

## Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Bill

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Introduced on: 28 September 2005 [SP Bill 36]  
Introduced by: Peter Peacock (Executive Bill)  
Passed: 10 May 2006

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### Passage of the Bill

The [Scottish Schools \(Parental Involvement\) Bill](#) [SP Bill 45] was introduced in the Parliament on 28 September 2005. Stage 1 commenced on 30 November 2005 with the Education Committee as the lead committee. The Stage 1 (general principles) debate took place on 22 February 2006 and the [Bill](#) was passed following the Stage 3 parliamentary debate on 10 May 2006.

### Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The main policy objectives of the bill are:

- to support parents' involvement in the education provided in public schools and in their own children's education
- to achieve a more flexible and inclusive statutory system for parental representation in schools to replace the 'one size fits all' approach of the School Boards system
- to strengthen parents' rights both collectively and individually
- to enable education authorities to modernise their procedures for appointing headteachers and deputy headteachers while retaining the principle of parental involvement in any new systems.

### Provisions of the Bill

The bill repeals the provisions of the School Boards (Scotland) Act 1988, which provide the framework for the current system of school boards.

The bill provides for a system of parent forums, whereby every parent/guardian of a child at a school will be a member of the forum, and parent councils who may represent the parent forum. The membership and functions of parent councils will be decided locally by parent forums within the framework of the legislation and associated guidance.

The bill gives Scottish Ministers and education authorities new duties to promote the involvement of parents in their child's education and in school education provided in public schools under the management of education authorities. Local authorities will also be under a new duty to prepare a strategy for parental involvement.

## **Parliamentary consideration**

There were relatively few areas of contention with the bill's proposals. The Committee received evidence from some, particularly existing school boards, that the current system was working well and that only minor changes were required. On the other hand the majority of evidence suggested that the current system required to be modernised.

At Stage 2 an amendment was made that added school pupils as a specific group whose views the local authority must have regard to when devising a strategy for parental involvement. A further amendment specified that meetings of a parent council should be open to the public, except where confidential matters are being dealt. In such cases only the headteacher and members of parent council may attend.

The Bill gives parent councils a role in promoting contact with certain groups of people. Another Stage 2 amendment added pupils as a specific group to this list.

An SNP lodged amendment was passed at Stage 2 that gave ministers and education authorities a duty to promote parental involvement in nurseries. However, this requirement was removed at Stage 3. Instead the Executive proposed a new amendment, which was passed, that specified that one of the functions of a parent council is to promote contact between the parent forum of the school and nursery education providers for prospective pupils of the schools in question.

Another Executive amendment at Stage 3 means that in preparing their strategy for parental involvement an education authority is to have regard to how that strategy will promote equal opportunities.