DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CIRCULAR 24/91

To The Chairperson, Board of Management of each National School

PARENTS AS PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

1 PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Partnership for parents in education is a stated policy aim of the Government. Through the Programme for Economic and Social Progress the Government and the Social Partners have formally recognised the promotion of parental involvement in the education of their children as an essential strategy of educational policy and practice. This Circular is concerned with ensuring that partnership for parents is positively pursued at a local level by each national school.

2 SCHOOL/FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

The Department endorses the view of the National Parents' Council, Primary, expressed in its recently published booklet, *Parents' Associations - Making Them Work* , that parents should be involved in their local school for two main reasons:

"The school is regarded as an extension of the home and an active partnership between parents and teachers makes this a reality, especially in the eyes of the young child, who is the central figure.

Research shows that parental interest and attitudes to school, to books and to education are the single most important influence on a child's learning."

These reasons are supported by the findings of the Primary Education Review Body.

The Department recognises that school/family relationships are particularly important at the primary level of education. As the recognised primary educators of the child, parents have a right to be assured that the child's needs are being met by the school. It follows that parents should be given as much information as possible on all aspects of the child's progress and development. Parents, as a body, are also entitled to know whether the school and the education system are meeting children's needs.

3 · PARENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

It is important that, where none exists, an active Parents' Association be formed for each individual school in order to promote and develop effective and positive participation by parents in education at the school level.

Circular 7/85 issued by the Department of Education in January, 1985 urged school authorities to have a Parents' Association formed in association with every National School.

While much progress has been made since then, there are still national schools which do not have a Parents' Association. The Department sees a Parents' Association as essential for

**developing partnership for parents in education at the level of the local school, and*

**supporting and encouraging individual parents to become more involved in the education of their children.*

The Minister for Education now requests each Board of Management to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that a Parents' Association is formed in association with its school. The Board should actively promote all means of effective co-operation between the school and the Parents' Association.

4 FORMING A PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

As a first step, the Board should call a general meeting of parents for the purpose of the parents forming a Parents' Association where one does not already exist. It would be desirable that the Board arrange with the National Parents' Council-Primary to have a representative present to advise the parents.

The Booklet entitled *Parents' Associations - Making Them Work* will be of particular assistance to schools in promoting parental involvement. A copy is being sent to the Chairperson of each Board for this purpose. Further copies may be purchased from the *National Parents' Council,* ~~*Primary, Hogan House, Hogan Place, Grand Canal Street Lower, Dublin 2,*~~ *price £2.00.* 16-20 Cumberland St South, Dublin 2 (01 6789980)

It is in the best interests of the school that positive and effective communication exists between the Parents' representatives on the Board and the Parents' Association. To this end, parent representatives should be ex-officio members of the Parents' Association Committee.

5 DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

Further developments will be necessary in order to bring about genuine partnership at school level.

Each national school will be required to establish as part of its overall school policy/plan, a clearly defined policy for productive parental involvement. The Department in consultation with the partners in education will draw up guidelines for this process. The guidelines will take account of the recommendations of the Primary Education Review Body on relations between parents and boards of management and teachers which, in general, the Department accepts.

In conjunction with the guidelines, the Department will prepare an information booklet for parents on the educational provision being made for their children and on the operation of the national school system.

6 NATIONAL PARENTS' COUNCIL

Each Parents' Association should strongly consider affiliating to the National Parents' Council, Primary Tier. Such affiliation affords parents the opportunity and the mechanism for having a voice in decision making on primary educational issues at a national level. The National Parents' Council provides representation for parents, as partners in education, on various Government-appointed educational bodies. Through its representative function, the Council is making a distinctive and valuable contribution to central planning and policy development in education.

