

## **RESPONSE TO “EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT GAP” FROM NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **Evidence**

There is no evidence to demonstrate which approaches used by schools have been most successful and are being used throughout Scotland. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation clearly articulates that *“the lack of data, research and evaluation evidence for schools and local authorities currently hampers progress.”* They continue by suggesting that Scotland needs a *“national evidence base”* of what positively impacts learning and professional development for teachers in how to use evidence. I think this applies to all statements within this consultation.

### **Reporting to Parents**

Some schools will explain clearly to parents how children learn and how parents could help their development though this will be inconsistent across establishments. A prominent issue is the assumption that teachers know how to conduct parents’ evenings effectively. Training for teachers in how to conduct parents’ evenings in order that parents leave informed, and with next steps, could make significant impact in helping parents and teachers to collectively raise children’s attainment.

North Ayrshire Council in partnership with the University of Glasgow (Robert Owen Centre) is developing approaches to parental engagement. This work will be further enhanced as part of the authority’s work to close the attainment gap. A framework and action plan are being developed as part of the response to the national attainment challenge. The following questions will be the focus for that work.

- Do parents know what questions to ask of teachers in order to help their child?
- What are their expectations?
- What do they learn from reports/parents’ evenings and does it affect what they do to promote learning with their child/ren?
- What would encourage them to attend parents’ nights, particularly secondary?

### **Parent Councils**

There has been an assumption that one size fits all, e.g., around Parent Councils. This formal structure and expectation does not always contribute to developing conducive relationships between parents from the most disadvantaged communities.

## **New Measures to realistically be taken**

Scottish Government: Parents need to realise the importance of their role as co-educators. Campaigns, e.g., TV adverts to promote simple tips such as the importance of speaking with young children, could make significant impact. Media campaigns reach a diverse range of parents and so the media could be used to send out a positive message about expectations of their role, e.g., in reading to/with their child, taking them to the library regularly, engaging in fun, stimulating activities within and outwith the home. These are examples for younger children but these could be extended as to how to support study and an enquiring mind in the later years.

Local Authority: We would potentially benefit from reviewing our reporting processes in order to be clear on purpose and expectations for all. Do we know if our processes are effectively contributing to raising attainment and, if so, what factors are key to this?