

## **PET(4)-05-11 Paper 12a**

### **P-03-310 Policies to Help Protect Pupils Needs and Rights**

#### **Petition wording**

We the undersigned, call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to have a policy that only allows the closure of 6th forms, if there is consent and support in in the community. There should be improvements to the consultation process to make them sturdy, strong and easier for the public to access and participate in. The consultation period should give the public enough time to get the information and act accordingly.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-310.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Mandy Howells

**Number of signatures:** 112 (a related petition collected 2,119)

#### **Supporting information:**

This petition seeks to review and challenge current Assembly Government policy and guidelines on the reorganization of schools and specifically in this case any reorganization of post-16 education. We have already presented a petition to the Assembly Government focused upon saving the sixth form in Brynmawr Comprehensive School. This petition titled -We the undersigned appose against the close of brynmawr foundation schools 6th form-we want a choice-and it contained 2119 names this clearly demonstrates the depth of feeling in the local community.

We fully support the Assembly Government's ambitions as set out in the recent legislation on extending education and training options. We also fully support the Assembly Government's transformation agenda which, as we understand it, seeks to ensure that schools and colleges work far more closely together in order to extend the range of options available to children and young people. In terms of Blaenau Gwent we also support the new Learning Campus which we believe will certainly enhance the learning opportunities for the population of the borough.

Our concern is that our children and young people have a choice of options available to them for post-16 education. All too often the Assembly Government's policies appear to force the closure of sixth forms which in turn remove the element of choice from the options for continuing education from 16 onwards. We feel strongly that young people should have the right to stay on at school if that is their wish and that a sixth form education provides an excellent option for some people. Clearly some will choose to attend a sixth form college and we would support their right to do so.

Recently in Wrexham and in Rhondda Cynon Taff proposals to close sixth forms have been defeated and we believe that this reflects the wishes of parents and the local communities. We hope that this petition will help focus political attention on these matters and will persuade the Assembly Government to re-write its current guidelines and policies for post-16 education options. We want to see a level playing field between schools and colleges that will enable all young people to have a choice of options at 16 and onwards.

At the same time we have significant concerns about the robustness of local authority's consultation processes. Our experience is that a local authority regards consultation as simply a box-ticking exercise. There need to be minimum standards set and expectations for local authorities to reach in terms of consultation exercises.,and has mentioned in the epetition they need to be made more sturdy, strong and easier for the public to access and participate in. .

The consultation period should also give the public enough time to get the information and act accordingly