

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and
Education Committee

Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg |
Priorities for the Children, Young People and Education Committee

CYPE 42

Ymateb gan : Cymdeithas Rhieni ac Athrawon Cymru (CRhA Cymru)

Response from : Parents Teachers Association Cymru (PTA Cymru)

Question 1 – Within the remit set out above: what do you consider to be the priorities or issues that the Children, Young People and Education Committee should consider during the Fifth Assembly?

- Establish a framework of positive parent participation in every school in Wales – so that parents can have a say in education, get involved with school life and support children’s learning.
- One powerful indicator of this is to establish a parent body such as a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in every school in Wales. We want to work with the Welsh Government to make this a statutory requirement within five years if parent bodies are not established voluntarily. As well as being a force for good in terms of education and school improvement, parental participation in school life can also improve well-being and build a sense of belonging and community for children and families alike.

Question 2 – From the list of priorities or issues you have identified, what do you consider to be the key areas that should be considered during the next 12 months (please identify up to three areas or issues)? Please outline why these should be considered as key priorities.

1. Give parents a voice by assisting the creation of parent associations in all schools

We want every school to benefit from a successful and supportive PTA or parent body. And for this body to have a strong relationship with the school leadership team and board of governors.

PTA Cymru is part of PTA UK who with approximately 14,000 members supports over 3.9 million children and their parents. We have helped our member organisations across the UK engage parents and children in the school community and raise over £120 million overall for their schools. PTAs or other parent bodies can play an important role in involving parents positively in their child's learning and school improvement to build school communities and create better outcomes for all.

Our objectives align with those of the existing Welsh Government and other political parties as set out in the policy *Rewriting the Future* (2014): *"Schools that reach out and effectively engage families in children's learning and the life of the school and which place themselves at the centre of their communities will see improved outcomes for learners, particularly those from deprived communities."*

Importantly, the Welsh Government **Families and Communities toolkit (2015)** gives PTAs and other parent groups a key role in helping schools reach out and engage families from all parts of the community, *"In successful schools, parents and carers are asked about what is important to them, and what they would like to see happening. The Parent Teacher Association/Parent Council or other group is empowered and supported to widen its scope so it plays an important role in providing a community channel through which parents/carers can be consulted and their voices can be heard and acted on."*

Parents matter in education

We know that parents have more influence over achievement than schools for our youngest children (Amanda Sacker et al 2002). The value parents place on education and their child's school has an impact on their child also. The University of Warwick's 2007 research has found that parental engagement is a powerful lever for raising achievement in schools. They also found that a number of parents did not realise how much they matter and were reluctant to participate, in part, because of the poor experience they had themselves of education.

Establishing a parent body in every school in Wales will ensure support and help for school leaders to engage and consult parents, involving parents positively in their child's learning and school improvement to create better outcomes for all.

PTA Cymru want to create a community network and ensuing opportunities to ensure the parents voice is heard at national, regional and local level. Evidencing how positive parental participation can happen in schools where this is not the norm by supporting parents to understand their value and encourage them to participate positively in education. We are keen to work with the committee and the Welsh Government to achieve this aim.

PTA UK (PTA Cymru) highlights opportunities such as this consultation to parents so that their voices are heard in policy development. Parents have told us they would like the committee to work with the Education Secretary on :

- Tackle the disruption of our children's education due to staff absenteeism. They feel the quality of education is severely affected when teachers and classroom assistants are absent from their classes due to illness, training, dealing with Estyn or Local Authority inspections. Children can consider the supply teachers as inadequate and become demotivated. Also the impact is often reflected in relatively lower National Test results.
- Improve the curriculum and address their concerns on testing. Parents want to be engaged on the new curriculum so they can work in partnership with teachers to ensure that our children reach their potential and develop life skills and values rather than being coached to pass tests.
- Ensure that schools have sufficient resources to have areas for sport, outdoor learning and play, and are staffed so that growing class sizes can be curtailed.