

PE1391/F

Renfrewshire Parent Council Forum: Comments on submissions by interested parties re. PE1391

Susan Calcluth-Russell

14th September 2011

GTCS Comments. We are in agreement with comments made by the GTCS and see this particular submission as a strong endorsement of the petition.

EIS Comments. We are in agreement with the comments submitted by the EIS. In reference to point 10, we accept that wording of legislation would have to take into account the differences in the primary and secondary school week. It certainly wouldn't be our intention to reduce teaching entitlement of secondary pupils.

The wording of legislation could state different pupil teaching entitlement time for primary and secondary pupils, 25 hours and 27.5 hours respectively. Or as suggested, stated as a minimum 25 hours.

Education Scotland Comments. As above we accept that the wording of any legislation would have to take into account the differences in primary and secondary pupil teaching time.

As the committee knows, this petition arose from a policy 'The Revised Model for the Delivery of Primary Education' which was due to be implemented in Renfrewshire Council.

In their submission, Education Scotland states '[At present, any change in curricular arrangements falls under SEED Circular 3-2001 on Curriculum Flexibility. This Circular sets clear expectations that such changes will involve consultation with parents, be clear about the educational gain intended from the proposals, and have sound arrangements for evaluation. The Circular further states that "Innovative approaches to the content and delivery of the curriculum which fulfil the above criteria will be welcomed, and judged on their merits in terms of the outcomes achieved."](#) It would thus be important that any significant changes to the curriculum meet these stated expectations.'

And yet Renfrewshire Council approved a policy which affected the delivery of the curriculum without meeting the above criteria. The 'Revised Model for the Delivery of Primary Education' had been passed as policy and was about to be implemented without approval from any regulatory body. There was no consultation with parents previous to the Council decision, no arrangements for assessment and evaluation were in place and the policy had dubious educational gains. It was only when parents and teachers highlighted the inadequacies of the model and sought opinion from regulatory bodies such as the GTCS that doubts over the credibility of the scheme were raised.

If such policies can be approved without scrutiny and approval of regulatory bodies does this not suggest that legislation protecting pupil teaching time is necessary?

At no point have RPCF or this petition doubted the benefit of bringing in 'experts' to enhance pupils learning. And, as rightly pointed out, we have valuable partnerships to enable this. However, as is common practise, this is additional to classroom teaching with teaching staff present. Other activities are offered as 'extra curricular' activities and therefore delivered out with 'school time' or have specific parental consent eg outdoor education.

In the case where non-GTC registered 'experts' are brought into schools to deliver part of the curriculum, we would argue that it is very important for the class teacher to be present. This would enable teachers to draw on the learning outcomes of the lesson and bring them into the wider curricular – this being a core element of the curriculum for excellence.

Learning Directorate Comments

["Our understanding of the proposal by Renfrewshire Council was to pilot bringing in experts in drama and sport to enrich the learning experience of their pupils"](#)

If the purpose was to enrich pupils learning experience, why do we not provide more lessons from our GTC registered drama, music and sports teachers? This would indeed be welcomed.

From the wording of the statement from the Learning Directorate...[the committee may be aware that Renfrewshire Council decided, that further to the announcement of the Review, their proposal was perhaps better explored in a national context...](#) it would appear that the Learning Directorate were not fully aware of the opposition to the policy from the parent's, teachers, the GTCS and the EIS. Even the statement submitted by Renfrewshire Council to this committee acknowledges that this opposition was a decisive factor in dropping the policy.

Renfrewshire Council Comments Renfrewshire Council openly admits that a main factor in the development of 'The Revised Model for the Delivery of Primary Education' was to save money. By bringing in staff with re-numeration levels of half that of teaching staff, it aimed to save £1.2 million annually.

This quite clearly goes against [SEED Circular 3-2001 on Curriculum Flexibility](#) as stated above.

There are a number of points made in this submission about the merits of the particular model that we would argue strongly against. One example being [...the experiences/activities offered by specialist staff in the council proposal would have been part of the 25 hour per week educational provision and not just an add-on. The experiences would have been well planned to enrich and enhance learning.](#)

Examples of the programme given to parents (as written in the official policy) included 'Primary 1 - What would you like to be if you where a sports person. Draw, Write and Discuss. Primary 2 – Classroom games and Primary 3 - Draw and colour country flags'. None of which require specialist drama or sports coaches or enhance pupils learning.

Our opposition to 'The Revised Model for the Delivery of Primary education' is well documented. On all counts we believe that the policy would have been detrimental to children's education.

As a result it has opened up a wider debate about who should be in schools educating our children. Our position as parents is we want GTC registered teachers to be fully responsible for the education of our children.

Introducing legislation would safeguard the fundamental principle of pupils being taught by qualified teachers for the full time they are in school.