

## Deputation from Parent Council Chairs against proposed Secondary Management Cuts, 2 Feb 2011

We represent Parent Councils from High Schools across the City. We have representatives here from Boroughmuir, Drummond, Gracemount, Holyrood, James Gillespie's, Royal High & St Thomas of Aquins, plus Leith Walk Primary, and letters of support from Balerno, Craigmount, Forrester & Liberton, plus St Mary's RC Primary.

On behalf of City parents, we want to set alarm bells ringing. The Council proposes to cut £2.4 million from 'Secondary school management' over the next two years. This is the biggest single item of cuts in the Children and Families budget. Please do not vote this through today.

1. Cutting management might sound like fewer 'paper-pushers' but what's actually proposed is a serious loss of Deputes and Principal Teachers. This will **damage frontline work with pupils**.

Why?

At the moment Edinburgh's Principal Teachers work at the chalkface. They know their own subjects inside out. They are close to the experience of teaching and learning. Most have only *two periods a week* allocated for 'management' – the rest of the time they are teaching.

How would things change with the cuts? An example:

- replace three PTs of Biology, Chemistry and Physics with one PT of Science
- that one PT of Science (if we follow the 'Faculty' model adopted elsewhere) would be allocated *half their time* for management
- result: not three PTs – all close to their subject and virtually full-time teachers – but one PT who has merely half-time contact with pupils

### **We need to keep experienced staff in the classroom.**

The work of senior teachers is crucial, not least at the upper end of Secondaries, where the expertise of a subject-focussed PT can make a huge difference.

To bring in the new Curriculum for Excellence successfully, schools need leadership from the staff with most experience.

This is a time when we need to give young people the very best chance in a tough job market.

2. On a practical front, what's proposed is

**unclear** in detail – No plan has been put forward to show exactly where the axe will fall and how the process will be managed. Discussions with Secondary Headteachers to work out the detail have stalled. The level of real savings that can be achieved is far from certain.

**unfeasible** in timescale – Experience elsewhere (and in the few schools in Edinburgh that have gone down this road) shows that re-structuring school management takes many years to work out on the ground. Yet the idea here is to move fast, with drastic changes from as soon as August 2011.

**unwise** to pursue right now – The Scottish Government has commissioned an important review of Devolved School Management which will pick out best practice across Scotland on exactly the issues under consideration here. The outcome will be published next month, March 2011, and new guidance will be issued. It would be better to wait and see what this review recommends.

The leadership of Edinburgh's Headteachers, Deputes and Principal Teachers has driven up standards year after year, in a City where we have an exceptional degree of competition from the private sector. We cannot and must not allow this progress to stop. For the sake of our kids, our City and our country, our schools must deliver a real Curriculum for *Excellence*.

Let's show we value our experienced teachers. Please don't vote through these cuts today.