

Perth & Kinross

Local Agreements : School-Based Consultative Staff Mechanisms [October 2000]

**PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE - 18 OCTOBER 2000
00/566
SCHOOL-BASED CONSULTATIVE STAFF MECHANISMS
REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES
ABSTRACT**

This report provides information on the outcomes of the review of the working of School Planning Consultative Groups in schools and outlines a range of proposals for improving the operation of these Groups which will further develop the participation of teaching and support staff in the effective management of the life and work of schools.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- i) notes the findings and conclusions of the review of the working of School Planning Consultative Groups;
- ii) requires all schools to address the relevant issues, following the consultation exercise. and
- iii) requires the Director of Education and Children's Services to review the implementation and impact of these proposals in early 2002.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 In May 1997 the Education Committee approved Report 971278 outlining proposals for the establishment of School Planning Consultative Groups in all schools following a survey of the previous Tayside guidelines which was carried out between November 1996 and March 1997.

2.2 The proposal to establish a School Planning Consultative Group in each school was intended to

- be a genuinely collaborative creative process representative of all staff in school
- encourage staff involvement in decision making at school level
- result in a feeling of ownership and involvement for all staff
- integrate all other school processes including curriculum and staff development, staff review, DSM and workload management.

2.3 The report recommended the implementation of these groups in schools from the start of session 1997/98 and provided guidelines about their remit, membership and operation.

2.4 The report also recommended that the Director of Education review the progress in implementing these proposals in schools. This review is an action within the current Service Plan (4.1 Chapter 9, Page 25) and has been the subject of subsequent discussion in the Joint Consultative Committee (Teachers) Sub Group on Workload.

2.5 It was accordingly agreed in November 1999 that a review of the working of the School Planning Consultative Groups be undertaken by joint teams of JCC members and Educational Development Officers visiting a sample of schools between January and April 2000.

2.6 The review had two purposes..

1 to establish whether or not the authority's guidelines were being carried out and whether or not any amendments were required.

2) to establish the impact of the School Planning Consultative Groups on

- communication throughout the school
- participative management which involves staff
- involvement by staff in decision making
- involvement by staff in workload management.

2.7 A sample of twenty one schools were visited by teams of two (one Educational Development Officer and one member of the Teachers' side of the JCC) and a variety of teaching and support staff were interviewed. The sample consisted of one nursery school, one special school, twelve primary schools and departments and seven secondary schools.

3 REVIEW FINDINGS

3.1 The findings of the review were:

3.1.1 Authority Guidelines

- Less than half of all schools had a written, clear remit about the Group and its operation which had been made available to all teaching and support staff. This was particularly the case in relation to new staff.
Election arrangements, where required, were in place and operating satisfactorily.
- The balance of membership between the different levels of teaching staff and the inclusion of support staff was satisfactory although in a couple of instances support staff had been excluded either because of timetabling problems for meetings or through the establishment of separate groups.
- In at least a third of schools the frequency of meetings of the Group did not meet authority guidelines.
- The circulation of agendas in advance was satisfactory although there is still a requirement to ensure that all teaching and support staff receive the agenda and not just members of the Group.
- The circulation of minutes of meetings and decisions taken did not meet the authority's guidelines in a third of schools and there is a need to ensure that such information is circulated to all teaching and support staff.
- In all instances the Consultative Groups considered issues related to

- o the School Plan and its development
- o the operation of the devolved budget.

- However in at least a third of schools the issue of workload management was not formally considered.

3.11.2 Impact

- **Communication**

In the majority of schools the Consultative Group had enhanced communication throughout the school although there is a need in the larger schools to ensure that all staff are included in two way communication.

- **Participative Management**

In nearly all schools the Consultative Group had contributed to the development of participative management although again in larger schools there was a need to fully involve all teaching and support staff.

