SPTC has pleasure in responding to the Committee's call for evidence in relation to the amendments proposed by Scottish Government to the Education (Scotland) Bill currently under consideration by committee.

These comments refer specifically to the draft National Improvement Framework (NIF) launched by the Government in September 2015. The Framework represents one of a number of amendments brought forward by Government to the Bill.

Our perspective on the NIF have been informed by parent members of SPTC (who we are currently surveying); the perspectives of our parent and teacher directors; discussion and scrutiny of both relevant research and the informed debate which has taken place since its publication.

- The NIF was drafted and launched with no consultation or discussion with interested parties, and with an implementation schedule which permits no real time for considered discussion and consideration. Further, there is no timetable for publication of the feedback Government has received – nor the answers to questions received.

- It is unclear what problem the Framework is designed to resolve. If the problem is that Scottish Government wants evidence of impact of educational policy, national standardised testing is not necessary in order to produce statistically robust data to drive improvement in our schools.

- The document offers no evidence base for the approaches it proposes.

- The premise of the NIF is directive and counter to the co-operative and consensual nature of Scottish education.
The emphasis of the NIF is on academic attainment and fails to recognise the holistic approach of CfE – an approach which is widely welcomed by parents.

The NIF fails to recognise the contribution and involvement of parents, young people, communities and the myriad of others who all play a part in – and have a stake in – our young people’s education and long term success.

It alternatively places ‘duties’ on parents and treats them as consumers rather than partners in their children’s education.

Parents are making it clear to us that they want assessment of their children to be used for diagnostic purposes which lead to improvements in their child’s experience in school. They want the emphasis to be on good quality communication between themselves, their child and his or her teacher.

Eileen Prior
Executive Director
9 November 2015