

ITEM No ...2.....

REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES COMMITTEE –
12 DECEMBER 2016

REPORT ON: EMPOWERING TEACHERS, PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES TO
ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY IN EDUCATION – A
CONSULTATION RESPONSE

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 397-2016

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to share with members of the Children and Families Services Committee the proposed consultation response to the governance review on 'Empowering Teachers, Parents and Communities to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education'. The review asks a number of questions about the governance of Scottish education and seeks responses by 6 January 2017.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Committee members are asked to:

- Agree the response to the consultation ; and
- Instruct the Executive Director of Children and Families Service to provide a future report on the outcome of the governance review.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the consultation response to the governance review. Committee members will be updated on any future financial implications.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 "Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: A Delivery Plan for Scotland" was presented to Scottish Parliament in June 2016. The Delivery Plan identified four areas under which priorities and actions are grouped: closing the attainment gap; further developing the curriculum; empowering teachers, head teachers and communities; and the continued implementation of the National Improvement Framework. There was a strong focus on reducing the workload on teachers in relation to bureaucracy in the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence. The plan reinforced the Government's commitment to closing the attainment gap through activities such as the Scottish Attainment Challenge and the forthcoming increase in the hours of early learning and childcare.

4.2 In relation to the Curriculum for Excellence the emphasis was on the need to de-clutter the curriculum and make sure there is enough time to allow teachers to teach the things that matter most at each stage of a child's learning based on their local context. For primary schools, the Delivery Plan suggested that every child should achieve the best possible progress in the priority areas of literacy, numeracy, health

and wellbeing and that the Government's commitment to two hours of PE in the primary and two periods in the secondary should be maintained.

- 4.3 The Delivery Plan stated that the Scottish Government are committed to a publicly owned and run, comprehensive education system but that the Government would seek more autonomy for schools by providing them with the responsibilities and resources to make this happen, and to ensure that the overall funding for education is transparent and protected. To this end, a Governance Review was launched in September 2016. The review examines the system changes required to empower schools and decentralise management through the encouragement of school cluster working and the potential creation of new educational regions. The clear policy objective is to devolve aspects of decision making and funding to schools and communities.
- 4.4 The Delivery Plan noted that proposals are being developed for a fair and transparent national funding formula and that these proposals will be consulted upon in March 2017. As the legal responsibility for delivery of education services sits largely with education authorities, the Scottish Government will extend this responsibility to individual schools by way of an Education Bill which will be introduced in the second year of this Parliament.
- 4.5 The Delivery Plan outlined the key actions Scottish Government will take to continue implementation of the National Improvement Framework. The actions set out in this section of the delivery plan are summarised under six key drivers for improvement: School leadership; Teacher professionalism; Parental engagement; Assessment of children's progress; School improvement and Performance information. The Plan outlines a package of support which aims to improve and develop school leadership with activities ranging from formal learning to development of the existing cluster and shared headship models. There are a number of activities to support the professional development of teachers. The activities outlined cover recruitment, training and availability of teachers.
- 4.6 The data collected by Scottish Government on children's attainment will be further developed with a new approach to standardised assessments, new data collection on children's health and wellbeing and further data on school leaver destinations amongst others. School Improvement will be addressed with the development of a new Standards and Evaluation framework, a refocus on school inspection activities and a national approach to reporting on school improvement. Performance information will be published nationally on a school by school basis and this will be the initial focus of the International Council of Education Advisers in September. There are a number of commitments for each element of performance reporting culminating in a draft Dashboard being available by Summer 2017.
- 4.7 The proposed consultation response from the Children and Families Service is included as Appendix 1 of the report. The response reinforces the level of ongoing activity and joint working across the three local council areas of Angus, Dundee and Perth and Kinross as a useful platform on which to extend links. It reinforces the value and integrity of local democracy and decision making at community level. The governance review provides a clear opportunity to build on existing best practice across Scottish education and the views expressed within our professional response are intended to reflect our knowledge and experience across all sectors from pre-school through to secondary education.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Executive Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education.

MICHAEL WOOD
Executive Director of Children and Families Service
November 2016



Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve Excellence and Equity in Education

A Governance Review

RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response.

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Individual

Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

Dundee City Council, Children and Families Service	(01382) 433071
----------------------------------------------------	----------------

Phone number

Address

Dundee House 50 North Lindsay Street DUNDEE

Postcode

DD1 1NL

Email

michael.wood@dundeecity.gov.uk

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

- Publish response with name
- Publish response only (anonymous)
- Do not publish response

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

- Yes
- No

QUESTIONNAIRE

Question 1 -

What are the strengths of the current governance arrangements of Scottish education?

