

Save Our Teachers

TIME FOR ACTION!

Briefing Paper No.4

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Renfrewshire Parent Council Forum

3 February 2011

Purpose of this paper

This Briefing paper sets out the **Campaign Action Plan** for the Renfrewshire Parent Council Forum up until 19th February. (A further Action Plan will be issued for the campaign after that date)

The initial aim of this **Campaign Action Plan** is to convince Renfrewshire Council at its meeting on 17 February:

- **To suspend the introduction of the Revised Model for the Delivery for Primary Education** until such times as a **proper and meaningful consultation** can be undertaken.

In the event that the Council fails to agree to this, then we will embark on further campaigning, enlisting the further support of parents and teachers, unions and others.

This paper sets out the immediate campaign that we are asking parents, teachers and others to support.

The recommended actions are set out in chronological order.

February 5th to 16th – “Convince the Council”

STEP 1 - Sign the e-petition at www.ipetitions.com/petition/keepteachers

STEP 2 - E-mail ALL Councillors

We appreciate that many, many parents have already contacted their councillors.

However, we are urging parents to **contact, by e-mail, ALL 39 Councillors** using the template e-mail below. This asks councillors (i) to agree to suspend the Council’s Standing Orders, which is required, technically, in order for this matter to be re-opened for discussion at the Council, and (ii) to support a motion that suspends the introduction of the Council’s proposal.

E-mail template to all Councillors

Dear Councillor

I urge you to support the suspension of the Council’s Standing Orders at the meeting of the full Council to be held on 17 February in order that the Council can consider the following motion:

“That the Council notes:

- (i) that the Education Policy Board of 13 January approved, by 10 votes to 8, the proposals for a Revised Model for the Delivery of Primary Education;
- (ii) that there has been widespread concern regarding the proposal among parents, head teachers, teachers, churches, unions and many others; and
- (iii) that the information meetings conducted by the Convenor of the Education Policy Board, the Director of Education and his staff, subsequent to 13 January, have singularly failed to convince parents (and teachers) of the merits of the proposal.

Accordingly, the Council agrees:

1. To suspend the introduction of the Revised Model for the Delivery for Primary Education until such times as a proper and meaningful consultation can be undertaken with parents, head teachers, teachers, churches, unions, the General Teaching Council for Scotland, and other interested parties.
2. That senior officers are instructed to arrange an early meeting with representatives of the recently formed Renfrewshire Parent Council Forum, as the independent voice for Parent Councils across Renfrewshire, with a view to considering:
 - a. arrangements for the meaningful and comprehensive consultation with parents regarding the Council’s proposal; and

- b. opportunities and suggestions which may give rise to substantial savings and efficiencies within the Council, in general, and the functions of the education department, in particular.”

Please cut and paste this text. The template will also be available on the RPCF website <http://renfrewshireparents.schools.officelive.com/default.aspx>

The e-mail addresses for all Councillors are:

cllr.derek.mackay@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.alex.murrin@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.bill.perrie@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.mary.fee@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.eddie.grady@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.cathy.mcewan@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.brian.lawson@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.celia.lawson@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.susan.mcdonald@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.jim.sharkey@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.mike.dillon@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.terry.kelly@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.kenny.maclaren@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.tommy.williams@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.george.adam@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.eddie.devine@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.marie.mcgurk@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.lorraine.cameron@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.jackie.green@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.mark.macmillan@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.eileen.mccartin@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.john.caldwell@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.john.hood@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.tracie.mcgee@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.iain.mcmillan@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.david.arthur@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.neil.bibby@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.bruce.mcfee@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.david.clews@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.audrey.doig@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.anne.hall@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.allan.noon@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.michael.holmes@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.iain.langlands@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.carol.puthuchearry@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.james.harte@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.james.mcquade@renfrewshire.gov.uk; cllr.sam.mullin@renfrewshire.gov.uk;
cllr.iain.nicolson@renfrewshire.gov.uk

STEP 3 - Visit Councillors' surgeries

Where possible, parents, ideally in groups, should also visit Councillor's surgeries before the 17th. Details of the surgeries for each Councillor are at:

<http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/ilwwcm/publishing.nsf/Content/Navigation-cs-CouncillorsHomePage>

STEP 4 - Write to the Council's Director of Education, Robert Naylor, raising your concerns. His e-mail is robert.naylor@renfrewshire.gov.uk

STEP 5 - Write to your MSP, voicing your objections to this policy.

