

# Jim Steven's Workshop on Establishing Effective Partnerships

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## Group A

What do we see as the strengths of a good school?	What do you see as the weaknesses of our schools?	What do you see as the opportunities available to Highland Schools	What do you see as the threats to Highland Schools	How can Highland Council Support Parent Councils
Leadership	Availability of supply staff	Community resources	Budgets	Communication
Communication	Poor subject choices	Availability of field studies	Closures	Email Forum
Good organisation	Insufficient sport facilities	Safe environments	Lack of subject teachers	Adapted parent council guidance pack Chairpersons Rep group
Motivated staff/pupils	Contradiction of information	Personalised education		
Engaged learners	Building fabric/maintenance	Community interest		Better communication between primary and secondary Parent Councils
High Foundation attainments Resources Variety of EC activities (trips etc) Safe/secure environment Development opportunities for pupils	Lack of F.E requirements  Career guidance  Small schools	Local university		
Adequate special needs provisions				
Community engagement				
Approachable parent council members				

## Group B

### What do see are the strengths of a good school?

Strong partnership between teachers and parents as well as the child

Head teachers promotes a positive ethos and approach to learning

Every child is valued and has a right to learn  
Good links with wider community – organisations, business

### What do you see as the weaknesses of our schools?

Lack of parental involvement

Not using modern communication methods such as email or social media

### What do you see as the opportunities available to Highland Schools

Use technology for communication and getting pupils involved in doing this

Environment easy access to outdoor education

### What do you see as the threats to Highland Schools

Falling school role leads to cuts in the curriculum due to staff reduction.

### How can Highland Council Support Parent Councils

Hold more events

Getting a plain English explanation on CfE to all parents not just parent councils as some schools don't have parent councils.

## Group C

What do see are the strengths of a good school?	What do you see as the weaknesses of our schools?	What do you see as the opportunities available to Highland Schools	What do you see as the threats to Highland Schools	How can Highland Council Support Parent Councils
Strong leadership of head teachers	Segregation of Gaelic and English medium teaching	Environment/surroundings	Funding	More events like this one (the conference)
Good discipline	Infrastructure	Outdoor activities	Lack of vision	Group of parents meeting with the Head of Education
Involvement of pupils in school organisation	Communication	Environmental studies education	Population migration	Constructive facilitation of other issues with the council
Adequate resources	Lack of adequate 'green space'	Partnership with businesses	Difficulty in attracting teachers	Greater opportunities to contribute to agenda of meetings such as this
School being 'fun'	Pupil numbers of small high schools and restricting ability to deliver wide curriculum	Ability to use integrated community	Not making people aware of opportunities of working from home	Email address sharing or generic email addresses
Pupils want to be there	Dress code enforcement	Video conferencing teaching		Make head teachers aware that this is not a threat
Clear vision – regularly reviewed	Raising concerns with teaching quality			Training for parent council representatives
Good team work amongst the teachers				Newsletter highlighting good practice – including other authorities
Openness to new ideas				Parent council funds should be spent at the discretion of the parent council
Tackling bullying				Depute head teacher recruitment process
Breadth of curriculum delivered				Better audibility at meetings – amplifier
Participation of parent body				
Open leadership				

## Group D

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Knowledge about individual learners and parents	Lack of communication	Outdoor environment being used to enhance learning experiences	Lack of finance	Listen and provide the platform to listen to parents
Knowledge of communities and engagement	Consistency in guidance	Strong communities can be exploited	Inconsistency in different geographical areas	Pay membership to Scottish parent teacher council
Engagement with parent on a regular basis	More consistency with following guidelines and procedures	Safe learning environment	Sourcing and securing teaching staff in rural areas	Support Highland in the same way other as other Scottish councils
Engaged staff	Lose of experience	Fibre optic broadband	Capping of pupil numbers	Recognised contact with Highland council
Engaged children – they have a voice and sense of ownership Effective leadership from Head Teacher	Lack of a good language provision across schools High turnover of staff (static staffing equally a challenge)	Linking to UHI development	Enforcing the one size fits all policy  Falling schools roles	Better links with area educational officer Make the structure and function of highland council education more visible to parents
Good Parental engagement	Fabric of buildings		Class size driven by budget and not learning	More Pan Highland visits oppose to focusing on Inverness
Flexibility to ensure all levels of ability are catered for	Rural schools have lost specialist teachers  Class contact time reduction		Lack of subject choice  Limited resources  Resources being focused in hubs i.e. Inverness, Wick	

*Group E*

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Teachers and their level of commitment	Resources i.e. Buildings and safe car park/drop off area	Outdoor resources – fantastic natural environment	Budget cuts	Replace Moira McCarroll
Pupils ability to remain positive and creative in over-crowded environment	Lack of money	Better links between parent council and feeder schools and Highland Council	Reduction in teaching posts and hours	Support Parent Councils to understand what their role is
Being able to tap into our location	Lack of teacher time	Grants available – more information on these would be useful	Lack of communication	Promote and facilitate communication between parent councils and between Pcs and Highland Council
Open and forward thinking	Lack of stability personnel			More workshops
Head Teachers	Car park management/security			Clearer guidance on what to do if school is putting up barriers for parental involvement
Management Team	Communicate with parents			Guidance on how to communicate with parents with helpful ideas and suggestions
Website (if applicable)	Lack of use of technology in many schools and websites not used			Consult earlier
Extra – curricular activities	Not being able to follow child's academic progress			Ensure Head teachers understand the importance of

*Group F*

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Safe	No measurement of staff and leadership	Talk	Budgets	At conference – open forum for parents to contribute in discussions Circular table
Fun	Financial constraints	Accept challenge	Closures	Opportunity to raise concerns Cascade information
Welcoming	Schools are isolated from each other	Understand	Recruitment	Listen to parent councils Agenda – update first
Good communication/engaging	Disparity of facilities	Connect	Geographical location	
Good work ethic				
Continuous improvement culture				
Mutual respect				

## Group G

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Happy children who want to get up and go to school every day Relaxed atmosphere throughout the wider school	Lack of communication  Role of the league table	Fantastic outdoor assets  Environment can offer pupils a future	Cost of transport  Provision of transport	Listen more  Timely consultation – often consulted too late in the process Respond
Good physical environment that encourages learning and a nice to place to be Good resources that are up to date with the outside world	Tick box mentality  Lack of support from Highland Council	Proximity to our food chain (farming & fishing)  Sporting opportunities through our nature playground	Distance to educational attractions e.g. science  Lack of outreach	Monthly online live chats moderated by Highland Council and agenda agreed with parents in advance Wider newsletter – regular and is able to highlight good practise Very short (one page) key actions that address some of the challenges that are known – e.g. equity gap best and worst.
Good and enthusiastic teachers	Constitution needs to be kept in mind – it's important		Connectivity – no Wi-Fi	