C. N. LINDSAY,
SECRETARY.

MAY, 1991

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AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS

Chuig an gCathaoirleach, Bord Bainistíochta gach Scoile Náisiúnta

TUISMITHEOIRÍ MAR PHÁIRTITHE SAN OIDEACHAS

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS

IMLITIR 24/91

Chuig an gCathaoirleach, Bord Bainistíochta gach Scoile Náisiúnta

TUISMITHEOIRÍ MAR PHÁIRTITHE SAN OIDEACHAS

1 TUISMITHEOIRÍ MAR CHOMHPHÁIRTITHE

Is aidhm ráite pholasaí ag an Rialtas é comhpháirtíocht a bheith ag tuismitheoirí san oideachas. Tríd an gClár um Fhorás Eacnamaíoch agus Sóisialta tá aitheantas foirmiúil tugtha ag an Rialtas agus ag na Comhpháirtithe Sóisialta do chothú páirtíocht tuismitheoirí in oideachas a bpáistí mar straitéis riachtanach do pholasaí agus chleachtas oideachasúil. Is chuige an Imlitir seo deimhin a dhéanamh de go gcothaíonn gach scoil náisiúnta comhpháirtíocht do thuismitheoirí ar bhealach dearfach ag an leibhéal áitiúil.

2 CAIDREAMH IDIR AN SCOIL AGUS AN TEAGHLACH

Aontaíonn an Roinn le tuairim Chomhairle Náisiúnta na dTuismitheoirí, an Bhunroinn, faoi mar a nochtar í sa Leabhrán a d'fhoilsigh siad le gairid *Parents' Associations - Making Them Work* gur chóir go mbeadh tuismitheoirí gafa lena scoil áitiúil ar dhá phríomhchúis:

"Féachtar ar an scoil mar fhorleathnú ar an teaghlach agus is trí chomhpháirtíocht ghníomhach idir tuismitheoirí agus oidí a chuirtear bonn fírinneach faoi seo, go háirithe mar a fheictear don pháiste óg é, an té is lárnaí.

Léiríonn taighde gurb é an tionchar is tábhachtaí ar fhoghlaim pháiste ná suim an tuismitheora agus dearcadh an tuismitheora i leith na scoile, i leith na leabhar agus an oideachais."
Tacaíonn cinneadh na Comhairle Athbhreithnithe don Bhunoideachas leis na cúiseanna seo.

Aithníonn an Roinn go mbaineann tábhacht ar leith le caidreamh idir an scoil agus an teaghlach ag bunleibhéal an oideachais. Ós iad bunoideachasóirí aitheanta an pháiste iad, tá ceart ag na tuismitheoirí a bheith cinnte de go bhfuil an scoil ag riar do riachtanais an pháiste. Tagann de sin go mba chóir an oiread eolais agus is féidir a thabhairt do thuismitheoirí ar gach gné de dhul chun cinn agus d'fhorbairt an pháiste. Ina theannta sin, tá ceart ag tuismitheoirí mar chomhlacht, a fhios a bheith acu má tá an scoil agus an córas oideachais ag riar do riachtanais pháistí.

3 CUMAINN TUISMITHEORÍ

Aon áit nach bhfuil ceann ann cheana, tá sé den tábhacht go mbunófaí cumann gníomhach tuismitheoirí do gach scoil ar leith d'fhonn chomhpháirtíocht éifeachtach dhearfach san oideachas ag leibhéal na scoile a chur chun cinn agus a fhorbairt.

In Imlitir 7/85 a d'eisigh an Roinn Oideachais i mí Eanáir, 1985 spreagadh údaráis scoileanna chun féachaint chuige go mbunófaí Cumann Tuismitheoiri i gcomhcheangal le gach scoil náisiúnta.

Cé go ndearnadh dul chun cinn suntasach ó shin, tá scoileanna náisiúnta fós ann nach bhfuil Cumann Tuismitheoirí acu. Ceapann an Roinn go bhfuil Cumann Tuismitheoirí den riachtanas chun

**comhpháirtíocht do thuismitheoirí san oideachas a fhorbairt ag leibhéal na scoile áitiúla*

agus

**tacaíocht agus spreagadh a thabhairt do thuismitheoirí aonair éirí níos gafa le hoideachas a bpáistí.*

Iarrann an tAire Oideachais anois ar gach Bord Bainistíochta pé céimeanna is gá a ghlacadh lena dheimhniú go gcuirfear Cumann Tuismitheoirí ar bun i gcomhcheangal leis an scoil. Ba chóir don Bhord gach deis a thapú go gníomhach chun comhoibriú éifeachtach a chur chun cinn idir an scoil agus Cumann na dTuismitheoirí.

