

**HPCP Conference, Charleston Academy, 12 Nov 2016**

**List of Questions for Speakers, that PC members would like answered:**

**Finances**

1. Regarding the £5million additional funds, if only £4million comes to Highland, where will the other £1million go ?
2. Regarding new schools and refurbishments, who is paying for this ? Is most of the funding via PFI, what is the normal contract length and will our children be paying for it?
3. Why aren't the Council fighting facilities issue in PPP schools harder and why are pupils and staff suffering in PPP schools without any accountability ?
4. Regarding the funding of new Business Manager posts, would this be a one off pot of money or would it be a long term commitment to fund this new role ?

**Management of Schools**

5. If leadership is fundamental why remove and reduce school head teachers ?
6. As a parent I want Head Teachers to focus on learning and teaching and not broader management issues; is this a widespread opinion ?

**Recruitment**

7. Why does Highland Council take so long to advertise vacant posts?
8. To improve recruitment and retention of teaching staff and offer a wide range of subjects, could the Council advertise posts overseas as well?

**Teacher : Pupil ratios**

9. Are there going to be changes to the formula used to calculate teacher : pupil ratios?
10. Pupils at rural, remote and small schools are penalised under the existing staffing formula because they do not get equitable access to the curriculum; therefore will the Council take rural deprivation as well as social deprivation into account when calculating staffing formulas in the future ?

**Curriculum**

11. Why is there still a very narrow choice of 6 subjects in S4, when other authorities have more?
12. A lot of funding and special attention goes to gaelic medium education, taking pupils and resources out of local schools, compromising some of the basic learning and causing an

inequitable situation. Would it not be better to spread this gaelic teaching out to more children over more schools?

13. What is 'The English Model' referred to by Bill Alexander ?

#### **Attainment Gap**

14. One bad way to close the attainment gap is to lower attainment at the upper end, can you assure us that increased attainment for all learners will be encouraged ?

15. Rather than decision making in a vacuum, are the Scottish Government and Councils looking at which schools nationally and internationally are doing better and why ?

16. What is the data on positive destinations per SIMD (based on deprivation index)?

#### **Wider Achievement**

17. Why aren't local and national wider achievement awards (eg Saltire, Youth Achievement, Leader etc) being promoted and encouraged more widely in schools as they are hugely beneficial to young people and many pupils and parents are unaware that they exist ?

#### **4.5 day week/ 33 period week**

18. How is the 4.5 day week saving money ?

19. A 4.5 day week means shorter lunchtimes, a hurried meal and no time for valuable lunchtime clubs; is there any flexibility about whether schools have to take this on ?

20. What positive outcomes for pupils have arisen from the 33 period week, as we are not experiencing them?

21. In which areas will schools be linked by common time tables ?

22. How will common time tables work when schools offer a different range of subjects; and in which geographic areas will schools be linked by common time tables ?

#### **ICT**

23. Is there sufficient bandwidth in remote areas to ensure that the new ICT programme can work ?

24. What plans are being put in place to tackle the abysmal connectivity in many areas that has thwarted any increased use of technology for years?

25. Will teachers (and parents) receive adequate information and training in how to use Google classrooms and Chromebooks ?

26. Regarding chromebooks, what measures are in place to support accidental damage and will parents be responsible?

27. Why are chromebooks being rolled out in August 2017 and will all schools get them at the same time ?

28. Who is writing the Google classrooms and will they be ready in time ?

**Communication / Consultation**

29. Are parents being consulted around further changes to the exam system?

30. Our parent council ASG has not been consulted about the future options for management of schools, how do we get informed and take part in consultation ?

31. Could emergency contact details be updated electronically by parents as this would save masses of admin (and paper) for schools.

32. When kids fail NAR, communication by written letter can be too slow, so would it be possible for schools to email or telephone as a preference where possible ?

33. It is very hard to get parents engaged in the education process; as parental engagement is so central to education policy is this something that Council Quality Improvement Officers could be professionally trained in, help and advice on ?