

## **PARENT GOVERNOR REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL AUTHORITY COMMITTEES**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In 1999, the Education (Parent Governor Representatives) (Wales) regulations were introduced requiring the election of representatives of parent governors at maintained schools as members of committees which dealt with education. Elections and appointments were to be completed by 1 June 2000.

This survey was undertaken by the All Wales Centre for Governor Training and Research in September 2005, just over five years after the first Parent Governor Representative (PGR) appointments.

A questionnaire (Appendix A) was circulated to all 45 PGRs in Local Authorities across Wales. It was later reported to the Centre that one PGR had resigned, so that at the time of the survey only 44 PGRs were in post. 25 completed questionnaires from 16 of the 22 Welsh local authorities were returned to the Centre. This represented a response rate of 57%.

**ANALYSIS**

**1 GENERAL INFORMATION**

1.1 There is no consistency in the number of Parent Governor Representatives appointed across local authorities in Wales. The distribution amongst Welsh local authorities at the time of this survey is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Parent Governor Representatives in place per local authority

No. of PGRs in place	No. of local authorities
0	1
1	4
2	12
3	3
4	2

1.2 Personal Information

The majority of respondents fall into the 41-50 years age cohort with 15 of the 25 respondents (8 female, 7 male) being in this cohort. Five respondents (4 female, 1 male) are in the 31-40 years age cohort and five respondents (1 female, 4 male) in the over-50 cohort.

Twenty-four respondents describe their ethnic origin as “White”, while one describes theirs as “Welsh”.

The majority of respondents (15 have been Parent Governor Representatives for between one and three years, with 6 serving less than one year, and 4 more than three years.

1.3 Committees

All respondents serve on their Council’s Scrutiny Committee which deals with education, though the title of the committee varies from local authority to local authority. Such variation in titles reflects the way the authority organises its education service and how it is often linked to other services, e.g. Children, Families and Lifelong Learning Committee (Powys), Integrated Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee (Merthyr Tydfil).

In addition to serving on scrutiny committees, a number of respondents (6) additionally serve on forums or working groups. These include School Improvement Working Group and Education Budget Forum, though the most common is the School Admissions Forum, on which 3 of these 6 respondents serve.

#### 1.4 Topics discussed at committee

Respondents were asked to list some of the topics which “you have discussed at committee meetings”.

No list of suggested topics was given to help prompt respondents, nor were respondents asked to give any indication of the length of time given to any particular topics or give any indication of the importance they felt attached to particular topics. Similarly, respondents were not asked to list a particular number of topics. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note how the same topics were mentioned by a number of respondents. The most common topics mentioned by respondents are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Topics discussed at Committee Meetings

<b>Topic Title</b>	<b>No of respondents who listed this topic as being discussed at committee</b>
Budgets	8
Falling rolls/school reorganisation	8
School performance	8
Transport	4
School buildings	3
School meals	3

#### 1.5 Conclusions

There is an even spread of male and female Parent Governor Representative respondents on local authority scrutiny committees (13 female, 12 male), with the majority in the 41-50 age cohort. In the 31-40 cohort, female PGRs outnumber male PGRs 4 to 1, while in the 50+ cohort the reverse is true, with males outnumbering females by 4 to 1. However, the response is too small to draw any significant conclusions from this finding. It is noticeable that the ethnic origin of respondents is overwhelmingly white.

Given that respondents were given no assistance in selecting the topics which were discussed at committee meetings, it is interesting to note that budgets, falling rolls/school reorganisation and school performance were each mentioned by 8 respondents.

2 COMMITTEE EXPERIENCE AS A PARENT GOVERNOR REPRESENTATIVE

2.1 Respondents were asked for their committee experience as a Parent Governor Representative, and their responses are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Committee Experience as a Parent Governor Representative

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am expected to play a full part in all Committee deliberations	7	11	5	-	2
I am expected to contribute only when educational items are discussed	1	3	7	8	6
I have not been given any encouragement to take part in the business of the Committee	1	4	3	9	8

2.2 With only two exceptions, respondents feel that they are expected to play a full part in all deliberations of the committee and all but 5 feel they have been encouraged to take part in the business of the committee. In fact, one respondent comments *“I feel I have had a major contribution to the draft policy on small schools organisation.”* Although, another respondent from the same authority reports *“I have received no encouragement to take part in the Committee.”* This view is supported by another respondent from a different authority *“At committees with a large number of members, it is difficult to get a word in edgeways or be taken seriously”*, though the same respondent adds *“in smaller committees and working parties I have been able to contribute effectively to discussion.”* Finally, yet another respondent observes *“I play a full part because I am motivated to do so”*, though they do not say whether this motivation is self-generated or the result of encouragement received from their authority.

