PTA UK | A PTA FOR ALL SCHOOLS
A VOICE FOR ALL PARENTS

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All-Party Parliamentary Group for Education
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Dear Mr Kinahan

APPG for Education: Evidence on "How well do schools prepare young people for their future careers?"

PTA UK is the largest membership organisation for parent teacher associations in England, Northern Ireland and Wales and champions parental participation in education. We welcome this inquiry and its aim to develop a clear set of practical recommendations. Both parents and educationalists have told us of how important they feel supporting young people to consider a broad a range of career options is and that this is an under-developed area.

PTA UK has around 14,000 parent associations in its membership. Given below are a few examples of how some of these associations are active in working in partnership with school staff to prepare young people for the workplace and to expose them to job possibilities. We know young people, on contemplating the point at which they will leave secondary education, seek advice, support and direction from their parents and their teachers. It follows, therefore, that there is benefit in recommending this type of partnership between home and school. We would support the APPG's call for evidence and success stories in this area. It's crucial that insights from young people on what they want and need drives what schools and others provide.

We invited input from PTA UK members and parents on our PTA UK Facebook Page. This solicited a range of views. Some respondents were uncomfortable or sceptical that schools were able to or should do this due to pressures in the education system and the focus on academic subjects.

Other PTAs see this as an area of activity they wish to invest volunteer time and other resources in. Indeed the chair of Cumbria's **Keswick School** PTA plans to work with the school's career programme to put on a careers fair inviting parents and local businesses/employers to offer advice to pupils as they look beyond secondary school. She adds: "It makes sense to take advantage of the parent body's collective professional experience."

Huntington School in York has established an 'aspirations unit' for its pupils manned by a careers adviser and kitted out with information about work, apprenticeships, college and university, and forces training. The school also works with its Year 11s, governors, parents, Friends group and past-pupils to hold a careers 'speed dating' event for some 250 Year 9s ahead of choosing their GCSEs and attending options evening. This event entails the pupils grilling the adults on their jobs, training and careers path.

Another inspiring example is the approach taken in Dorset by The **Queen Elizabeth School**. The school is keen to be seen as a "hub of the community and business landscape". Consequently, the school has set up the QE Family; a group of teachers, parents, other friends of the school (and crucially students) which aims to support the school through business links, volunteering and raising money towards additional facilities and enrichment opportunities. They hope that by engaging the community it can draw on a wider range of skills and contacts than they would be able to achieve alone. Senior staff told us: "We believe that partnerships between parents, educators and children enhance our pupils' success". The School Leadership Team working with the QE Family has provided opportunities for a number of organisations and businesses (Including Dorset Police, Insurance companies and the British Heart Foundation) to hold activities in the school that inspire students and equip them with new skills and perspectives. Relationships with stakeholders and the

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school have been built through business networking breakfasts and an annual award presentation event.

Other parents also felt that being prepared for work means schools could also cover life skills such as First Aid/CPR, financial management and PHSE, and that primary schools also have a role to play in getting children thinking about the world of work.

St Wilfrid's primary school in Northwich, Cheshire has a Parent Teachers and Friends Association that facilitates a 'Young PTA'. 125 of its 312 pupils are registered as members with older children taking on committee responsibilities. PTFA Chair Samantha Newey says "The Young PTA has changed the life of the school by being at the heart of it, feeling empowered to make decisions, engaging with key people, being instrumental to getting others involved in events...The Young PTA is growing our young leaders of the future." They invite professionals into school to join their monthly meetings (including their local MP, Graham Evans) to hear about what they do and ask questions. They also ran an annual Mini Careers Fair with a wide range of professionals, local employers and organisations such as the Police, Redrow Homes, artists, scientists, medics and therapists. This helped give the children an insight into the wide range of jobs that could appeal to their interests and talents.

Finally, we also received feedback from parents that children with additional needs or educated in special schools had insufficient support in the areas covered by this inquiry.

We hope these perspectives are of value to the APPG for Education and this inquiry. PTA UK would be delighted to take part in any roundtables on this and other topics in the future.

Yours sincerely

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