Comments

There are a number of significant strengths with the current governance arrangements for Scottish education. The key strength lies with the fact that education is delivered at source at local council level with the active engagement of elected councillors. From a parental point of view there is considerable security in the knowledge that the central staff and school staff are readily accessible and can respond quickly given their clear knowledge and understanding of the local context. The following strengths apply:

Councillors play a valuable role in the delivery and scrutiny of education at a local level. They are reactive and responsive to the educational establishments in their own areas as well as being knowledgeable to broader issues. The scrutiny element of the role is important as well as the support and challenge role.

Councillors are engaged in ongoing discussion and dialogue with central educational staff on a wide variety of issues but extends well beyond the narrow field of education to encompass the wider children and families' agenda.

The relationship between head teachers and the central team at council level ensures that there can be an appropriate level of ongoing support and challenge. This is fundamental to the role of the authority in promoting continuous improvement.

The ability to work in close partnership with each council service, the Third Sector and the NHS at a local level is important in creating a solution focussed approach across the entire Children and Families agenda rather than simply education.

Question 2 -

What are the barriers within the current governance arrangements to achieving the vision of excellence and equity for all?

Comments

This is a closed question. It assumes that there are barriers in terms of the delivery model for governance and that these have been created at a local level. The real barriers have been imposed on councils over recent years following a series of past and present reduction to the budget. These have resulted in a significant level of changes to the way in which the system is organised and to a marked reduction in the level of central staff who are able to provide support to establishments – in essence a capacity issue. This would not be resolved by the creation of a new tier described as an educational board and indeed may well be exacerbated. The emerging solution is that councils are collaborating at a strategic level to a greater extent than ever before. This ensures that the workstreams in place to promote the highest quality experiences for children, young people, families and communities. This approach is essential since the achievement of excellence and equity for all starts well before children enter formal education and extends beyond the realm of core education from a service delivery standpoint.

Question 3 -

Should the above key principles underpin our approach to reform? Are there other principles which should be applied?

The key principles underpinning the approach to reform are sound although none of them require a change in the existing governance arrangements to make them happen. With the exception of the third principle referring to a 'simple and transparent' funding system, the other three are evident already. This should be extended to include direct reference to funding at council level to ensure that the workstreams being carried out across Children and Families Services (which extends well beyond education) is protected as we move forward.

An additional principle should include the need to support councils in the delivery of high quality provision to address the different challenges faced by children and families from pre-birth onwards. The review is light on any reference to children and families and this is an omission since there is a myriad of research to reinforce the fact that the pre-school experiences and life circumstances of children will shape their life chances.

Question 4 –

What changes to governance arrangements are required to support decisions about children's learning and school life being taken at school level?

Comments

Few changes if any are required to existing governance arrangements in an effort to enhance school-level decision making. Decisions that require to be made at school level are in place already. Curriculum guidelines in Dundee fully embrace the philosophy of Curriculum for Excellence in that the curriculum is shaped at a local level by empowered schools and communities in best meeting the learning and wellbeing needs of children and young people.

See also Q6 response.

Question 5 –

What services and support should be delivered by schools? What responsibilities should be devolved to teachers and headteachers to enable this? You may wish to provide examples of decisions currently taken by teachers or headteachers and decisions which cannot currently be made at school level.

Comments

Schools at present have full control over the structure and delivery of their curriculum. They have full control over their staffing compliment within the budget allocated. They have control over levels of promoted staff. They have control over the range and levels of support staff.

Presently at central level the ASN support function is currently managed- but with full consultation of schools. This is being devolved in Dundee next session to schools as well. There have also been great advances made in HTs leading and supporting central initiatives. We believe in Dundee we have the balance right and this is supported by the Head Teachers and schools

There needs to be a coherent approach to risk assessment and risk management in relation to staffing issues. For example how would exigencies such as maternity leave be met and covered financially.

Question 6 –

How can children, parents, communities, employers, colleges, universities and others play a stronger role in school life? What actions should be taken to support this?