2.3 Respondents were asked to comment on their understanding of their voting rights. Out of the 25 respondents, 21 are clear about their voting rights in committee. Of the 4 who are unclear of their voting rights, 2 are from the same authority. The remaining 2 respondents who are unclear about their voting rights are from different authorities. Finally of these 4 respondents who are unclear of their voting rights, one has been in post for only 3 months, though the others have been PGRs for 11 months, 14 months and 5 years respectively.

2.4 Conclusion

Overall, respondents give a positive view of their experiences of working on scrutiny committees, though there are a small minority who show some concern over the lack of encouragement they receive to contribute to committee work. Similarly, a small minority are unclear of their voting rights.

## 2.5 Recommendations

Where applicable, LEAs should clarify to Parent Governor Representatives their voting rights, and emphasise the importance of their contribution to the work of scrutiny committees.

3 TRAINING AND SUPPORT

- 3.1 Respondents were asked about provision of training by their authority on their role as a Parent Governor Representative. Only a minority of the respondents (11 out of 25) report that they have been offered such training by their authority. The type of training offered is reported as being short induction sessions.
- 3.2 In addition, as Table 4 shows, limited training and support from local authorities affects PGRs in the performance of their role.

Table 4: Training and Support

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have received sufficient training to enable me to perform a meaningful role in Committee as a Parent Governor Representative	1	5	4	9	6
The Local Education Authority has been very supportive and helpful in developing my role as a PGR in Committee	3	3	9	7	3
My role as a PGR is being delayed by a lack of training and lack of support from the Local Education Authority.	1	2	6	10	6
My ability to play a meaningful role as a PGR in Committee is improving with experience and confidence	7	14	2	2	-
I am unclear about my role as a PGR	3	6	4	9	3

- 3.3 It is clear that the majority of respondents (15 out of 25) feel that to a lesser or greater degree they have received insufficient training to perform their role as a Parent Governor Representative (see Table 4), while 10 respondents feel that the LEA to a lesser or greater degree has not been very supportive in helping them develop their role. All of these 10 respondents who feel that the LEA has not been very supportive in helping them develop their role also feel that they have had insufficient training.

A number of respondents have commented on their lack of support: *“I am left to my own devices”*; *“I’ve not really had any contact between meetings”*; *“No real support”*. On the other hand, two respondents have commented favourably on the encouragement they have received from the Committee Chair. The first observes *“the*

*Chair/Vice Chair has given (me) some help”, while the second comments “I am encouraged by the Chairperson to speak”, but then continues “but council politics, i.e. members’ views and opinions, tend to dominate”.*

- 3.4 In spite of the lack of training and encouragement, the vast majority of respondents (21) feel that their ability to play a meaningful role is increasing with experience and confidence (see Table 4). As one respondent says, *“I had no training or guidance, but when I needed it I asked an official or councillor”*. This experience is replicated by a second respondent, *“I have ‘picked up’ my role as I have gone along”*.
- 3.5 It is worthy of note that some PGRs from the same authority have given different responses to the question as to whether or not their LEA has offered training.
- 3.6 This phenomenon occurs across 5 LEAs. In four cases, the respondents stating that they have not been offered training have been in post for a relatively short time and, therefore, may have not been a PGR when training was offered. However, in one LEA the longer serving respondent states that they have not been offered training which the shorter-serving respondent says that they have.
- 3.7 There is still some confusion over the role of the PGR. Nine respondents report that, to a lesser or greater degree, they are unclear about their role (see table 4). One comments *“There seems to be little precedent as to the role of the PGR. This can be confusing.”* A second states, *“The role of the PGR on the Scrutiny Committee is unclear.”*
- 3.8 However, it is in the area of facilities provided by LEAs that respondents report least support (see Table 5)

