

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE: 25 MAY 2004**

#### **RESPONSE TO “BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS OF A LIFELONG LEARNING SOCIETY”**

##### **Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1** To inform the Education Committee of the Authority’s response to a consultation paper ‘A Review of Collaboration between Schools and Further Education Colleges in Scotland’ (Scottish Executive, February 2004).

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** Ministers asked an inter-departmental group of Scottish Executive officials to co-ordinate a review of collaboration between schools and further education colleges in Scotland. The review was launched on 20 October 2003 at a conference in Edinburgh that brought together representatives from school and further education sectors, as well as other interested parties and Executive officials.
- 2.2** A report of the conference was published to accompany the consultation paper, and a summary of the consultation paper and a leaflet specifically seeking the views of school pupils.

The four main themes of the conference were :

- The purpose of greater school collaboration
  - Managing supply and demand and funding responsibilities
  - Implications for schools and colleges
  - Pupil welfare and support
- 2.3** The Executive has also published as part of its review a document entitled ‘Building the Foundations of a Lifelong Learning Society : The Experience of Motherwell College and Local Schools.’
- 2.4** The consultation paper asked for responses under the following headings:
- Scope of Strategy and Implementation Plan
  - Purpose of School/College Collaboration
  - Supply, Demand and Funding
  - Implications for Schools and Colleges
  - Pupil Welfare and Support
  - Pupil Responses

The response to the consultation paper is outlined in section 3 below.

### **3 CONSULTATION QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES**

**3.1** The full response to the consultation paper has been placed in the Members' Lounge. The authority's key issues are outlined in the following paragraphs.

#### **3.2 Scope of Strategy and Implementation Plan**

Strategy, framework and overall funding should be national issues, with local control over implementation, protocols, partnerships, refinements and student numbers.

#### **3.3 Purpose of School/College Collaboration**

It is important that control at collaborative ventures should be maintained in school and authority, particularly as schools are deemed in loco parentis. Issues such as vulnerability of pupils, disclosure, multi-level teaching, guidance and support will all determine the 'powers' of the college. There should be no single pattern of agreement of delivery of service at a national level but provision for local flexibility.

#### **3.4 Supply, Demand and Funding**

While recognising that it is important for the FE Colleges to be funded appropriately via the Scottish Further Education Funding Council, education authorities have the best knowledge of local circumstances and should be funded accordingly.

#### **3.5 Implications for Schools and Colleges**

It must be recognised that schools and colleges are different institutions with different requirements, although the best teaching in schools and colleges will share many of the same qualities. Age and maturity are important factors in the development of young people within school, alongside the substantial amount of formal guidance and supervision that is required. Flexibility for local arrangements must be paramount.

#### **3.6 Pupil Welfare and Support**

As indicated above, this can be a key issue. There is a need for each college to have a dedicated FE/School Co-ordinator and for each school to have a dedicated School/FE Link Person. Our response indicates that FE staff require substantial development to be able to support school students; there are also issues regarding Disclosure Scotland and the need to safeguard vulnerable pupils. Finally, there are issues regarding sharing of information between schools and colleges. We have now moved forward to develop a closer working relationship with Kilmarnock College and to improve many of the above aspects.

### **3.7 Pupil Responses**

Representative groups of East Ayrshire pupils were asked to respond to key issues within the consultation paper. Generally, they indicated their support for the option of attending College and saw it as providing specific vocational opportunities. The pupils identified a need for increased provision by Colleges for our schools.