Comments

DSYW has brought employers more prominently into school planning and management. This is an area that needs to continue to expand. It is vital that schools see themselves as full members of the communities that they serve and that the school building is seen as an asset of the community. The approach taken to GIRFEC implementation nationally and locally has helped drive this further forward. This is bound closely together with the local authority working within the wider Children and Families Partnership. Schools are full members of the partnership. Any changes in governance must ensure that the independence of schools is not promoted in a way that would dilute their effectiveness in supporting the full range of support that children and families require and retreat to being the deliverers of learning uniquely. This will destroy much of what has taken years to build.

The NHS in particular requires to be considered to ensure its role in integrated children's services is enhanced. Clarity is needed as who would be the employer in any regional arrangements.

Question 7 -

How can the governance arrangements support more community-led early learning and childcare provision particularly in remote and rural areas?

Comments

We are not convinced that community led ELC particularly in remote and rural areas is achievable due to population age profiles and work patterns of the existing workforce e.g. some holding multiple jobs. It would be essential that any community led provision would be of equally high quality to that of other ELC providers and would require to meet the requirements of partnership status stipulated by each Local Authority. Requirements for SSSC registration, demands of dual inspection processes and overall governance arrangements are a challenge and may affect interest in community led ELC.

Question 8 –

How can effective collaboration amongst teachers and practitioners be further encouraged and incentivised?

Comments

Dundee City Council Children and Families Service is in the process of migrating from a centrally led framework of quality improvement to include a sectoral led model of school improvement partnerships supported by central officers. Central to the success of such a model is the notion of collaborative leadership and collegiate support and challenge. The evolution of such a model will enhance existing arrangements for collaborative activity including: professional networks, well embedded cross – sector cluster activity, internal SQA verification activity/staff capacity building and centrally supported CLPL activities. This is in addition to effective models of collaborative cluster working.

Continued engagement by school leaders and staff in models of practitioner enquiry including PDSA (Plan/Do Study Act) and RAFA (Raising Attainment For All) approaches will remain central to teacher/support staff collaboration.

Question 9

What services and support functions could be provided more effectively through clusters of schools working together with partners?

Comments

Evolving sectoral led approaches to ensuring school improvement (as outlined in 8 above) have at their core the reciprocal support and challenge offered by a group/cluster of schools working in partnership with one another. Existing arrangements for determining resource allocation for pupils with additional support needs via community/Ward based Support for Learning Management Groups will continue to be key in meeting pupils' learning and wellbeing needs.

Question 10 -

What services or functions are best delivered at a regional level? This may include functions or services currently delivered at a local or a national level.

This question implies that there are services or functions which are not being delivered well at council level. There are many examples of collaborative working and an example of this is the work taking place between Angus, Dundee & Perth and Kinross councils in terms of extended collaborative approaches involving Children and Families' Services working in close partnership with Children's Health, NHS Tayside, the Third sector and local businesses to address the national agenda in terms of tackling poverty, closing the equity gap, raising attainment and improving the health and wellbeing of all children, young people, families and communities. The three Tayside authorities and NHS Tayside already work closely together and are well placed to build on this foundation to act in the best interest of all of Tayside's children, young people and their families and improve outcomes for all in line with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Moving forward, a core priority would be to identify areas of policy and practice across the three authorities, and where possible NHS Tayside, that is consistent with best value approaches and suitable for joint working purposes in the short, medium or longer term.

Question 11 –

What factors should be considered when establishing new educational regions?

Comments

Political governance is a significant consideration. Another major consideration is the nature of the Education Service in each current Local Authority. In some cases there have been amalgamation with Communities, in others with Children's Services. The differing working arrangements and relationships with NHS and Adult Health and Social Care partnerships will require consideration.

It would be important to consider the different levels of collaboration, both formal and informal that currently exist across local authorities. Issues of rurality would require careful consideration in the formulation of any new working arrangements.

There is scope to deliver support functions such as educational development and quality improvement at local level. There are examples of successful inter-authority co-operation i.e. 1 + 2 Modern Languages.

Question 12 -

What services or support functions should be delivered at a national level?

The work of key agencies and groups such as Education Scotland, the Care Inspectorate, the SQA, GTCS and SCEL should be delivered at a national level but there is scope to review the existing structures and purpose to establish that these are still 'fit for purpose'.

Question 13 –

How should governance support teacher education and professional learning in order to build the professional capacity we need?

Comments

Teacher education, professional learning and leadership development should continue to be a shared responsibility across all key stakeholders within Scottish education, both individually and collectively. Existing and emerging partnerships between local authorities, initial teacher education establishments/Universities and national bodies/organisations including SCEL, Education Scotland, GTCS and SQA should remain central to teacher education and professional learning.