Wendy Alexander (Paisley North) Wendy.Alexander.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

Hugh Henry (Paisley South) Hugh.Henry.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

Trish Godman (West Renfrewshire) Trish.Godman.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

February 5th to 15th - “Contact the press”

As part of the campaign against the introduction of the *Revised Model of the Delivery of Primary Education* it is important that parents' views are heard and reported in the press. An ideal way to do this is to write letters to the papers. Letters do not have to be long or complex, they simply have to express your concerns and opinions.

To help you with your letter you may want to consider key messages addressed by the campaign, such as:

- The detrimental effect on children's education. Teachers are to be replaced by non-teaching staff for 10% of their education time. The policy does not state what training, qualifications and experience the replacement staff must have.
- The legality of the policy given that only qualified, registered teachers are allowed to 'teach' children. If the council are trying to introduce this as an 'enhancement to support the delivery of the curriculum for excellence' it may contravene existing Education laws. The GTC and EIS have both questioned the legality of the policy.
- Despite numerous 'cluster meetings' to present the policy to parent groups, many questions remain unanswered. Such as 'how can we expect inexperienced, non-qualified staff to control classes of 30+ children' 'Are teachers now expected to teach 100% of the Curriculum in 90% of the time?'
- This policy is detrimental to our children, to the integrity and professionalism of teaching and to the education system in Scotland.
- And many, many more!

Over the next few weeks we will try to increase media coverage of the issue. Writing to the papers in response to articles and other letters is an excellent way to keep the issue in the media spotlight, which in turn mounts pressure on the Council to withdraw the proposals.

Contact details of newspapers can be found within the letters pages or on websites, a few are listed below:

Paisley Daily Express	pde@s-un.co.uk
The Herald	letters@theherald.co.uk
The Scotsman	letters_ts@scotsman.com
The Evening Times	letters@eveningtimes.co.uk
The Daily Record	news@dailyrecord.co.uk
Paisley and Renfrewshire Gazette	editorial.gaz@cypress.co.uk
Scotland on Sunday	letters_sos@scotlandonsunday.com

If you wish any further information or help with your letters contact Susan Calcluth-Russell on scalcluth@hotmail.com

February 17th, 9.00am – “Lobby the Council”

Parents will be lobbying the full Council meeting on 17th February.

Please meet at **9.00am** outside the main doors at Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1UJ.

The full Council starts at 9.30am.

February 19th – “March and Rally”

We have applied to the Police for the right to march through Paisley. Details will be announced when all permissions are in place.

We have booked the **Paisley Town Hall** for a Rally at **11.00am**.

Appendix 1 – A sample letter

Dear Councillor

I refer to the Education Policy Board's decision in respect of the 'Revised Model for the Delivery of Education'. As a parent and constituent, I am writing to you to ask that you OPPOSE this report when it is discussed at the full council meeting on the 17th February.

Parents across Renfrewshire are strongly against the policy on the following points.

1. Replacement of qualified teachers with part time support staff for 2.5 hours of the school week. These staff will not have teaching qualifications or be registered with the GTC.
2. In this time our children will not be 'taught', thereby reducing our child's education time by 10% - this amounts to almost one full year of primary education for a child entering Primary 1.
3. The policy leaves children in Renfrewshire at an educational disadvantage compared to other children across Scotland. Whilst we appreciate the financial pressure the Council face, it is noted that no other Council is taking such measures.
4. The policy has been rushed through without the consultation of parent councils, teachers and parents.
5. Questions remain unanswered as to how the policy will actually work in schools, even though the council is implementing the changes from April in pilot schools, and across Renfrewshire from August.
6. How can we expect inexperienced, non-qualified staff to control classes of 30+ children?
7. I believe that the safety, education and behaviour of my children will be comprised by this policy. The report written by the Director of Education and Leisure Services lists no health and safety issues. How can this be so?
8. It is highly questionable as to how this 'pre-planned and set enrichment programme', delivered by non-teaching staff can meet the requirements of the Curriculum for Excellence. Yet this is how it is being presented to parents.

For further points of reference on this issue please see 'Save Our Teachers: Why Renfrewshire Council's proposals don't support Curriculum for Excellence'
(<http://renfrewshireparents.schools.officelive.com/Resources.aspx>)

9. This reduction in education time is being introduced when Renfrewshire council has already cut teaching posts by 244 since 2007. It is also cutting 70 classroom assistants and 101 management teaching posts in these proposals. This is surely too much at the expense of our children's future.
10. This policy is detrimental to our children, to the integrity and professionalism of teaching and to the education system in Scotland.

Please use your position as a Councillor to oppose this policy from being rushed in and implemented without due consideration and consultation.

Yours sincerely