

Report

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Report to:	Education Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	14 June 2011
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	Parents as Partners Conference – Working Together to Support Children’s Learning
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ provide an update on the outcome of the evaluation of the Parents as Partners Conference held in March 2011 and to use this information to inform the planning and organisation of future parental events.

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the feedback from parents/carers who attended the Parents as Partners Conference be used as a part of the self-evaluation process to help inform the planning and organisation of future parental events.

3. Background

- 3.1. On 3 March 2009, the Education Resources Committee approved the Strategy for Parental Involvement designed to support parents and schools in working together to support children’s learning. Parents, carers and families are the most important influence on children’s attitudes, behaviour and achievement and effective parental involvement will support learning within school.
- 3.2. The Parental Involvement Strategy provides a supportive framework for establishments, services and parents carers to use in helping everyone to work together to support children’s learning.

Research shows that:

- the younger the child, the greater impact parents have on their child’s achievements;
- at age 7, parents have 5 times more influence than that of the school;
- at age 11, influence is more even between parents and school;
- at age 16, the balance swings significantly towards school.

- 3.3. As part of the strategy a commitment has been given to host an annual 'Parents as Partners' Conference. On Thursday, 17 March 2011 over 100 people attended the South Lanarkshire Council Education Resources 'Parents as Partners' conference in the Council Offices. (This event was originally scheduled to take place on 29 November 2010 but due to the adverse weather it was postponed until 17 March 2011).
- 3.4. The Parents Sounding Board was responsible for the planning and organising of the conference. John Rice, the South Lanarkshire National Parent Forum representative who is a parent council member on Stonelaw High School Parent Council also played an active part at the conference in describing the role of the National Parent Forum of Scotland.
- 4. 'Parents as Partners' conference - supporting children's learning**
- 4.1. The conference got off to a good start with the award winning Stonelaw High School Band taking centre stage and showcasing their musical talents to a very appreciative audience.
- 4.2. Councillor Mary Smith, Chair of the Education Resources Committee opened the conference and in her introductory remarks made reference to the important role that parents play in supporting children's learning, which is the central theme of South Lanarkshire Council's Parental Involvement Strategy.
- 4.3. Parents/carers had the opportunity at the conference to attend 'learning workshops' and engage in dialogue with other parents in groups on how they can support their child's learning and their school.
- 4.4. As part of the planning process parents had suggested offering a menu of workshop and information sharing activities that would help with their understanding of Curriculum for Excellence. Primary and Secondary schools showcased what they were doing with children and young people to take forward aspects of Curriculum for Excellence. This also included sessions on the challenges ahead particularly in relation to assessment and reporting.
- 4.5. The range of workshops, information sessions and examples of good practice on offer included:
 - i) What does Curriculum for Excellence look like in Primary School? - (Mossneuk Primary School)
 - ii) Secondary Assessment – Curriculum for Excellence – (Hamilton Grammar School)
 - iii) Engaging Parents in Curriculum for Excellence – (Interactive Panel Session that provided parents to put forward questions)
 - iv) GLOW Scotland's Education Intranet – (Margaret Tracey, Elaine Fitzpatrick)
 - v) Global Citizenship – (Biggar Primary School)
 - vi) 21st Century Parenting (Health and Wellbeing) – (Liz Highet-Gallacher)
- 4.6. A range of market stalls was also provided to enable parents to see some of the learning activities and programmes that are available in schools and services. This included information inputs from youth learning, the psychological service, cultural team, home school and community learning and development, who all demonstrated the support they provide to children and young people.
- 4.7. In closing the conference Larry Forde, Executive Director of Education Resources extended a vote of thanks to parents for the support they provide to their children,

the school and parent council and confirmed that we all share the same aim which is “to continue to work together to support children’s learning.”

5. Outcome

- 5.1. The evaluations from parents/carers indicated that they liked the learning workshop format as it helped to raise their awareness of how they can support their child’s learning as well as providing them with an update on Curriculum for Excellence.
- 5.2. A summary of the evaluations completed by 49 participants following the conference is attached (Appendix 1). It is also worth noting that a over 20 parents intimated an interest in joining focus groups that Education Resources may establish with 37 expressions of interest in wishing to know how they could contribute to the work of the Parents Sounding Board.
- 5.3. Parents/carers in 96% of schools across South Lanarkshire have established Parent Councils (143) across South Lanarkshire.

6. Employee Implications

- 6.1. None

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. To be met from within existing resources.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. There are no sustainability matters arising from the recommendations in this report.
- 8.2. The risk posed by not engaging with parents would affect the positive relationships developed over the last few years. To mitigate this risk, Education Resources has developed a Parental Involvement Strategy which gives a firm commitment to engage with parents and carers to support children’s learning.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. This report does not present a new strategy, policy or plan and is, therefore, not subject to consultation or equality impact assessment.
- 9.2. Parents and schools were engaged in the planning and organising of the Parents as Partners Conference and were also active participants.

Larry Forde
Executive Director (Education Resources)

25 May 2011

Link(s) to Council Objectives/Improvement Themes/Values

- Raise Educational Attainment for All
- Increase Involvement in Lifelong Learning
- Improve Lives of Vulnerable Children, Young People and Adults

Previous References

- Education Resources Committee – 19 January 2010

List of Background Papers

- The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006
- Parents as Partners – Newsletters
- Council Plan: Connect
- How good is our school?

Contact for Further Information

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

Des Dickson, Operations Service Manager

Ext: 4495 (Tel: 01698 454495)

E-mail: des.dickson@southlanarkshire.gov.uk