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**Review of the Impact of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006:
Scottish Government Response**

I was delighted to attend the launch of the final report for the NPFS's Review of the 2006 Parental Involvement Act at Drummond High School in May. I have agreed to attend the NPFS's Area Representative meeting on 30 September. Before visiting the Forum, I wanted to set out the Scottish Government's initial response to the 2006 Act Review.

As I stated at the launch of the final report, the Review, its findings, recommendations and the depth and breadth of analysis is a testament to the work undertaken by the National Parent Forum. The Forum provides a very strong parental perspective across a wide range of education issues, and the Review demonstrated the valuable role that you play in informing national policy. I also welcome the steps taken by the review team to involve partner agencies via a cross-stakeholder reference group and to take account of independent evidence via the literature review and the research conducted by Ipsos MORI.

A wide range of evidence has shown that parental involvement has a significant positive effect on children's achievement. This is why parental involvement and engagement plays a prominent role in the Scottish Government's plans to increase attainment and close the equity gap. Parental engagement is one of the six key drivers in our National Improvement Framework. Parents, families and communities are at the heart of our education reforms. I now want to build on the achievements of the last ten years, drawing on the recommendations from the 2006 Act Review, as well as our own reform agenda, to ensure that Scotland is a world leader in parent and family involvement in education.

The Scottish Government welcomes the final report and its national recommendations.

In relation to Recommendations 1 and 2 in the report (the recommendations relating to the 2006 Act itself) I would like to reiterate that Scottish Ministers' accept both recommendations in full. As set out in our 'Education Governance: Next Steps' paper we now plan to consult on bringing forward amendments to the 2006 Act as part of the forthcoming Education Bill.

As recommended in your report we will seek to modernise, extend and strengthen the legislative framework on parental involvement. This will include proposals to: strengthen the role of Parent Councils; ensure that Parent Councils focus on substantive matters of school improvement and policies; ensure that learning in the home and family learning are covered in the legislation; strengthen the duties in relation to parental engagement strategies, and; extend appropriate legal duties into the early years.

In addition, we will seek to ensure that the need for strengthened parental involvement is reflected both in the responsibilities of the new Regional Improvement Collaboratives and in the Headteachers' Charter. Further detail on these proposals will follow in the consultation on the content of the forthcoming Education Bill.

The final report from your Review contained a further 19 National Recommendations, 12 local authority recommendations and five recommendations to schools.

You will be aware that our 'Education Governance: Next Steps' paper included a commitment to ensure that every school has a teacher or professional with responsibility for promoting parental, family and community engagement. It included a further commitment to ensure that every school has access to a 'home to school' link worker to support parents and families who find it challenging to engage in their child's learning.

In addition, the Programme for Government 2017/18 (PfG) included a commitment from Scottish Government to publish a National Action Plan on Parental Engagement and Family Learning. As set out in the PfG document, the Action Plan will cover early years and schools. In line with the themes covered in your review, the plan will focus on family learning in the home, parental representation and effective communication with parents.

The Action Plan, which will be developed in the coming months will be the main vehicle for implementation of the remaining national recommendations from the 2006 Act Review. I have asked officials to ensure that the key themes and recommendations from your review are addressed in the Action Plan as outlined below:

- **Reforms to legislation**, as set out above.
- **National policy and strategy**: responding to the Review's recommendations on effective consultation with parents, the national parenting strategy and the remit and membership of the national steering group on parental engagement.
- **Communication, information and reporting**: responding to the Review's recommendations on communication channels, the Additional Support For Learning Act's code of practice, ParentZone Scotland and the digital learning and teaching strategy.
- **Workforce skills**: responding to the recommendations on Education Scotland's Engaging Parents and Families toolkit and to improve the 'offer' on parental engagement within Initial Teacher Education and the Into Headship qualification.
- **Family learning and learning in the home**: to increase parents' access to family learning programmes and to provide much greater clarity about what family learning is.

- **Improvement, collaboration and inspection:** to continue to ensure that parental involvement is reflected in Education Scotland's inspection function and to ensure it is a key theme in improvement activity.
- **Funding:** to set out further steps to ensure that parents are fully involved in decisions about Pupil Equity Funding, and to address the recommendation relating to local authority funding to Parent Councils.
- **Volunteering:** further steps to facilitate parent volunteering in schools, working with employers organisations to facilitate this.
- **Research:** further steps to improve the evidence base on parental involvement and engagement, and to ensure that parent involvement/engagement is reflected in the national research strategy for education.
- **Equalities and equity:** to ensure that key groups are supported to be fully involved in their child's education and in the life and work of their school, in particular parents with disabilities, dads, ethnic minority parents and parents from more deprived circumstances.

My officials have reconvened your reference group of key organisations and experts to inform the amendments to the 2006 Act and the development of the new Action Plan. I am glad that the NPFS will play an active role in the work of this group.

Again, I would like to thank you, the NPFS leadership team and all of the NPFS area representatives who worked on the Review. The findings and recommendations from the Review will influence the future direction of parental involvement in Scotland. I encourage the NPFS representatives to work closely with Scottish Government officials to provide your views on the detail of our proposals to strengthen the 2006 Act, and to formulate the National Action Plan.


JOHN SWINNEY