- **Decision Making**

There was a marked difference between the primary and secondary sectors with staff in nearly all primary schools feeling fully involved in decision making but only half of their secondary colleagues feeling the same way. It is clear that all concerned in secondary schools - Senior Management, the Consultative Group, sub groups and all teaching and support staff - require to further develop the role and ethos of the Consultative Group in relation to full involvement in major decision making.

- **Workload Management**

In the majority of schools the Consultative Group contributed positively to workload management issues although there is still a need for all staff to be more involved in developing this aspect of the role of the Group.

3.1.3 General

- In a number of smaller schools where the whole staff was involved in regular meetings there appeared to be confusion as to whether or not there needed to be a separate Consultative Group as well and whether there was any need to formally address the areas of the Group's remit.
- In a number of secondary schools a range of project and sub groups had been established which had no formal reporting/communication relationship to the Consultative Group.

4 PROPOSALS

4.1 Operating Guidelines

4.11.11 The review has not produced any evidence for substantial change to the authority's guidelines. A copy of the original guidelines which accompanied Report 971278 is attached in the appendix. The following parts of the guidelines need to be clarified and addressed by schools

- A clear, written remit about the role and operation of the Consultative Group must be made available to all teaching and support staff, in particular new staff who join the staff between the election/establishment of the Group. In secondary schools the relationship between the Consultative Group and the Board of Studies Committee or its equivalent should be made explicit.
- The Group will be elected either annually or biennially by agreement at a whole staff meeting.
- The Consultative Group must contain at least one member of the support staff and arrangements should be put in place to allow them to participate fully.
- The Consultative Group must formally meet at least once per term.
- The timing of meetings to optimise participation is essential. It is appropriate for the Group to meet during PAT or INSET time or any other suitable time of the normal school day/week.
All teaching and support staff must be notified of the agenda well in advance and be notified of the minutes of the meeting and decisions taken thereafter.
- Support for the production of agendas and minutes should be made available either through allocated time for teaching staff or through the school's clerical staff.
- Workload management issues must be formally considered at every Group meeting.

4.1.2 The following additions to the operating guidelines are required

- In smaller schools where the whole staff (teaching and support) are involved in regular meetings there is no requirement to establish a separate Consultative Group. There is, however, a requirement for these whole staff meetings to follow the operating guidelines for the Consultative Group and address the relevant issues formally at least once per term.
- The intention behind the establishment of these Consultative Groups as outlined in para 4.1 of Report 97/278 should be emphasised to all schools

The planning process in schools should embrace all aspects of the work of the school including new developments and initiatives, ongoing maintenance and consolidation of work, resource and financial management, workload issues and staff support. This proposal to establish a School Planning Consultative Group would ensure that adequate consultation took place on all aspects of a school's work."

In consequence all project and sub groups should have a formal reporting/communication relationship to the Consultative Group.

4.2 Developing the impact and ethos of the Consultative Group

The following issues need to be addressed by schools

- The development of communication about the role and work of the Consultative Group to inform and engage all members of the teaching and support staff in all schools.

- The need to fully involve all teaching and support staff in developing a participative management philosophy and practice in larger schools.
- The involvement of all teaching and support staff in secondary schools in developing the role of the Consultative Group in major decision making.
- The need for all staff to contribute to the role of the Consultative Group in managing workload.

4.3 It is recommended that consideration be given to changing the title of these Consultative Groups to Staff Consultative Groups to emphasise the central nature of their role.

4.4 It is also recommended that Head Teachers be consulted about these proposals, and that following any agreed amendments, the proposals be implemented in schools with immediate effect.

4.5 It is further recommended that these proposals and their implementation be the subject of a further review and report to Committee in the early part of 2002.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report at this time.

6 CONSULTATION

The Head of Legal and Administrative Services, the Joint Consultative Committee (Teachers) and head teachers have been consulted on the contents of this report.

7 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This report addresses the Council's key theme of partnership with its staff and the promotion of their active participation in the delivery of services. It also addresses part of specific objective 4.1 in Education Services' Service Plan: "To involve staff in schools and other education services through the review and amendment of staff consultative and participative processes in all schools and services".

