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**Parents’ perception of the National 4 Qualification**

We have been surveying parents on their perception of the National 4 qualifications. The survey will remain open until the end of December but following are some brief initial points from the responses received so far.

**What information did you receive from your child’s school to help you understand what level of qualifications would be suitable for your child?**

**Report card Parents Evening**

A third of the parents have answered ‘None’. Of those who did receive information, this was most often verbal information at parents’ nights or report cards. Around a fifth of the parents have stated they attended an information evening at their school or received written information on Qualifications.

**What, if any, information did you receive specifically about National 4 qualifications?**

Over a third of parents received nothing. Of the remaining, the most frequent information received was that N4s do not involve an exam. A small amount of parents replied that they were told N4s were similar to General level at Standard Grade (but all added that they do not feel they are valued a such). Many of the parents who attended information evenings have stated that they do not understand the progression through National qualifications.

**If you are a parent of a child who left school at the end of S4 after gaining National 4 qualifications – what are your views of National 4 in preparing your child for further education and training at college or getting a job?**

All responses have been entirely negative stating ‘poor’ or ‘not valued’. More specific comments include:

*Employers don't seem to value it. My son only writes his N5s on applications now.*

*Nat 4 level is not the requested achievement asked by colleges or employers to progress onto further advanced studies. It is as good as leaving school a half way through course.*

*I would feel that it has left her unprepared for any further training or further education and at a big disadvantage for employment*

**If you are the parent of a child who stayed onto school until S5 or S6 after gaining National 4 qualifications – what are your views of National 4 in preparing your child for further study at school?**

Although there are a handful of parents who felt that it was a natural progression, the majority of parents felt that progression onto N5 from N4 is difficult and that N5 is vastly different in requirements on ability and comprehension.

Many parents also commented on the N4/N5/Higher timeframe, for example:

*Useful in some subjects, however it seems that an extra stage has been put into the path to getting to highers in many subjects. That is, can't go from Nat 4 to Higher - must go through the Nat 5 route, which means my child will not be at the level required by the end of S6 to move into the desired course.*

*No benefit because then all they do is stress over trying to sit National 5 in one year. If you sit National 5 in S4 you have two years to prepare. Seems unfair that a child who struggles gets one year to sit Nat 5 but the brighter children get two years*

**Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about you and your child’s experience of National 4?**

Many of the parents commented that the National 4 is not valued by their children and that their child felt like a ‘failure’ as they were sitting N4, and did not see it as an achievement to have passed.

Several parents stated they felt there was too much assessment, that there was lots of work to be covered and that learning was rushed.