parent Forum (this may take place at the annual meeting). Members of the Parent Forum will be sent a copy of any proposed amendment and given reasonable time to respond to the proposal.
- 18.** Should the Parent Council cease to exist, any remaining funds will be passed to the education authority to be used for the benefit of the school (or schools), where this continues.
- 19.** The Chair of the Education Committee or a representative and the local Elected Member(s) for the ward(s) of the school's catchment area have the right to attend and speak at any Parent Council or Parent Forum meeting.
- 20.** The Executive Director of Educational and Social Services or a representative has the right to attend and speak at any Parent Council or Parent Forum meeting.

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL:
Department of Educational & Social Services**

School Boards and Parent Councils : A Comparison

The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 is intended to increase the level of parental involvement and engagement in children's education. School Boards will cease to exist on 31 July 2007. Parent Forums and Parent Councils will come into effect from August 2007.

This leaflet outlines the key differences between the School Board and the new Parent Forum and Parent Council.

February 2007

Size, composition and appointment

<u>School Boards</u>		<u>Parent Councils</u>
<p>Board size and make-up is a set ratio of parents, teacher and co-opted members. Four 'bands' are based on school roll, eg roll of <500 means 4 parents, 1 teacher and 2 co-opted members; > 1500 means 7, 3 & 3 respectively. Parents always have a majority of 1 on the Board</p>	<p>NEW</p>	<p>The Parent Forum, which is made up of all parents, carers and/or guardians of pupils at the school (including parents of nursery class), will decide on the type of Parent Council parents think will suit the school.</p> <p>The School's parent body (the new Parent Forum) will decide the size and composition of their Parent Council.</p> <p>The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 is designed to allow parents to decide on Parent Councils that reflect local circumstances</p>
<p>Formal elections for School Boards are held every other autumn</p>	<p>NEW</p>	<p>The method of appointing (and co-opting) Parent Council members will be decided by the parents. Generally, members of the Parent Council must be parents of children who attend the school and the chairperson must have a child in the school. However, the Parent Council can decide to co-opt other members from teachers, support staff, pupils and the community who will have knowledge and skills to help them.</p> <p>In denominational schools, the Parent Council must invite the relevant church or denominational body to nominate a representative to be a co-opted member.</p> <p>Once established, the Parent Council must inform the headteacher of the school, members of the Parent Forum, pupils and other parties as they consider appropriate that it has been established. The Parent Council must also inform them of who the members are and how they can be contacted. It must also provide a copy of its constitution to the headteacher and inform members of the Parent Forum and other parties as they consider appropriate of what its functions will be.</p>
<p>School Boards have no individual constitutions – the details are set out in statute.</p>	<p>NEW</p>	<p>The Parent Forum decides on the type of Parent Council and constitution that is right for the school.</p> <p>The main function of a constitution is to describe the Parent Council, what its objectives are and how it will carry these out.</p> <p>'Model constitutions' will be offered for parents' consideration, but not imposed on them.</p> <p>Parents will be able to make further amendments to the constitution at a later stage. Changes to the constitution can be made at anytime after obtaining consent from members of the Parent Forum</p>

Functions

<u>School Boards</u>		<u>Parent Councils</u>
Functions to be exercised with a view to raising standards and quality of school's education	EXPANDED	<p>Parents have a key supportive role to play in assisting the headteacher and school staff in their aims to raise standards of education and secure improvements in the quality of education provided by the school.</p> <p>The aim is to take account of the whole needs of the child in respect of developing a child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential – the wider definition of education in the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000.</p>
Promote contact between schools, parents and community	EXPANDED	<p>The role of the Parent Council falls broadly within four areas and will be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support the school in its work with pupils • represent the views of all parents • encourage links between the school, parents, pupils, pre-school groups and the wider community • report back to the Parent Forum. <p>The Council can also make contact with parents of prospective pupils and others (perhaps nurseries, colleges, etc).</p>
Report at least annually to the parent body on Board activity	CONTINUED	
Ascertain views of parents on matters which are Board responsibilities	EXPANDED	<p>Ascertain views of parents on any matter of interest or concern.</p> <p>The Council should have in place arrangements for ascertaining the views of the parent body (the new Parent Forum) as regards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the standards of education in the school • the quality of education which the school provides • the exercise by the Parent Council of its functions • such other matters as appear to the Parent Council to be of interest or concern to the Parent Forum

Powers

<u>School Boards</u>		<u>Parent Councils</u>
Request and receive advice, information and reports from education authority or Head Teacher.	CONTINUED	
Make representations to authority or Head Teacher on arrangements for parent-teacher consultation and on information, statements and reports requested and provided as above.	EXPANDED	<p>Representation can be made on any matter of interest or concern to parents or the Parent Council.</p> <p>As a member of the Parent Forum you can expect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get information about what your child is learning • get information about events and activities at the school • get advice/help on how you can support your child's learning • be told about opportunities to be involved in the school • have a say in selecting a Parent Council to work on behalf of all parents at your school
	NEW	In future, if representations made to an authority or Head Teacher remain unresolved, a Parent Council may then make them to HMIE.

Powers (continued)

Raise funds, receive gifts and expend sums at their discretion for the benefit of the school, taking account of the Head Teacher's views.	EXPANDED	In future, a Parent Council may : a) raise funds by any means other than by borrowing b) receive gifts; and may expend any sums so received entirely at the Parent Council's discretion.
Involvement in appointment processes for Head Teachers and Depute Head Teachers (specifically at shortlist and final interview stages)	EXPANDED	The Bill states the principle of Parent Council involvement in new appointment processes. It is intended the parent representatives will be involved in agreeing the job specification and advertising strategy, and participating in the letting and interview processes.
Appointment of clerk who, if not a Board member, may be paid.	CONTINUED	
Approval of Head Teacher spend on books and teaching materials, subject to authority guidance and policy.	DISCONTINUED	These 3 aspects of 'management' are being discontinued.
Fix occasional holidays after consulting the authority	DISCONTINUED	
Control the use of school premises outside school hours, subject to authority direction.	DISCONTINUED	

Education authority and/or Head Teacher responsibilities

<u>School Boards</u>		<u>Parent Councils</u>
Authorities and Head Teachers to give information and advice, on request	CONTINUED	
Take account of representations received and respond to them	CONTINUED	
Provide financial support including administration, training expenses and other outgoings	CONTINUED	
Provision of financial information, budget and outturn	CONTINUED	On request rather than automatic, i.e. depending on the Parent Council's priorities.
Head Teacher has a right to attend School Board meetings	EXPANDED	The Head Teacher has both a duty and a right to attend. The Head Teacher should be present at Parent Council meetings, or be represented by another member of staff, unless both the Head Teacher and the Parent Council agree it isn't necessary.
Head Teacher provides Board with an annual report on pupil attainment	EXPANDED	The annual report will provide an evaluation of the performance of the school and state what the Head Teacher's objectives and ambitions for the school are. A summary copy will go to all parents. ?
Head Teacher informs the Board of policy changes in relation to the curriculum, pupil assessment, discipline, rules and uniform	EXPANDED	Head Teacher to have regard to, and respond to, representations from Parent Council for information on or involvement in policy changes, on these or any other matters.