## **4 LEGAL/POLICY/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1** There are no financial implications at the moment. However, depending on the decisions to be taken by the Scottish Executive following consultation, there may be a need to consider further any legal and/or financial implications.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1** It is recommended that Members:
- (i) approve the response to consultation;
  - (ii) note the contents of this report:

John Mulgrew  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

JMc/EO'N  
5 May 2004

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 1 Building the Foundations of A LIFELONG LEARNING SOCIETY. A Review of Collaboration between schools and Further Education Colleges in Scotland. Report of School/College Conference Monday 20 October 2003 (Scottish Executive 2004).
- 2 Building the Foundations of A LIFELONG LEARNING SOCIETY. A Review of Collaboration between schools and Further Education Colleges in Scotland. Summary of Consultation Paper (Scottish Executive, February 2004).
- 3 Building the Foundations of A LIFELONG LEARNING SOCIETY. The Experience of Motherwell College and Local Schools (Scottish Executive, February 2004).
- 4 Building the Foundations of A LIFELONG LEARNING SOCIETY. School/College Review : School Pupils' Views (Scottish Executive 2004).

Members wishing further information should contact John McCarney, Head of Service: School Support, Tel: (01563) 555631 or David Farrow, Quality Improvement Officer, Tel: (01563) 555650

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

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL  
RESPONSE TO “BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS OF A  
LIFELONG LEARNING SOCIETY”**

**1. Scope of Strategy and Implementation Plan**

*Q1. What issues should the review address? What issues are best determined locally?*

- Strategy, framework and overall funding should be national issues, with local control over implementation, protocols, partnerships, refinements and student numbers.

**2. Purpose of School/College Collaboration**

*Q2. How should the joint schools/FE strategy articulate the purposes and scope of school pupil participation in college?*

- It should provide the broad strategy, summarise the purpose and offer guidelines.

*Q3. Where should school/college collaboration sit alongside other further education priorities and college programmes?*

- Where possible and practicable, it should be aligned to, but not driven by other FE priorities and programmes.

*Q4. How can we enhance the value placed by pupils and parents on vocational subjects to achieve parity of esteem across vocational and academic learning?*

- Through accreditation and qualifications, through GOALS-type long-term initiatives, and through genuine parity of esteem.

*Q5. How best should school/college collaboration engage with the delivery of joined-up services through the community planning process and Community Learning and Development?*

- Through joint membership of bodies, joint in-service, common aims and objectives and early and planned consultation.

*Q6. Should the nature of collaboration be different for distinct cohorts of pupils, including different age groups, for example:*

- \* *Primary children;*
- \* *12-14 years;*
- \* *14-16 years;*
- \* *16+;*
- \* *'winter leavers'?*

*If so, what should those differences be?*

- Yes, and as appropriate for local conditions.
- Primary: as for current GOALS programme.
- 12-14: concentrating on options, tasters, parental involvement.
- 14-16: facilitating and delivering flexible curricular provision.
- 16+: Vocational; minority subjects; school-based; "GOALS".
- Winter leavers: tailor made as locally agreed.

*Q7. Should the powers of colleges to engage with various age groups of school pupils differ (and if so, how should they differ)?*

- Control should be kept in school, if schools are deemed "in loco parentis". Issues such as vulnerability of pupils, disclosure, multi-level teaching, guidance and support will all determine the "powers" of the college. There should be no single pattern of agreement or delivery of service.

*Q8. Are the existing further education curriculum choices available to school pupils sufficient to meet the purposes of school/college collaboration? If not, what additional support (if any) should we be giving to the Scottish Qualifications Authority and Learning and Teaching Scotland to develop them further?*

- No. Better prediction of surplus and need of courses, better prediction of teaching staff, increased flexibility, improved timetabling and the investigation of IT and video-conferencing.

*Q9. Should we develop, in addition to the lifelong learning strategy indicators, specific indicators for school/college collaboration? If so, how should the success of collaboration be measured?*

- Yes. We need structures, accreditation, and especially quality of experience: in teaching, learning, communications, pupil/parent views, and support for pupils/students. Further development is needed to investigate and pilot indicators.

### **3. Supply, Demand and Funding**

*Q10. Should responsibility for pupils' curriculum remain entirely with the relevant education authority (and school)?*

- Yes, as in question 7 (in loco parentis)

*Q11. Should further education colleges remain entirely responsible for the courses offered to school pupils and the pupils they accept on to them?*

- No. It is our view that partnership working means shared responsibility.

