

Report To: Education & Communities
Committee

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Report By: Corporate Director Education,
Communities & Organisational
Development

Report No: EDUCOM/31/12/SB

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Subject: Parental Involvement Strategy

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to ask Committee to note the contents of the review of the Parental Involvement Strategy, and the development plans for the coming years

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Parental Involvement Strategy for 2009 – 2012 has been reviewed and evaluated using a wide range of evidence including consultations with parents, children and staff, information gathered at authority reviews and HMIE visits, and the Authority Validated Self Evaluation process. Strengths and areas for continued development have been identified.
- 2.2 Future objectives were identified through the use of questionnaires, groups of parents and staff and by sampling pupil councils. National guidance on progress, including key milestones identified by the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board, contributed to the decisions on the way forward.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and its appendix.

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4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act aims to get parents more involved in their child's learning. The Act placed responsibility on local authorities to improve Parental Involvement in three ways; learning at home; home / school partnership; parental representation. Inverclyde Council launched a three year plan to meet the requirements of the Act in 2009 and this has now been reviewed and further plans to support the Act made.
- 4.2 Inverclyde schools have actively sought to meet the requirements of the Act and to inform parents about Curriculum for Excellence. All schools and establishments are addressing the needs of parents in a variety of ways. Information is given to parents by demonstrations of learning, workshops and information evenings on Curriculum for Excellence, question and answer session and access to working classrooms. Parents are consulted on pupil reports, at authority and school level and there has been consultation in schools on positive behaviour, homework and health and wellbeing for example. Parent Councils are involved in supporting self evaluation and focus groups. Inverclyde Council is committed to improving opportunities for parents to become more involved, knowledgeable and confident about their child's education.

5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Schools and establishments will continue to develop partnerships with parents
- 5.2 Education Services will continue to provide ongoing advice and support to schools and parents.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial. Financial support will be given from the existing budget provision for Parental Involvement
- 6.2 Legal. There are no legal issues
- 6.3 Human Resources. There are no human resource issues.
- 6.4 Equalities. All parental involvement initiatives will comply with equalities legislation and recognise the need to promote equalities, including race, gender and disability equality
- 6.5 Repopulation: There are no repopulation issues.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this paper and its appendices.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Appendix 1. Review of Parental Involvement Strategy and plans for 2012 / 2015

Review of Parental Involvement Strategy 2009 /2012 and plans for 2012 /2015

What have we achieved against the action points of the Parental Involvement Strategy?

Our objectives for parents were that they will be:	What has been happening?	What has been the impact?
Parent's will be more involved in their child's learning	Authority, educational establishments and cluster based parental involvement activities have taken place. These included events which gave information to parents in the form of demonstrations of learning, workshops and information on CfE; pupils demonstrating learning at the conclusion of inter disciplinary projects; question and answer sessions at parents evenings; access to working classrooms and regular progress and settling in reports at various stages.	There has been increased parental awareness of CfE and children's learning in school. Very good numbers of parents attended school and cluster events.
Welcomed and involved in the life of their child's school	Schools and establishments continue to develop close links with parents. Parents of children in early years are contributing to learning stories; parents run school libraries and are members of Eco committees; some Head Teachers make themselves available before and after school, or at a 'drop in' time for informal discussion; there are opportunities to participate in classroom visits both in primary and secondary schools and 'meet the teacher' sessions in many schools.	Many parents are actively involved in their child's educational establishments. Parent / teacher relationships continue to develop in a positive way.
Able to support learning at home	Schools and establishments giving information to parents on the learning intentions for the coming term or session; study tips packs; Glow supporting homework; School Parental involvement teams working with staff to make parent prompts for reading; guidance given on curricular areas and parents involved in making up for example, science / literacy / numeracy at home packs; joint parent and child homework tasks.	Parents and pupils are actively engaged in learning at home. Pupils are experiencing well planned homework tasks across all curricular areas. Parents feel more confident in supporting their children in their learning.
Encouraged to express their views and take part in decision making	Parents in the authority have been consulted on pupil reports, both at school and authority level; there has been consultation in schools on homework, Child Protection, positive behaviour, reporting, and health and well being; many Parent Councils have curriculum sub groups; parents councils are involved in the school improvement plan and self evaluation; schools issue themed questionnaires, 'question of the month' and invite parents to be part of focus groups within the school.	Many school and authority groups have been very well supported by the participation of enthusiastic parents. This is evidenced by policy content.
Involved in forums for discussion and debate on educational policy	A number of parents have effectively contributed to the authority literacy strategy; parents have taken part alongside staff in CPD on Creativity and Cooperative learning; parents have been involved in sessions sharing their own experiences of higher education and the world of work. Parent council representatives meetings provide a combination of information and discussion.	Parents are actively influencing authority and school policy.

How do we know what we are good at and how can we continue to develop and improve?

A wide range of evidence has enabled us to identify what has been happening and the impact of this. The evidence also identified the main strengths of the strategy. Evidence includes the authority validated self evaluation process, attendance at and evaluations of curriculum / information events and parent conferences, agendas and minutes of meetings, consultation with parents and pupils and information gathered at authority school visits and HMIE inspections.