Existing and evolving approaches to collaboration and networking amongst teachers, practitioners, schools, early learning and childcare settings and the wider community (employers, colleges, universities etc.) should be consolidated and extended at an area level e.g. Pan Tayside and Fife. This will also be supported by models of cluster and School Improvement Partnership working.

Question 14 –

Should the funding formula for schools be guided by the principles that it should support excellence and equity, be fair, simple, transparent, predictable and deliver value for money? Should other principles be used to inform the design of the formula?

Comments

The creation of a national formula for the devolution of a staffing budget in our view will be extremely challenging and will ultimately be an artificial compromise and not responsive to the needs of schools and young people.

One of the issues that schools will face, and in fact face now is the delivery of support for pupils with ASN and pupils with multiple and complex needs. These needs are being met in mainstream schools in the whole and in the future it is likely that more of these needs will be met through the universal service. This would have to be a consideration in any formula and will become a growing consideration as these needs expand. We do not as yet have an agreed definition of ASN nationally and it is measured entirely differently from authority to authority. A national formula will not have the ability to be sympathetic or respond where schools experience changes in their school ASN population.

Where there is no central locus with budgets (though they be devolved to schools) may lead to schools looking to avoid enrolling pupils with complex needs.

Who would fund successful placing requests to private schools offering specialist support- would this be left with the authority or dealt with by schools, or indeed national government?

It is questionable how a formula can deliver value for money.

- The present funding arrangements of schools reflect local circumstances.
- It is not certain what the benefit of a national, standardised approach to a funding formula would be.
- How would PPP and property maintenance costs, including provision for emergencies be factored into school budgets.
- Funding and resourcing for children with additional support needs raises important issues. Arrangements must conserve and support development of inclusive approaches.

Question 15 –

What further controls over funding should be devolved to school level?

Comments

Dundee Devolved School Management scheme provides the framework for devolving budgets to schools, with the overall aim of improving learning and teaching process by delegating powers to enable schools to make decisions at a local level but remaining accountable to the local authority. The framework is still relevant in the current climate. There are however certain budget headings that still do not lend themselves to easily being devolved to individual school level e.g. home to school pupil transport and would offer no benefit by devolving.

Funding should only be devolved to Head Teachers where it can directly support the best outcomes for pupils and have an impact on the core delivery of learning and teaching. Devolving budgets which Head Teachers cannot influence or control e.g. property rates offers no added benefit and does not support the overall aim of improving learning and teaching. Head Teachers need to be able to focus on raising attainment and closing the gap through effective learning and teaching. Head Teachers do currently have the autonomy and decision making over DSM to make appropriate decisions. Existing DSM frameworks indicate the governance arrangements and controls that should be adhered to when managing devolved budgets e.g. consultative committee in schools ensuring that school staff are informed and consulted on the general operation of the devolved budget. Schools are also expected to adhere to Council Financial Standing orders in terms of procurement. There is a central recruitment and selection process which schools adhere to. The above existing controls over funding arrangements currently offers a comprehensive range already.

Question 16 –

How could the accountability arrangements for education be improved?

High stakes accountability requires high quality assessments each year that are equated to those in previous year. More emphasis should be placed on comparisons of performance from year to year rather than school to school. This allows for differences in starting points while maintaining an expectation of improvement for all

A more consistent and broader set of standards for proficiency and appropriate improvement targets should be set. The accountability system should also set targets in terms of growth rather than requiring each pupil to reach an absolute level of performance. The use, need and value of classroom based evidence needs more attention. Better use of moderation, sharing and evaluating samples of pupil work across schools.

Question 17 -

Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the governance of education in Scotland?

Comments

There is an acceptance and understanding that there is much to commend in Scottish education and this was evident in the recent OECD review. The move to 'educational regions' or the establishment of 'educational boards' has caused considerable debate. There is no doubt that the level of strategic collaboration across council areas has increased in recent times and there is an acceptance that there is scope for further development. Additionally the role of local government is an important one in promoting a culture of localised accountability cannot be understated and would require a change in legislation should this be removed. At a parental level, it is essential that communication is as effective as it can be and this includes the need to engage with the local council/department/service to raise issues or concerns about key aspects of schooling.

The governance review as it stands places too much emphasis on 'education' at the expense of the range of factors involved in the delivery of a Children and Families Service. This is reinforced by the use of the terms 'educational regions' and 'educational boards'.