

Your Ref:

Our Ref: AC/AB/LMc

Date: 22 January 2018

Dear Parent

The Highland Council is concerned by the plans of the Scottish Government to make sweeping changes to the way our schools are managed and governed.

This matter is of the greatest importance to the education of Highland's children. As parents, and as the Depute Leader of the Council and Chair of the People Committee, we are writing this open letter to all parents, to encourage you to find out about these plans, and to make comment on them.

The Scottish Government published *Education Governance: Next Steps* in June of last year. That document proposed radical changes to the responsibilities and legal duties of Headteachers, Parents, Local Councils and national bodies such as Education Scotland.

The Government has now published proposals to implement many of these changes through new legislation. These can be found at:  
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/11/9712>

The Government says that these changes will lead to improved attainment for all children, and also narrow the attainment gap between the least and most advantaged pupils. It claims the changes will reduce bureaucracy for Headteachers, and give them freedom to make choices about how they run schools, as well as giving pupils and parents a greater say.

Highland Council shares these objectives. But we do not believe that the Government's proposals will achieve these aims. Infact, we believe that the Government's proposals will be counter-productive, and that they will increase bureaucracy and could reduce the quality of teaching in our schools.

The Government intends to remove responsibility from local Councils to improve education in local schools. It will centralise aspects of school management, removing local democratic control and splitting up the running of schools from other local services for children and families.

The Government has provided no detail about how it will resource these changes and fund a number of new national and regional bodies, at a time when it is providing less funding for local services to Councils.

We do not need new laws to have better schools and better outcomes for our children. Many of the intentions of Government can be achieved within the existing framework, and without the need for new legal duties on Headteachers.

Because the proposed changes are so far reaching, we are writing to urge you to discuss them with other parents and at your Parent Council.

We also urge you to consider making a response to the consultation. You can do this at the Scottish Government website, <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00527374.docx>

Thank you for reading this letter, and for caring about the education of your children, and of all of Highland's children.

Yours sincerely



**Councillor Alasdair Christie**  
Depute Leader of the Council,  
and parent



**Councillor Andrew Baxter**  
Chair of People Committee,  
and parent