

2 January 2008

To: LegCo Bills Committee

The English Schools Foundation (Amendment) Bill 2007

Election of Parent Members of the Board of Governors

1. Background

- 1.1 A note was provided to members of the Bills Committee for their meeting on 17 December 2007 describing in outline the procedure for the election of parents to the Board of Governors.
- 1.2 In the context of the Committee's wish to see the parent of a student with special educational needs (SEN) elected to the Board, ESF was asked to provide more information about the identification of students with special educational needs.

2. The Process for Identifying Students with SEN

- 2.1 As part of its recently agreed policy for special educational needs, ESF has introduced a new assessment process. The process involves assessing students with SEN against a 6-level scale. The levels of the scale indicate the degree of support or adjustment that is needed to enable a student with SEN to be educated in school.
- 2.2 A student at Level 1 of the scale will need the class teacher to be aware of his/her learning needs and to adjust the approach to teaching to a limited extent to meet the student's needs. Students at Level 2 and above need support from specialized staff and may need special equipment and facilities.
- 2.3 Students with SEN are formally assessed by the school against the 6-level scale and the school's judgments are checked by the ESF-wide Assessment and Review Panel to ensure consistency.
- 2.4 The proposed Election Procedures for Parent Members of the Board will be amended to state :

The parent of a student who has been formally assessed by the school against the "Framework for identifying students with disabilities in ESF schools" at Level 2 or higher will be eligible to stand as a candidate for the place on the Board reserved for the parent of a child with SEN.
- 2.5 The amended Election Procedure is attached as Appendix A.

Heather Du Quesnay
Chief Executive

Election of Parent Members of the Board of Governors

1. Background

- 1.1 At the meeting on 1 December 2007, the Bills Committee discussed a number of issues regarding the election of parents to the Board of Governors.
- 1.2 ESF agreed to provide a paper on this subject. It should be noted that the administrative detail of the procedure will require further work once the revised Ordinance is approved.

2. Procedure

2.1 Notification of the Election

The CEO will give notification of the election to all parents :

- by publishing notices in the schools;
- by email; and
- on the ESF and school websites.

2.2 Nomination of Candidates

- a. The CEO will write to all parents inviting the nomination of parents in two categories :
 - parent of a child with special educational needs (SEN); and
 - parent of any child.
- b. Nominations will require a proposer and seconder.
- c. Each nomination form will need to be signed by the nominated parent indicating his/her agreement to stand.
- d. Nomination forms will be returned to the CEO by a specified date.

2.3 Verification of SEN Status

The parent of a student who has been formally assessed by the school against the “Framework for identifying students with disabilities in ESF schools” at Level 2 or higher will be eligible to stand as a candidate for the place on the Board reserved for the parent of a child with SEN.

2.4 Submission of Personal Statement

Nominated candidates will be invited by the CEO to submit a personal statement giving brief details of their relevant experience and what they believe they can contribute to the Board of Governors.

2.5 The Ballot

- a. Ballot papers will be dispatched to parents by post using the billing address held by ESF.
- b. Each parent, up to two connected with any child, will have a vote. Parents with children at more than one school will be able to vote at each school attended by their children. Parents will have only one set of votes per school irrespective of the number of children they have in the school.
- c. Each parent entitled to vote will have :
 - One vote for the parent of a child with SEN; and
 - 6 votes for other parents.
- d. Parents will be asked to return the ballot paper to ESF Centre in an envelope marked 'Parent Ballot' supplied by ESF. The returned papers will be kept in a secure place until the count.
- e. ESF's Internal Auditor will be responsible for opening the envelopes and managing the count. The candidates will be invited to be present during the process.

2.6 The Result

The result will be announced by the Internal Auditor through notices placed in the schools and on the ESF and school websites.

2.7 Match of Candidates to Places

- a. If fewer candidates are nominated than there are places available, those nominated will be deemed to have been elected.
- b. If vacancies remain, the Board will have power to co-opt a parent or parents to fill vacant places for the remainder of the school year. A new election will be held at the start of the following school year.

Heather Du Quesnay
Chief Executive