

# EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 31 JANUARY 2005

### PROGRESS REPORT ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT BILL

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

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

- 1.1** To inform the Education Committee of progress on the Scottish Executive initiative to improve parents' involvement in schools and the latest stages of consultation.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The Scottish Executive wish to improve parental involvement in children's education. A wide ranging consultation was carried out across Scotland in March – June 2005. East Ayrshire consulted widely with professionals and parents in terms of its response.
- 2.2** The Scottish Executive produced a report on the consultation in July 2005. They are now proceeding to process the Parental Involvement Bill through the Parliament. The Bill was published in September 2005 and it is intended that it will receive Royal Assent by July 2006. It is anticipated that the Bill will take effect around August 2007.

#### **3. PROPOSALS**

- 3.1** Each school will no longer have a School Board but 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.
- 3.2** 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:
- It is no longer prescribed by legislation as the School Board was.
  - 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.

**3.3** 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 (it is also proposed that unresolved matters can be taken to Her Majesty's Inspector of Education).

**3.4** It is also proposed that parents will continue to have an involvement in the appointment processes of Head Teachers and Depute Head Teachers. It is specifically proposed that parents should be involved at the shortlisting and final interview stages. A separate consultation is currently underway on these proposals.

#### **4. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

**4.1** The authority consulted widely on the initial proposals in the period April and May 2006 and made a formal response via the Education Committee. We continue to work with formal bodies such as the School Board Steering Group, individual School Boards and PTAs to discuss these matters and ensure that parents are fully informed of the current process.

**4.2** Learning and Teaching Scotland, on behalf of the Scottish Executive, will provide briefing information to parents over the next year. We will fully utilise this information and will supplement this with authority specific information to parents. Currently, the School Board Steering Group has discussed the possibility of creating authority guidance which will support the formation of the Parent Forum and Parent Council in each school. To assist in this development, PTA representatives will be invited to join the Steering Group. The Steering Group is commencing work on developing a draft constitution for the Parent Council with the intention of providing this for adoption by individual schools and the Parent Forum if they so wish.

**4.3** Consultation is currently under way with professionals and parents on the appointment processes for Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher posts. The results of this consultation will be reported to Committee in due course.

#### **5. FINANCIAL/LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

**5.1** There will be financial costs associated with the setting up of the Parent Forum and Parent Councils. The Scottish Executive have indicated that additional funding will be provided, but the level of this funding is not yet known. This will require further consideration in due course.

#### **6. COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1** Nil

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1** It is recommended that Members:

- (i) note the contents of this report.
- (ii) request the Executive Director to develop a draft constitution for consideration by each Parent Council
- (iii) request the Executive Director to report the results of consultation on Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher appointments
- (iv) request the Executive Director to provide further progress reports as required and,
- (v) otherwise note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

JMcC/EO'N  
12 January 2005

### **List of Background Papers**

1. Consultation on Draft Bill: Making The Difference – Improving Parents' Involvement In Schools - Scottish Executive, march 2005
2. Consultation on Draft Bill: Making The Difference – Improving Parents' Involvement In Schools - Education Committee Paper - 24 May 2005.
3. Making the Difference – Improving Parents' Involvement in Schools: Draft Bill Consultation Report – Scottish Executive, September 2005.
4. Parental Involvement – Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher Appointment Procedures: A Consultation Document – Scottish Executive, November 2005.

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

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