Q12. *To what extent should school pupils generally expect their desire for experience of college be realised?*

- We agree to a great extent, given realistic aspirations and full consultation.

Q13. *Given the Executive's Partnership Agreement commitment, to what extent should 14-16 year-old pupils expect to undertake a further education course to develop vocational skills if they so choose?*

- Not necessarily. Pupils need much guidance, and many schools are very successful in providing for all their pupils.

Q14. *Should any special arrangements be extended to older school pupils?*

- Yes, but this requires much sharper and further definition.

Q15. *How can we best make clear that we expect all schools to have links with colleges and ensure that colleges make appropriate provision for school pupils?*

- Through joint planning, central partnerships, joint I/S training, and working groups to facilitate and manage specific areas of contact.

Q16. *How should colleges engage with the independent school sector (and what are the possible implications of this for public funds)?*

- Although not applicable for East Ayrshire, perhaps on a commercial basis.

Q17. *How should the potential role that further education colleges may play in a pupil's curriculum choices best be identified? What role should Careers Scotland play in this process?*

- With central support, through joint timetabling and option booklets. There are some reservations as to whether Careers Scotland can deliver advice and service totally consistently across the authority.

Q18. *How should the suitability of pupils for college be assessed?*

- Schools are in the best position to judge, if given accurate and specific information about levels and progression of courses on offer. Schools have a broad range of pupils, and an inclusion agenda.

Q19. *Can Personal Learning Plans be a useful vehicle to support school pupils who make use of learning opportunities in colleges? If so, should they be mandatory for such pupils?*

- Yes. Ideally each pupil should have a PLP, with realistic targets and challenges, and much support. It is premature to expect or get real value just yet from a compulsory system.

*Q20. What further measures, if any, are required to consider labour market needs when planning school/college collaboration, and what role could the Enterprise Networks play in this process?*

- As consultants and advisers, but not dictating courses or funding.

*Q21. How should the further education needs of pupils in less geographically accessible areas be met when it is not practicable for pupils to attend college?*

- By having collage staff deliver courses in schools, by using ICT, distance learning and video conferencing.

*Q22. How should education authorities, schools and colleges work together to plan further education provision in appropriate colleges (or schools) for school pupils ?*

- By regular and joint meetings, strategy and implementation groups, timetabling jointly, realistic targets, joint training, staff swapping, and dedicated liaison staff.

*Q23. Which body should assume lead responsibility for preparing any local strategies?*

- The Local Authority.

*Q24. In partnership with which bodies should local strategies be developed?*

- This list should include the Local Authority, FE, Careers Scotland, Enterprise Companies, SQA, L&T Scotland, and school staff.

*Q25. Should partnership agreements to deliver the Enterprise in Education agenda be adapted to cover the full spectrum of school/college collaboration?*

- There is a need to review all activities, programmes and provision to ensure cohesion of service.

*Q26. How should issues of over-demand for courses be managed?*

- This can be addressed by improved consultation timings and mechanisms to predict shortage and surplus, joint planning, and improved and early communications.

*Q27. How should pupils' on-going engagement with further education be monitored and evaluated?*

- All programmes must have monitoring and evaluation through quality or performance indicators embedded to ensure consistency of quality and service.

*Q28. Should there be some form of statutory duty on incorporated colleges and education authorities to encourage school/college collaboration?*

- Yes, but this should be broadly drawn to allow for local agreements and flexibility.

*Q29. Similarly, if SFEFC (or any successor body) remains the principal source of funding for school enrolments (see below) should this be incorporated into its duties?*

- Yes, but any funding must be sustainable, mainstream and predictable.

*Q30. Should primary funding responsibility for school enrolments continue to rest with the Scottish Further Education Funding Council? Or should funding responsibility rest with education authorities or schools? Are there other bodies this responsibility should be given to?*

- With education authorities, who have the best knowledge of local circumstances.

*Q31. How can colleges be appropriately reimbursed for their partnership working with schools, while safeguarding the integrity of the concept of 'enrolment'?*

- There should be operational agreement based on level of course, number of hours, and accreditation.

