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Chair
School Council
James Gillespie's High School
Lauderdale Street
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Gillian Tee
Director, Children and Families
City of Edinburgh Council

20th June 2011

Dear Gillian,

Review of Secondary Schools Management Structures

Further to the publication of the papers for the Education, Children and Families Committee tomorrow, and our recent Parent Council meeting, I am writing on behalf of the James Gillespie's High School Council to raise some concerns.

There is anxiety amongst the parent body with regard to the speed at which reorganisation is taking place, and the difficulties that this may pose for the continuing implementation needs of the changes associated with Curriculum for excellence.

The Convener of Children and Families, Councillor Marlyn Maclaren, was in attendance at our recent School Council meeting, as one of our four local ward councillors. A question was asked as to where budget responsibility lay for meeting the conserved salary costs over three or five years, depending on the grades concerned. This remains unclear, having now seen the Committee paper, and I would be grateful if you could advise us if the costs would be met centrally or from the devolved school budgets. (We do not feel that the latter option would be sustainable.)

Management time for the new Curricular Leader posts was outlined as 6 periods a week. Parents have subsequently indicated concerns about the inadequacy of this, particularly given the other changes taking place in school with Curriculum for excellence development, staff training needs, and the implication of administrative and management changes as a result of the reorganisation of Business managers, bursars and senior administration staff.

The Committee paper refers to training needs for the new CL posts. How will release from timetable work be covered, and from which budget?

The probationer teacher support and supervision arrangements may require to change, with a reduction in PT posts. Where would responsibility lie for that, and what measures would be envisaged for ensuring the CL had the necessary subject knowledge to support probationer teachers in disciplines other than their own specialism?

What monitoring will be put in place by Children and Families to follow the progress of these changes over the next few years and how will it be resourced?

Will there be additional cost implications for any physical reorganisation necessary within schools where the subjects are not necessarily in adjacent buildings? From which budget would costs be met?

As the VERA decisions become known, we would be interested to know how any vacant DHT posts will be filled in a particular school. In James Gillespie's High School, it appears there will be one vacant DHT post by the autumn. Will the Parent Council be involved in the recruitment and interview process and when will it commence?

This is a time of considerable uncertainty, as has been acknowledged, but on behalf of the JGHS Council, I would like to register concern about the haste and lack of transparency over the proposals, and look forward to receiving your response on the specific questions, to allow me to share it with the wider parent body

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson
Chair
James Gillespie's High School Council