Table 5: Facilities Support

<b>Facility provided by LEA for PGR</b>	<b>No of respondents who are offered this facility by their LEA</b>
Computer facilities	1
Telephone facilities	3
Facilities for mailing	3
Website space	1
Secretarial support	3
Office space	1

- 3.9 Overall there are very few facilities made available to respondents. This serious shortage is compounded by the fact that the responses in Table 5 come from only 4 respondents. This means that 21 respondents claim that their local authorities do not provide them with any of the facilities listed in Table 5.
- 3.10 The 25 respondents in the survey represent 16 of the 21 LEAs which at present have PGRs serving on scrutiny committees. It is impossible to comment as facilities which may or may not be provided by those 5 LEAs whose PGRs have not responded to the survey.

3.11 However, it is worth noting that 2 of the respondents who report that they have facilities provided are PGRs in the same LEAs as respondents who say they have no facilities provided by the LEA.

3.12 Conclusion

While there is confusion over the provision by LEAs of training and facilities for their PGRs, it is clear that, overall, there appears to be very little in the way of either being provided. Although, the majority of respondents feel that their ability to play a meaningful part in scrutiny committee work is improving, this is due almost solely to increased experience and personal motivation. This inability to play a fuller role in the work of scrutiny committees is increased by the lack of clarity which a number of respondents feel about their role.

In addition to limited training offered to their PGRs, LEAs provide few facilities for PGRs.

3.13 Recommendations

All LEAs should provide induction training for new PGRs. This might well be helped by the provision of nationally produced guidelines which would ensure a degree of uniformity. LEAs should also be encouraged to consider the provision of facilities to help PGRs carry out their role. Finally, nationally produced guidelines should be provided for PGRs, outlining clearly their roles, powers and duties, with suggested modus operandi.

#### 4 CONSULTING PARENTS

- 4.1 Respondents report difficulties in contacting parents. One respondent comments “*There is no structure to permit this*”, while another adds “*contacting parents is very difficult ... the logistics are difficult to overcome ... there are no formal communication routes.*” A number of respondents were unaware that contacting parents was part of their role as a Parent Governor Representative: “*I was not aware that I had to (consult parents)*”; “*I wasn’t aware I should be actively seeking these (parents’) views.*”

These views are supported by the statistical evidence in Table 6, which shows how little each of the methods shown are used by PGRs to obtain parents’ views:

Table 6: How Parent Governor Representatives obtain the views of parents

Method of obtaining views	No. of PGRs using
Regular meetings with Parent Governors	5
Via local Governors’ Association	6
Via a Governors’ newsletter	6
Arranging a general meeting when required	4
Circulating a questionnaire to parents	3
Via PTA meetings	3
Using the internet / website	1

- 4.2 While little use is made of any of the methods for contacting parents, it is noteworthy that only one respondent reports using the internet or a website.
- 4.3 This problem with contacting parents is further highlighted by the number of the methods used by individual respondents to contact parents (see Table 7).

Table 7: Number of different methods used by respondents to contact parents

No. of methods listed in Table 6 used by respondents to contact parents	No. of respondents who use these methods of contacting parents
8 methods	-
7 methods	-
6 methods	1
5 methods	-
4 methods	-
3 methods	3
2 methods	2
1 method	9
0	10

- 4.4 As the statistics show, 10 of the respondents do not use any formal methods of contacting parents. Clearly, as the quotations in paragraph 4.1 indicate, one cause of this is logistical. Also, though, as is also shown by some of the quotations in

paragraph 4.1, a number of respondents might not be aware or see this as part of their role. This may go some way to explaining why, when 15 respondents reported they had experienced difficulties in obtaining the views of parents and 5 did not, 5 gave no response; they may not have considered it part of their role and had not tried to contact parents.

- 4.5 The problems experienced by respondents in contacting parents are mirrored in the way they report back to them. See Table 8.

Table 8: Methods used by respondents to report back to parents

<b>Method of reporting back to parents</b>	<b>No of respondents using this method</b>
Newsletter	6
Website	1
Meetings	6
Posters	-
Local Press	3
Other	3

- 4.6 The number of methods used by respondents is low and mirrors the figures in Table 6, including a low number (1) who employ a website for reporting back to parents. The “Other” methods are “in person” (2) and “via governor agenda”.