*Q32. Should colleges receive fee income for enrolments undertaken by pupils as part of their school-based curriculum? If so, from which public body should they derive that income?*

- If the local authority is responsible for overall funding, from the local authority.

*Q33. What scope might there be for releasing funds dedicated to school pupils' school education when those pupils undertake college courses?*

- Some caution required here to ensure value for money and implications of funding loss to schools.

#### **4. Implications for Schools and Colleges**

*Q34. What measures should be taken to retain the central ethos of further education colleges as centres of voluntary learning for adults?*

- If FE fully embrace school partnership and links, they cannot be fundamentally or centrally something else, so they need to adapt their ethos and methods accordingly.

*Q35. Are there particular issues that the training and development of (a) further education lecturers and (b) teachers need to address in order to facilitate more effective collaboration between the school and further education sectors?*

- Yes. Joint training, better understanding, examination of GTC registration issues, and disclosure.

*Q36. What training do guidance, teaching support and other staff in further education colleges need to be able to provide effective support to under 16 year olds?*

- At least as much as school staff in ITE, Induction, and regular CPD.

*Q37. Should there be a common framework for the recognition of the qualifications for lecturers and teachers?*

- Ideally yes, but this would need to be on a fairly extended timescale.

*Q38. Are there any unnecessary overly-prescriptive barriers concerning teaching qualifications that prevent effective collaboration between the school and further education sectors?*

- There should not be, but there are some 'invisible' ones such as misunderstandings, GTC registration and mutual suspicion.

*Q39. To what extent, if any, should the further education sector reflect (and/or adapt) for the teaching of school pupils in colleges the requirements for the teaching of school pupils in school? If so, how can this be done in a way that retains the existing strengths of the further education sector?*

- To a great extent. School and colleges are totally different scenarios, although the best teaching in schools and colleges share many of the same qualities. Age and maturity are very large factors in school, and the amount of formal guidance and supervision required.

*Q40. What responsibility should the Funding Council have for assessing and assuring the learning experience of school pupils (including for provision not funded by the Funding Council)?*

- Some body must assess and quality assure to attain consistency through shared quality indicators.

*Q41. How can college programmes become more flexible to take account of units students have gained while they were at school?*

- By flexible entry dates, multi-level teaching, timetabling, and improved joint planning, knowledge of pupils and the school curriculum.

*Q42. How should examination statistics be reported to reflect school/college collaboration?*

- STACS must fully reflect all pupil academic activity. When schools are performing well, this can be a major barrier.

*Q43. Where should responsibility for transport and for lunch vouchers for pupils eligible for free school meals lie?*

- Common arrangements are necessary, although some strategic guidance would be helpful.

## 5. Pupil Welfare and Support

*Q44. What further measures are necessary to develop an inclusive, collaborative approach to school pupils with additional support needs attending further education colleges?*

- Improved joint planning, and engaging with the Learning Support Network, SEN, DDA implications, and the entire inclusion agenda.

*Q45. To what extent should school/college collaboration focus on choice and opportunity for all pupils, or target support for a narrower section of the pupil population?*

- Collaboration should be focused for effective provision. Schools can and do deliver well to the vast majority of their pupils.

*Q46. What successful mechanisms exist to ensure appropriate co-ordination and communication between schools and colleges to deliver effective learning support, behaviour support and pupil support?*

- Not enough. There is a need for dedicated FE staff/school coordinator, and for each school to have a dedicated school/FE link person. FE traditionally have had student support serviced, but not for the age range lower down the school. The disaffected are not well catered for. There is an urgent need for training, support staff, and specific promoted posts to have a structure of effective support.

*Q47. What safeguards are in place in further education colleges for safe recruitment practices, codes of conduct, and awareness of issues in relation to child protection procedures? Do agreements between schools and colleges make respective roles and responsibilities explicit in relation to the safety of pupils? What further measures should be taken?*

- Disclosure issues should affect staff and students. The GTC(S) have their standards, but there are few FE safeguards during recruitment such as codes of conduct, child protection, standard circulars and protocols which are standard in schools.