8 CONCLUSION

The proposals and amendments to the existing operating guidelines and philosophy underpinning School Planning Consultative Groups will ensure the continuing development of staff participation in the effective management of the life and work of schools.

BILL FREW DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

APPENDIX

SCHOOL PLANNING CONSULTATIVE GROUP REMIT, MEMBERSHIP AND OPERATION

It is recommended that all schools establish a School Planning Consultative Group with a remit, membership and operation as set out below.

REMIT:

1. To oversee the creation of the draft School plan.
2. To consider the human, material and financial resources and support available to take the school plan forward
3. To receive regular information about the progress of the plan throughout the year
4. To be consulted on any significant revisions to the plan and their financial and workload implications
5. To receive regular information about the general operation of the devolved school budget
6. To be consulted on any significant changes in relation to the devolved school budget, in particular the viring of money between budget heads and the carry forward of surpluses or deficits to the next financial year

7. To monitor the workload of all staff in the school and to consider workload issues arising from any other source

8. To consider any issues arising from any other whole school or departmental group that have implications for school planning, workload or devolved school management.

MEMBERSHIP

The composition of the School Planning Consultative Group will be a minimum of:

- The Head Teacher
- A Senior Management Team Member (where appropriate)
- Elected teaching staff representatives according to the following ratio:

| Total Number of Teachers(excluding Head Teacher) | Number of Elected Teacher Representative |
|--|--|
| 1-5 | Whole staff |
| 6-19 | 3 |
| 20-39 | 4 |
| 40-59 | 5 |
| 60-79 | 6 |
| 80-99 | 7 |
| 100-119 | 8 |

- Elected non-teaching staff representatives on the basis of
- one representative for schools with less than 600 pupils

- two representatives for schools with more than 600 pupils

It will be open to schools to exceed the minimum number of the group according to their own wishes and the circumstances of the school. Any decision to exceed the minimum number should be arrived at after consultation with staff and should be mindful of the need to ensure that the Group membership retains an appropriate balance of promoted and unpromoted staff representatives.

OPERATION

1. The written remit and details of the Group's operational arrangements will be circulated to all staff
2. The Group will be elected on an annual basis, or exceptionally on a biennial basis by agreement at a whole staff meeting. Casual vacancies which occur within a year or two year period may be filled by a by-election or nomination from the group. In addition the consultative group can have the power to second members of staff to assist the consultative group or its sub groups in the work.
3. Arrangements will be made at school level for teacher representatives to be elected by teaching members of staff and for non-teacher representative(s) to be elected by non-teaching members of staff
4. Schools will give consideration to the desirability of a balance between the different levels of teaching staff. There should be an appropriate balance of promoted and unpromoted staff representatives on the group.
5. The Planning Group should elect a chairperson from the elected membership
6. The Group will meet at least once per term. Additional meetings may be called by the Head Teacher or the Chairperson
7. A written agenda for Group meetings should be produced, having been circulated in advance to staff and with an opportunity for all members of the group to place items on the agenda.
8. Meetings of the Group will be minuted and the minutes circulated to all staff as well as decisions taken as a result of the group's discussions
9. The timing of meetings will be by agreement between the head teacher and other members of the group at suitable times of the normal school day/week including PAT time, IST time and without prejudice to minimum non-contact time.
10. The Head Teacher will ensure that the group is consulted and receives regular information as per its remit
11. According to their size and individual circumstances schools may decide to set up sub groups of the Planning Consultative Group to address specific issues or else add other remits such as Staff Review, Curriculum and Staff Development etc. Any such groups should have

clear written remits which are circulated to all staff. In large schools sub groups will be necessary in order for the consultative mechanism to operate effectively.

12. The relationship between the Planning Group, any sub-groups and all other whole school groups including the Senior Management Team will be made explicit and circulated to all staff

13. Arrangements should be made to ensure that new staff are made aware of the remits of all groups.

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