- 4.7 It is also clear that a majority of respondents do not report back to parents at all. See Table 9.

Table 9: No. of different methods used by respondents to report back to parents

<b>No of methods listed in Table 9 used by respondents to report back to parents</b>	<b>No. of respondents who use these methods to report back to parents</b>
6 methods	-
5 methods	-
4 methods	1
3 methods	-
2 methods	4
1 method	7
0	13

#### 4.8 Conclusion

There are large shortcomings in the whole area of contact between respondents and parents. Most of this appears to be a logistical nature, i.e. in many cases, formal arrangements do not exist for respondents to contact parents and report back to them. However, there are a number of cases where respondents are either unaware that this may be part of their role as a PGR, or feel that they do not see it as a duty they should perform.

#### 4.9 Recommendations

LEAs should be encouraged to provide and publicise formal methods for PGRs to contact, consult with and report back to parents. The confusion over the role of PGRs in relation to their contacting parents emphasises the recommendations made in paragraph 3.13, viz. nationally produced guidelines should be provided for PGRs, outlining clearly their roles, powers and duties with suggested modus operandi.

5 NETWORKING AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

5.1 Of the 25 PGRs who responded to the questionnaire, 3 were in LEAs which had only one PGR. Consequently the statistics shown in Table 10 are based on 22 responses.

5.2 It is clear from the evidence shown in Table 10 that contact between PGRs in the same local authority is largely unplanned. See Table 10.

Table 10: Networking between Parent Governor Representatives in the same local authority

Number of respondents who meet regularly with other PGRs before or after committee meetings to discuss educational issues	-
Number of respondents who meet other PGRs before or after committee meetings, occasionally when certain issues demand	4
Number of respondents who meet other PGRs before or after committee meetings incidentally but unplanned	9
Number of respondents who think meeting other PGRs is not relevant	4
Of the remaining 5 respondents, one did not respond while the other 4 said they saw their fellow PGRs at committee meetings.	

5.3 Of particular interest is the fact that 4 respondents regard communication with fellow PGRs as of no relevance.

5.4 However, if discussion of educational matters between PGRs in the same LEA is limited and unplanned, they keep up-to-date with educational developments through a number of ways. See Table 11. (NB. These statistics are based on returns from all 25 respondents.)

Table 11: How Parent Governor Representatives keep up-to-date with developments in education

<b>Method of keeping up to date with developments in education</b>	<b>Number who use this method</b>
From the committee papers circulated for the meetings	23
LEA provides briefing papers, notes etc	10
From press and media coverage	18
Websites	7
Governor training events	11
Talking to the Headteacher(s)	15
Other (made up of: respondents who work in education; those who talk to teachers; those who use Governors Association.	8

5.5 Although the most common way that PGRs keep up top date with education developments is through papers circulated by the LEA for committee meetings (23),

relatively few respondents (10) report that their LEA provides them with briefing papers and notes.

- 5.6 Use of the press and media (18) and talking to Headteachers (15) are also relatively popular methods employed by respondents for keeping up to date with educational developments. However, the use of websites is low – at 7 respondents who use this method, it is the lowest response. This is perhaps a little surprising given that 20 of the 25 respondents are under the age of 50 and are more likely to be familiar with IT than older respondents.
- 5.7 As can be seen from Table 12, there is a large spread of the number of methods used for keeping up-to-date with educational developments.

Table 12: Number of methods used by respondents for keeping up-to-date with educational developments

<b>Number of methods</b>	<b>No. of respondents who use these methods</b>
7	-
6	1
5	4
4	9
3	4
2	5
1	2

- 5.8 It is quite noticeable, though, that only 2 rely on one method, with the bulk of the respondents (17) using 3 to 5 methods.

### 5.9 Conclusions

There is very limited formal, planned meeting between the PGRs from the same LEA to discuss educational matters, and this may add to the sense of isolation which 10 respondents report (see Table 13). It may also adversely affect the effectiveness of PGRs in carrying out their roles on committee. Overall, respondents use a variety of methods to keep up to date with educational matters, though there is limited provision of briefing papers etc by LEAs reported by respondents, and limited use of websites.

