

FED Stakeholder Council Reflections

The Foundation for Education Development's vision is informed by hundreds of hours of consultation with hundreds of stakeholders across hundreds of events which has delivered a consistent message: we need a long-term strategy and plan for education in England in order to deliver a system which leads to better outcomes for all learners.

We asked members of our workstream and stakeholder councils to reflect on the experiences over the last year of consultations and asked each them of three questions:

- 1. Why did you volunteer to do this?**
- 2. What have you learnt?**
- 3. What are your hopes and aspirations?**





Donna Moss-Seymour

Managing Director, The School Report

Why did you volunteer to do this?

To provide a voice for the many parents that I represent through my work at theschoolreport.co.uk.

What have you learnt?

I have met some great people whilst working with the FED parents council and heard many different experiences of the education system, but for me it has confirmed what I already knew, in that there is a fear of feedback within our education system and parents find it difficult to reach people in positions of influence. This is why FED works for me and the many parents I represent. It provides a gateway to join the conversation.

What are your hopes and aspirations?

I hope to inspire stakeholders within the education system to promote the parental voice, to listen to the parental voice and to act upon the parental voice to raise standards and aspirations for every child.





Paul Hodgkinson

Executive Principal, Bolton Impact Trust

Why did you volunteer to do this?

Initially I had an informal conversation about the work of the FED with Jo Malone and remember being impressed with the FED's intent to try to find longer term solutions which will benefit everyone in education for years to come. I was delighted when I was asked to co-chair the SEND Council as I am passionate about representing the AP and Special School sector. It became clear to me from an early stage that the FED (across all of its groups and work streams) take inclusion, equality and parity of opportunity very seriously. This was very attractive for me and the main reason for volunteering.

What have you learnt?

I have learnt that networking and specifically bringing people from diverse backgrounds and different contexts together promotes vibrant and healthy debate and that different starting viewpoints can contribute significantly to finding positive solutions to problems. I have really enjoyed listening to the many different opinions, attitudes and beliefs of Council Members. I have also enjoyed hearing about the experiences of other people from different parts of the country and from different walks of life.

Perhaps the most powerful message that I will take from my involvement with the FED will be that there is a very strong, united and powerful movement to level things up, be more inclusive, to celebrate individuality and to provide opportunities for all regardless of their circumstances.

What are your hopes and aspirations?

One of the main messages that has come from the work of the SEND Council is that education is done best in areas where there is 'appropriate provision for appropriate children at appropriate times in their lives' and that inclusion doesn't just mean keeping children in mainstream settings. I really hope that this message gathers momentum and that policy makers and decision makers are able to reflect on the message as they construct future education policy and strategy.





Sarah Sultman and Ali Durban

Co-Founder of Gesher School and NoLimits

Why did you volunteer to do this?

The FEDs work felt like an exciting opportunity for us to meet others who think differently and beyond the current system and are passionate about trying to effect change. All too often discussions on education forget the voices and experiences of children and young people with SEND. Especially those that sit just outside of mainstream. Square pegs in round holes, students who with the right educational experience could have completely different outcomes in life. We volunteered to do this specifically to advocate for this group, to amplify their voices and to ensure any long term plan for education includes those with SEND.

What have you learnt?

That we still have so much to learn! but also that we can contribute and add value to the discussion based on our experience. The SEND AP council has been made up of wonderful group of diverse educators. All of whom have been open to sharing, collaborating and being transparent about the challenges we have face. We have learnt that there is some really exciting and innovative practice happening in the world of AP and Specialist provision but that much more could be done to give mainstream educators more understanding and access to these discussions and resources.

What are your hopes and aspirations?

That the discussions, views and recommendations being made by groups / think tanks like the FED and others gets listened to by those in the position to effect change and that the process that we have been a small part of has the ability to lead to meaningful action. Our hope is that this work will lead to children and young people who are differently able and who learn differently being given more opportunities to be understood thereby opening the access to learning.

Our hope is that change can be implemented to a tired dysfunctional system so that all children and young people – including those with SEND are given an opportunity to pursue their passions and to have their talents recognised. So that they leave school as young adults with skills and qualifications enabling them to get jobs and lead independent, meaningful, and functional lives.





Heather Damons

Hospital School Teacher

Why did you volunteer to do this?

I volunteered to be part of the discussion because as a person of colour I feel because we don't have people of colour in significant numbers in influential places our ability to impact/influence positive change is hindered. I hoped that being part of a discussion that will hopefully shape the way in which education is delivered for future generations will alter the curriculum and allow all future generations to see themselves reflected in the curriculum.

What have you learnt?

All educators feel the same constraints and frustrations with what we are forced to adhere to with current government guidelines. We all want a change from the current top down subject content and are working extremely hard to challenge the status quo and make the curriculum inclusive because we value our students and want them to feel valued, seen and heard. My admiration for how educators keep striving despite the workload and deadlines and class sizes and ... and ... but they keep turning up and sacrificing personal time because there is a desire to be part of change. It was also really interesting to hear the views and experiences of people who are not teachers but work in education, who voiced the same concerns educators did and wanted to be part of the journey to influence change.

What are your hopes and aspirations?

I hope that all the work that the FED has done is taken seriously and that real change is made. I hope that GCSE subjects and literature choices will reflect the diversity of the staff and students so that all the hard work that's done in developing inclusive curriculum in the other key stages improves outcomes for everyone. I hope that teachers are heard and that the decision makers realise that change is vital as the current workload is unsustainable and for us to engender a love of learning we need to love our jobs and feel valued.





Adam Muirhead

Director Youth Work

Why did you volunteer to do this?

I feel as though practitioners' voices are incredibly important and sometimes under-valued part of policy development. In particular, I was keen that Youth Work (profession and practices) should feature in the educational policy landscape. I hoped that insights from Youth Work would be interesting and useful for educators in other settings.

What have you learnt?

That practitioners in formal education settings are burning out and desperately need some radical support from the state and from new potential partnerships to help ensure the system doesn't collapse.

What are your hopes and aspirations?

It is never clear to me that the decision makers in top policy positions (Government) are very interested in practitioners' experience, or objective best-practice evidence. I hope that the voices captured through this process find their way to the heart of real and positive change.





Jamel C Campbell

Early Years Educator

Why did you volunteer to do this?

Being an advocate for the early years/ education sector, I know how important it is to have a range of voices to create change and help shape policy. Which has not always been the case, so it was an opportunity for me to hold space as a minority within the sector (being a black male) and share my knowledge and experience.

What have you learnt?

I've learnt that no matter your specialty your input is valid. I've learnt that the Early Years needs more representation in these spaces and I am privileged to be able to represent the EY sector.

What are your hopes and aspirations?

I hope that through these workstreams and stakeholders council we are able to make real change that includes a range of voices that truly represent our community and sector which will benefit us all.





Penelope Harrison

Volunteer

Why did you volunteer to do this?

I joined the FED because, despite loving the idea of education, and otherwise fitting every other ideal for a student, being a disabled student left me fraught with trauma which I'm still unpacking today. No child should have to suffer this. I wanted a platform to ensure I could use my lived experience to ensure that.

What have you learnt?

I've learnt to stop second guessing myself, stop pre-empting my answers with 'I may be wrong' when I know I am right. I've learned to trust myself.

What are your hopes and aspirations?

I hope to keep going, to keep making changes. Although I am not certain in which domain, I want to use whatever resources I can to catalyse change.