Our strengths are:	How will we continue to develop?	What will be the impact?
Very strong partnership working with parent council chairs.	We will broaden this strong partnership to the wider parent forum. Work with CLD partners to use community engagement to gain a wider perspective of parental views. Pre Five parent groups will be given opportunities to be included in Parent Council training and events.	A wider range of parents will have their views and expectations taken into account at school and authority level.
A broad and comprehensive range of parental involvement activities are embedded in school calendars.	Continue to consult with pupils and parents to provide appropriate parental involvement opportunities. Work with pupil and parent councils and share results with all educational establishments. Financial resources will be devolved to clusters to support the objectives for the next year. Develop the use of Glow and the council website to share information with parents.	An increased number of parents are aware of opportunities for parental involvement in their school and also are kept in touch with events across the authority.
All schools have a parent council, or similar group of interested parents.	Continue to develop training and support for parent councils. Develop training for school managers. Encourage schools and parent councils to share good practice and provide opportunities for this.	All parent councils will carry out their responsibilities and duties effectively to the benefit of the school and its community
Schools are making very good use of the experiences and skills of parents to enhance the school curriculum and take learning from school to home.	Ensure all parents are aware of the opportunities to be involved in contributing to the curriculum and home learning. Take opportunities to share good practice across the authority. Work with CLD partners to raise awareness and expectations of all parents, including those considered hard to reach. A range of approaches will be used, for example, interest clubs and parenting groups.	An increased number of parents are involved in their child's school and feel that their skills and talents are being used effectively.
Good range of parental involvement in curriculum development initiatives.	Establishments continue to gather parent's views on curricular awareness through parent councils and focus groups. All educational establishments continue to ensure that parents understand both the information given and their role in supporting developments.	The skills and knowledge of parents contributes to developments in schools and the authority.
Most schools are using websites effectively to communicate learning and some parents are successfully using Glow.	Ensure all establishments have an effective and active website. Develop the use of social networking and text messaging and tweeting, where appropriate. Ensure the council's website has appropriate and up to date information for parents of all children.	Parents are well informed and communication is effective. Parents are able to access appropriate information electronically.

How do we know where we are and what do we need to develop next?

Various groups of parents and staff met to discuss what we are doing well and what we could do to improve parental involvement. Samples of pupil councils were asked how their parents supported their learning at home and how they know what their children are learning.

A questionnaire asked parents and schools to consider how the strategy should be revised to ensure that CfE was supported. Parent councils and schools were asked about their own effectiveness. Information to help shape the next steps has also been taken from the evidence sources used to decide what we are good at, as described above. Guidance from the curriculum for excellence management board, including key milestones, has been a key factor in deciding these development needs.

Our objectives now are to:

How will we develop these?

What will be the impact?

Develop parental involvement in the widest sense.	Work with CLD, Health and Social Work partners to identify current provision and plan for improvements involving parents of children from 0 to 18. Provide opportunities to share good practice and participate in CPD. Support early years establishments and their parents to continue the development of their parent groups as supporters of their child's education.	Parental partnership arrangements are developed which are parent friendly and take account of parent wishes, availability and circumstances. Educational establishments will have an increased understanding of family and community issues that may affect learning.
Continue to support and develop the role of parent councils	Support parent councils to work with schools to support and promote parental involvement in learning. Support parent councils in effectively engaging the wider parent forum. Encourage reflection on existing practice, and provide advice on specific areas to develop good practice in the context of individual parent councils. Take greater account of the close partnerships developed with parents at the nursery stage and build on this.	Parent councils are involved in their schools in a meaningful and mutually supportive manner. An increased number of parents are involved. Parents who have been confident supporting their child's early year's establishment are confident in their role as the child moves to primary school.
Ensure that all parents have a greater understanding of the purposes and benefits of the broad general education.	Continue to have secondary parent councils discuss curriculum structures and have an increasing role in sharing this with the parent forum. Give Primary parent councils opportunities to be involved in discussion and information sharing Focus parental engagement at S1–S3 on explaining progress achieved to date and how the entitlements to a broad general education are delivered alongside increasing specialisation	Parents in all sectors will have greater understanding of purposes and benefits of BGE, including how and why changes to curriculum structures are being introduced
Involve a wide range of parents in contributing to the development of assessment and reporting procedures	Reporting arrangements to parents are discussed with each parent council, and parent councils / parents are kept informed of and involved in the development and progress of P7 and S3 profiles. At both authority and school level, a priority will be to share assessment approaches and explain progress through early, first and second curriculum levels and towards third level. Engagement with parents will prioritise the S1-S3 broad general education entitlement including how progress is assessed and the transition to the Senior Phase. Parents Councils will be involved in this process Reporting and Assessment arrangements will be shared and understood by parents. Schools and the authority will consider how to increase the understanding of parents and how they can build the confidence of practitioners to enable them to engage with parents positively	Profiling will support ongoing dialogue and reflection with pupils, parents and teachers about the pupil's achievements and learning. All teachers are confidently discussing with parents how they can support learners in their next steps in learning. Parents understanding of standards is improved

How will we know there will be impact and improvements?

Participation levels, including the level of participation of usually hard to reach groups, are increased. Pupils and parents are actively involved in auditing practice and planning for improvement. Parents consider themselves appropriately consulted and supported. Parent Councils and school work together effectively to share good practice with each other and with the wider parent forum. Increased numbers of parents will consider all communication with their schools to be highly effective. Information from schools will show more parents are actively contributing to their child's learning.

Action plans which support us in continue to develop our strengths as well as to meet the future objectives sit underneath this plan. The action plans will be monitored and a summary of the developments which have supported the action plans and their impact on practice will be provided by the Quality Improvement Officer on an annual basis. The summary will be made available to all parent councils and other interested parent groups. Occasional surveys and focus groups will contribute to the monitoring and development of the policy. Individual schools and establishments should report on their activities annually within their Standard and Quality Report.