*Q48. What arrangements are made by further education colleges to safeguard vulnerable groups, and does this extend to school pupils? What measures are appropriate and effective?*

- Many pupils have a cocktail of vulnerability including physical emotional, social and emotional needs. Schools regularly employ SMT, promoted guidance staff, classroom assistants, SEN assistants, auxiliaries and parent helpers, and many schools report that that could do with considerable more.

*Q49. What is the current practice between schools and colleges of sharing information? What aspects can be improved?*

- The sharing of information is currently piecemeal and sporadic, unstructured, unplanned, and badly timed. Issues of pupil health, learning styles, records and absence are largely unknown to the FE sector, and the same levels of transitional planning used between primary and secondary could be adapted to secondary to FE.

*Q50. How do further education colleges successfully manage the needs of different groups, and ensure their safety? Do the needs of some groups preclude engagement of other groups?*

- This is a largely unknown quantity, but it may not be as comprehensive or planned as it needs to be.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

*Q51. Are there any other matters not referred to in this consultation paper which you wish to bring to our attention?*

- The issue of implementation timescales are unknown.

## **7. PUPIL RESPONSE**

**7.1** Representative groups of East Ayrshire pupils were asked to respond to the following key issues :

- **Why?** - What is the purpose of school/college links?
- To encourage people at school to go to college.
- To encourage people to stay on in education to get better jobs.
  
- **How?** - Who pays for it and how is it managed?
- Don't have a clue.
- The government?
- Don't know - is education not free?
  
- **What does it mean?** - What changes do schools and colleges need to make to build links?
- Don't know.
- Don't know what links are there already.
  
- **What about the pupils?** - How can schools and colleges make sure pupils benefit?
- Don't know.

**7.2** **If you already go to college or you are being taught by a college staff member for part of your week, we want to know.**

### Why did you choose further education?

- It was on my option sheet - motor vehicle sounded better than the other subjects.
- I want to be a hairdresser.
- My guidance teacher asked me if I wanted to go.
- I heard some of my friends were going and I asked if I could go too.
- It teaches you things to help you get a job.
- I want to be a joiner.

### • What do you feel you get out of it?

- I tried joinery and didn't like it, so I got to change to Motor Vehicle - I now want to be a mechanic.
- I feel as if I'm getting more experience at what I want to be.
- It means I don't have to do French!

### • What are your likes?"

- Make new friends.
- You don't have to wear school uniform.
- The Lecturers treat you like adults.
- Feel more grown up.
- Prefer the subjects at college.
- Like the student association.
- There's always somebody to talk to.

### • What are your dislikes?

- Not enough of it.
- Don't think I have any.

### • Should anything be done differently?

- Don't know.

### • What more, If anything, do you want out of the experience?

- Could I get paid?
- Maybe the chance to practice what we learn in a real garage.
- I'd like to do hairdressing more than once a week.

### 7.3 If you don't go to college or you are not taught in school by a college staff member for part of your week, we want to know...

- Is this because you were not given the chance?
- I've never been given the opportunity - at our school it only seems to be the pupils who get into trouble a lot who get to go to college.
- I've never been asked.
- Nobody told us about it.
- No college lecturers came to our school.
- I'd like to go, but there are never enough places
- If you were given the chance, would you go to college?
- I'd really like to go.
- Don't know - depends what is on offer.
- I think it would be really good - I've heard you're treated more like an adult.
- Yes - you don't have to wear a uniform!
- No - I want to stay on at school.
- No - I want to get my Standard Grades and Highers
- If you did get the chance to go to college, why did you choose not to go?
- It's a big place and I wouldn't know many people.
- Some of the people who go from my school are a bit scary - I wouldn't want to go if they were there.
- I couldn't get to do joinery.
- The classes I wanted to do were full.
- What can we do to make you more interested in going to college or being taught by a college staff member for part of your school week?
- Have more classes.
- More hairdressing and beauty.
- More subjects.
- Don't know - don't know enough about it.