### 5.10 Recommendations

Given constraints of time and the fact that there may be only one PGR in post at an LEA, it is extremely difficult to recommend that PGRs formally set aside time for meetings before committee. Nevertheless, it is a practice which is desirable in order to prevent a sense of isolation and to help PGRs carry out their role more effectively. Consequently, PGRs should be made aware of the value of planned meetings prior to committee meetings either by their LEA or through nationally provided guidelines and LEAs should make a facility (e.g. office space) available for such meetings to take place.

Overall, respondents use a variety of methods to keep up to date with educational developments. To further assist them, all LEAs might provide them with background information in education, and either LEA or nationally provided website addresses which PGRs would find useful in helping them keep up to date with educational developments.

## 6 DIFFICULTIES AND CONSTRAINTS

6.1 The difficulties and constraints experienced by respondents can be seen in Table 13 below.

Table 13: Difficulties and/or constraints experienced by PGRs

<b>Difficulty or constraint</b>	<b>No of respondents experiencing this difficulty/constraint</b>
Unfamiliarity with committee procedures	11
Limited support from the LEA	11
Limited support from the Governors Association	9
Limited support from the Parent Teacher Association (or equivalent)	6
Limited training opportunities	16
The political dimension at committee meetings	8
Isolation	10
Time	14
Bureaucracy	6
Negative attitudes among councillors	5
Uncertainty about my role as a PGR	10
Networking/contact with other parents	16
Shortness of time between receiving committee papers and meeting	5
Travelling distances	3
Inadequate information about parents (names, addresses, etc.)	10

6.2 It is clear that the greatest difficulties/constraints experienced by respondents are limited training opportunities (16 responses), and networking/contact with parents (16 responses). As one respondent commented on the first of these two difficulties, *“all progress I have made is due to my own limited efforts/abilities/resources”*, while a second respondent with reference to the difficulties they experience with networking/contact with other parents said *“no liaison structure exists”*.

6.3 14 respondents state that time is a difficulty for them. A number of respondents comment, in particular, on short or no notice of changed times of committee meetings. *“Committee times are often changed at late notice”*; *“I drove 55 miles to a meeting at County Hall to find out the time had been put back.”*

6.4 Of the 11 respondents who feel constrained by their unfamiliarity with committee procedures, and the 11 who say they have limited support from the LEA, one respondent comments *“Papers are discussed at the committee which we don’t have access to copies! Also our names are left off documents listing committee members!”* A second commented *“Going to a (committee) meeting is a very intimidating experience and generally a very unwelcoming atmosphere.”*

6.5 The vast majority of respondents (24) have reported that they have difficulties or experience constraints in carrying out their role as a Parent Governor Representative for a number of reasons. See Table 14.

Table 14: Number of difficulties/constraints experienced by respondents

<b>No. of difficulties/constraints as listed in Table 13 experienced by respondents</b>	<b>No of respondents who have experienced these difficulties/constraints</b>
16	-
15	-
14	-
13	-
12	1
11	2
10	1
9	2
8	1
7	3
6	2
5	3
4	2
3	3
2	2
1	2
0	1

6.5 60% of respondents (15) have experienced difficulties/constraints in more than 4 areas, while only 5 respondents have experienced difficulties or constraints in 2 or fewer areas. Only 1 respondent reports having experienced no difficulties or constraints in their role as a PGR.

6.6 In two cases where 3 PGRs from the same LEA have responded, there is quite a large degree of uniformity in the number of difficulties/constraints they give.

6.7 In LEA A two respondents report experiencing 11 difficulties/constraints and one respondent reports experiencing 8 difficulties/constraints. In LEA B two respondents report experiencing 7 difficulties/constraints and one respondent reports experiencing 4.

6.8 In the third case where 3 PGRs from the same LEA have responded, there is less uniformity. One respondent reports experiencing only 1 constraint/difficulty, the second respondent reports experiencing 2 constraints/difficulties, while the third respondent reports experiencing 6 constraints/difficulties.

6.9 Conclusions

The most common difficulties or constraints experienced by respondents are limited training opportunities and networking/contact with other parents. These are followed

by unfamiliarity with committee procedures and limited support from the LEA. The difficulty/constraint to which fewest respondents refer is travelling distances.

At the same time, 24 of the 25 respondents experience at least 1 difficulty/constraint with 15 (60%) experiencing more than 4 difficulties/constraints.

