

## **PE1623/P**

Scottish Parent Teacher Council Letter of 8 December 2016

SPTC is please to respond to the request for comment received from the Public Petitions Committee.

While the short timescale did not allow us to consult with our membership, our nominated parent and teacher directors have commented on the petition and we have also received comment through social media.

Our general observations on this matter are that

- a) The presence of church representatives as voting members on local authority education committees dates back to the time when church-run schools were handed over to the state. Since that is a very long time ago, it seems reasonable to look at the arrangement.
- b) We live in a diverse and multi-cultural society, which is often poorly represented within our governance structures. We would advocate that education committees reflect the population of our schools more effectively and that religious representative be drawn from a wider faith community.
- c) We would recommend that church or religious representatives do not have voting rights, but that they are there in an advisory capacity.
- d) The question of parental involvement has also become much more significant over recent years. Parents and carers now have rights through legislation to influence the decision making in their child's own schools. In some cases, parents have been given a position on education committees but this is not universal.
- e) We believe that the significant role of parents should be better represented at education committees and that committees should be obliged to offer a place to both a Primary and a Secondary school parent representative. These should have voting rights.