4 CUMANN TUISMITHEOIRÍ A BHUNÚ

Mar thúschéim, ba chóir don Bhord mórchruinniú tuismitheoirí a ghairm chun go mbunódh na tuismitheoirí Cumann Tuismitheoirí, áit nach bhfuil ceann ag feidhmiú cheana. B'inmhianaithe an rud é dá socródh an Bord leis an gCumann Náisiúnta Tuismitheoirí, an Bhunroinn, go mbeadh ionadaí dá gcuid i láthair chun comhairle a chur ar na tuismitheoirí.

Beidh cabhair ar leith le fáil ag scoileanna i gcur chun cinn páirtíocht tuismitheoirí ón Leabhrán *Parents' Associations - Making Them Work.* Tá cóip á seoladh chuig Cathaoirleach gach Boird chuige seo. Féadfar tuilleadh cóipeanna a cheannach ó *Chumann Náisiúnta na dTuismitheoirí,*

~~an Bhunroinn, Teach Uí Ógáin, Plás Uí Ógáin, Sráid na Mórchandlach Íocht., Baile Átha Cliath 2, luach £2.00.~~

Is chun leasa na scoile é go mbeadh cumarsáid dhearfach idir ionadaithe na dTuismitheoirí ar an mBord agus an Cumann Tuismitheoirí. Chun na críche seo, ba cheart go mbeadh ionadaithe tuismitheoirí ina mbaill de Choiste Chumann na dTuismitheoirí, ex officio.

5 COMHPHÁIRTÍOCHT LE TUISMITHEOIRÍ A FHORBAIRT

Beidh gá le tuilleadh forbartha chun comhpháirtíocht dhearúsach a thabhairt i gcrích ag leibhéal na scoile. Iarrfar ar gach scoil náisiúnta, mar chuid dá plean/polasaí iomlán scoile, polasaí mion soiléir a bhunú chun gafacht thorthúil tuismitheoirí a bhaint amach. Dréachtfaidh an Roinn i gcomhairle leis na comhpháirtithe san oideachas treoirlínte don phróiseas seo. Agus iad á n-ullmhú cuirfear san áireamh moltaí na Comhairle Athbhreithnithe don Bhunoideachas i dtaca le cumarsáid idir tuismitheoirí agus boird bhainistíochta agus oidí, moltaí a nglacann an Roinn, ar an iomlán, leo.

In éineacht leis na treoirlínte ullmhóidh an Roinn leabhrán eolais do thuismitheoirí faoin soláthar oideachais a dhéantar dá bpáistí agus faoi fheidhmiú an chórais bhunscolaíochta.

6 COMHAIRLE NÁISIÚNTA NA DTUISMITHEOIRÍ

Ba cheart do gach Cumann Tuismitheoirí smaoineamh go tréan ar chomhcheangal leis an gComhairle Náisiúnta Tuismitheoirí, an Bhunroinn. Soláthraíonn an comhcheangal seo an deis agus an mheicnic do thuismitheoirí guth a bheith acu i mbeartaíocht ar cheisteanna bunoideachais ag leibhéal náisiúnta. Soláthraíonn an Chomhairle Náisiúnta Tuismitheoirí ionadaíocht do thuismitheoirí mar chomhpháirtithe san oideachas ar chomhlachtaí oideachais Státcheaptha éagsúla. Trína feidhm ionadaíoch tá a mbronnann an Chomhairle dearscnaitheach mórluachach i bpleanáil lárnach agus i bhforbairt polasaí san oideachas.

C. N. Ó LOINGSEACHÁIN
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BEALTAINE 1991.

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