#### 6.10 Recommendations

Given that one of the greatest concerns expressed by respondents is limited training opportunities, it is recommended that a national conference be provided free of charge for PGRs to address their greatest needs and concerns. Networking with parents, unfamiliarity with committee procedures and limited support from LEAs are all difficulties which may be dealt with largely by LEAs, though they may benefit from national guidelines. Such guidelines would aid LEAS in ensuring that PGRs receive the support they need to carry out their roles effectively.

## 7 CONFERENCE FOR PGRs

- 7.1 21 respondents said they would be prepared to attend a cost-free one-day conference on the role of the Parent Governor Representative.
- 7.2 8 expressed a preference for such a conference to take place on a weekday, 7 respondents preferred a Saturday, while 6 said they had no preference.
- 7.3 As Table 15 shows, there is a large degree of agreement over topics among the 21 respondents who said they would be prepared to attend a cost-free one-day conference.

Table 15: Suggested topics for a conference

<b>Suggested Topic</b>	<b>No of respondents suggesting this topic</b>
Communication with parents	15
Support from the local authority	12
Greatest concerns over the role of the PGR	13
Sharing successes and good practice	17

### 7.4 Conclusion

There is a large degree of support from respondents for a one-day cost-free conference for Parent Governor Representatives. Also, there is a large degree of agreement amongst respondents over the topics to be covered in such a conference.

### 7.5 Recommendation

A national conference should be organised to address those areas highlighted in this report as concerns for PGRs, and those local authority officials and elected members with particular duties and roles in the area of scrutiny.

## 8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 Only very limited training for PGRs is provided by local authorities.
- 8.2 Local authorities provide few facilities or support such as computer and telephone facilities and secretarial support for PGRs.
- 8.3 There is some confusion amongst PGRs over their role and this is exacerbated by the limited support a number of PGRs report they receive from their local authorities.
- 8.4 PGRs experience a number of difficulties/constraints which prevent them carrying out their duties as effectively as they might. The constraints referred to most often are limited training opportunities and difficulties linked to networking with/contacting parents.

## 9 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 All local authorities should consult with PGRs and provide them with, at least, induction training. Such induction training would be aided by the provision of national guidelines to ensure a degree of uniformity and basic understanding of the purpose of oversight and scrutiny in education.
- 9.2 Local authorities should provide PGRs with the facilities and support needed for them to carry out their duties effectively. It is particularly important that support and facilities are provided to enable PGRs to contact parents as easily as possible.
- 9.3 In order to help PGRs carry out their role effectively, both they and officials and elected members of authorities should be provided with nationally produced guidelines clarifying their role, powers, duties and suggested modus operandi.
- 9.4 A national conference should be organised to address those areas highlighted in this report as concerns for PGRs and those local authority officials and elected members with particular duties and roles in the area of scrutiny.



RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE - SEPTEMBER 2005

PARENT GOVERNOR REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL AUTHORITY COMMITTEES

1 PERSONAL INFORMATION

1.1 Age Group:  
 18-30                       31-40                       41-50                       Over 50

1.2 Gender:  
 Male                       Female

1.4 Ethnic Origin:  
 White       Black       Asian       Other (please specify) .....

1.3 Name of Local Education Authority:  
 .....

1.4 How long have you been a PGR?  
 .....

2 WHICH COMMITTEE?

2.1 On which Local Authority Committee and/or sub-committee(s) do you serve as a PGR?  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

2.2 Please list some of the topics you have discussed at committee/sub-committee meetings:  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

3 COMMITTEE EXPERIENCE AS A PARENT GOVERNOR REPRESENTATIVE

3.1 Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

<i>Please tick appropriate box</i>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
I am expected to play a full part in all deliberations of the Committee					
I am expected to contribute only when educational items are discussed					
I have not been given any encouragement to take part in the business of the Committee					

Comment: .....

.....

3.2 Are you clear about your voting rights in Committee?

Yes  No

4 TRAINING AND SUPPORT

4.1 Have you been offered any training on your Parent Governor Representative role by the Local Education Authority? Yes  No

4.2 If yes, please indicate the type of training offered, and how often:

.....

.....

