

Report

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Report to:	Education Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	19 January 2010
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	National Parent Forum
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ inform the Committee of the establishment by the Scottish Government of a National Parent Forum.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the establishment of a National Parent Forum by the Scottish Government be noted; and
- (2) that, following expressions of interest from Parent Councils to nominate persons to serve on the National Parent Forum, John Rice from Stonelaw Parent Council be approved as the South Lanarkshire Council Parent Representative.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 heralded a change in parental representation through the establishment of Parent Councils. There are now 143 schools with Parent Councils in South Lanarkshire.
- 3.2. At the end of 2008 the Scottish Government commissioned a research survey on the establishment of a 'national representative body for Parent Councils'.
- 3.3. The aim of the research survey was to find out the views of the newly-formed Parent Councils and other relevant organisations on their interest in having a 'voice' at national level and on the shape and character that a national body might take.
- 3.4. Around 500 Parent Councils and organisations including the Scottish Parent Council Association (SPCA) and the Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC) took part in the survey.
- 3.5. Of those who did express a view, 79% were in favour of a national body. The key reason given was that this would provide a body that will represent Parent Councils and parents at national level and give them a voice.
- 3.6. In June 2009, the Cabinet Secretary announced that an independent National Parent Forum be set up given the interest expressed by parents in having a voice at a national level.

- 3.7. The National Parent Forum will be led by parents and be accountable to parents. The membership of the forum will consist of parents from across all parts of Scotland. The forum will also consider the needs and interests of Parent Councils and parent representatives will be invited to prepare and devise its remit and constitution. Funding for the forum will be provided from the Scottish Government.

4. Establishment of National Parent Forum

- 4.1. Over the last 2 years Education Resources have, through the Council's website, the Parents as Partners Newsletter, and the Education Newsletter, helped to raise awareness of the proposal to establish a National Parent Forum. Parents from Parent Councils throughout South Lanarkshire were also invited to participate in the research survey and encouraged to attend the National Parents Conference held at Hampden Park in June 2009 where this was discussed further.
- 4.2. In the summer, Learning and Teaching Scotland issued an invitation to all Parent Council chairs to put forward to their local authority nominations from parents interested in joining the National Parent Forum. All local authorities in Scotland were invited to put forward one parental nomination to serve as their representative on the National Parent Forum.
- 4.3. Education Resources again used the Council's website, and the September 2009 edition of the Parents as Partners Newsletter to invite expressions of interest from parents who would like to be represented on the new National Parent Forum by 5 October 2009.
- 4.4. One nomination was received from Stonelaw High Parent Council who advised that parent member, John Rice was interested in joining the National Parent Forum.
- 4.5. The first meeting of the National Parent Forum took place in Glasgow on 21 November 2009.
- 4.6. The meeting was chaired by David Cameron, outgoing President of the Association of Directors of Education Scotland. At this initial meeting the focus was on establishing key priorities for the forum, how the forum can influence government and other stakeholders, and the use of online technology. Discussions also took place on issues around Curriculum for Excellence, budgets, communication with parents and support for Parent Councils.
- 4.7. Further meetings are planned during 2010 to develop further its membership, remit and constitution.

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. None.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. None.

7. Other Implications

- 7.1. None.

8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 8.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to existing policy function or strategy and therefore no impact assessment is required.

- 8.2. Consultation took place through the invitation by Learning and Teaching Scotland to Parent Councils to submit expressions of interest from parents interested in joining the National Parent Forum and through the actions taken by Education Resources to help promote the establishment of the forum.

Larry Forde
Executive Director (Education Resources)

14 December 2009

Link(s) to Council Objectives

- Raise educational attainment for all

Previous References

- Education Resources Committee

List of Background Papers

- Views on a national representative body for Parent Councils (findings of survey by Carole Millar Research)
- Parentzone website: parentzone@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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