4.3 Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

<i>Please tick appropriate box</i>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
I have received sufficient training to enable me to perform a meaningful role in Committee as a Parent Governor Representative					
The Local Education Authority has been very supportive and helpful in developing my role as a PGR in Committee					
My role as a PGR is being delayed by a lack of training and lack of support from the Local Education Authority					
My ability to play a meaningful role as a PGR in Committee is improving with experience and confidence					
I am unclear about my role as a PGR					

Comment .....

.....

4 TRAINNG AND SUPPORT (continued)

4.4 Has your Local Education Authority provided you with support in respect of:

Computer facilities	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telephone facilities	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilities for mailing	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Website space	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secretarial support	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Office space	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comment .....

.....

5 CONSULTING PARENTS

5.1 Contacting Parents  
How do you obtain the views of parents, as their representative on Committee?

(a) Regular meetings with Parent Governors	<input type="checkbox"/>	(a)
(b) Via your local Governors' Association	<input type="checkbox"/>	(b)
(c) Via a Governors' Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/>	(c)
(d) Arranging a general meeting when required	<input type="checkbox"/>	(d)
(e) Circulating a questionnaire to parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	(e)
(f) Via PTA meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	(f)
(g) Using the Internet / Website	<input type="checkbox"/>	(g)
(h) Other (please specify).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	(h)

Comment .....

.....

5.2 Have you experienced difficulty in obtaining the views of parents? If yes, please give more details.

Yes  No

Comment .....

.....

5.3 Reporting Back to Parents  
How do you report back to parents?

Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/>	Posters	<input type="checkbox"/>
Website	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Press	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other (please specify) .....			

6 NETWORKING AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

6.1 Do you meet the other Parent Governor Representatives before or after Committee meetings?

- (a) Regularly, in order to talk about educational issues  (a)  
 (b) Occasionally, when certain issues demand  (b)  
 (c) Incidentally, but not planned  (c)  
 (d) I do not think this is relevant  (d)

Comment .....

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6.2 How do you keep up-to-date with developments in Education?

- (a) From the Committee papers circulated for the meetings  (a)  
 (b) The LEA provides briefing papers, notes, etc.  (b)  
 (c) From press and media coverage  (c)  
 (d) Websites  (d)  
 (e) Governor training events  (e)  
 (f) Talking to the Headteacher(s)  (f)  
 (g) Other (please specify) .....  (g)

7 DIFFICULTIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Have you experienced any of the following difficulties and/or constraints in your role in Committee as a Parent Governor Representative? (tick any which apply):

- (a) Unfamiliarity with Committee procedures  (a)  
 (b) Limited support from the LEA  (b)  
 (c) Limited support from the Governors' Association  (c)  
 (d) Limited support from the Parent Teacher Association (or equivalent)  (d)  
 (e) Limited training opportunities  (e)  
 (f) The political dimension at committee meetings  (f)  
 (g) Isolation  (g)  
 (h) Time  (h)  
 (i) Bureaucracy  (i)  
 (j) Negative attitudes among councillors  (j)  
 (k) Uncertainty about my role as a PGR  (k)  
 (l) Networking/contact with other parents  (l)  
 (m) Shortness of time between receiving committee papers and meeting  (m)  
 (n) Travelling distances  (n)  
 (o) Inadequate information about parents (names, addresses, etc)  (o)  
 (p) Other (please specify) .....  (p)

Comment .....

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8 CONFERENCE FOR PGRs

8.1 Would you be prepared to attend a cost-free one-day All Wales Conference on the role of the Parent Governor Representative?  
 Yes  No

8.2 Would you prefer a:  
 Weekday  Saturday   
 No preference

8.3 Please indicate any topics you would wish to be covered at a Conference:

Communicating with parents

Support from the local authority

Greatest concerns over the role of the PGR

Sharing successes and good practice

Others: .....

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9 ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ABOUT YOUR ROLE AS A PGR  
 In particular, please mention any major issues to which you feel you have contributed, or in which you have been successful.

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***Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your comments will be kept entirely confidential.***  
 If we require additional information on this subject, would you be prepared to help us again? **Yes / No**

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Tel: ..... Email: .....

**PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE BY 28 OCTOBER 2005  
 IN THE SAE PROVIDED TO:**

Steve Gullick, Centre Manager  
 All Wales Centre for Governor Training and Research, Swansea School of Education,  
 Swansea Institute of Higher Education, Hendrefoelan Campus, Swansea SA2 7NB  
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