SUPPORT SERVICES
FOR SCHOOL BOARDS:

A SURVEY OF EDUCATION
AUTHORITY INITIATIVES

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SUPPORT SERVICES FOR SCHOOL BOARDS: SURVEY OF EDUCATION AUTHORITY INITIATIVES.

Introduction

Since the introduction of the School Boards (Scotland) Act 1989, about 2,500 out of 3,000 schools in Scotland now have their own school board, although two and sometimes three rounds of elections were needed to achieve this level of representation. The SCC has taken a special interest in training and support for school board members, with our own representatives to government resulting in the setting-up of a school board support unit by the Scottish Office earlier this year. At a meeting which we organised in Inverness last November and which attracted over 280 school board members throughout Highland region, it was evident that school boards had a continuing need for advice, information and support as they worked out their role. This paper reports on the level and nature of support being given to school boards at education authority level, with a view to presenting this information to government and suggesting how support services might be further developed. We appreciate the help and co-operation of staff members of the school boards support units at the Scottish Office and at education authorities across Scotland.

Education authority initiatives

The SCC wrote to senior officials of the education departments at all twelve regional and islands authorities, asking them to tell us about the initiatives they had introduced to support school boards in their area. Authorities were encouraged to identify particular areas of support that they had chosen to concentrate on. Responses were varied, ranging from lengthy and detailed ones to perfunctory ones. Responses are summarised below:
## Initiatives mentioned in replies

### Initiative

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*R = Roadshow*

*PM = Public Meetings*

*Sp = Speakers provided ON DEMAND*

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☑️ = Present Policy
✓✓ = Proposed Policy

**Provinces:**
- B = Borders
- C = Central
- DG = Dumfries & Galloway
- F = Fife
- G = Grampian
- H = Highland
- L = Lothian
- O = Orkney
- SH = Shetland
- ST = Strathclyde
- T = Tayside
- WI = Western Isles
The Launch

All of the authorities had set up special school board units within the department of education, or created a post, usually assistant director, or similar level. Grampian however, created only a temporary post of Unit leader, to expire in the autumn of 1990, and at Assistant Rector of secondary school level. There are no plans to replace this post with a senior education official.

To launch the boards, three main approaches were adopted:

a) Roadshow

b) Public Meetings

c) Speakers provided on demand

Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, Grampian and the Western Isles adopted the Roadshow approach, travelling throughout the region to address public meetings and distribute information to parents and schools. Slightly different to this was the strategy adopted by Orkney and Tayside, which arranged the public meetings at certain venues in their regions, inviting local people to attend. As Shetland's support unit did not exist until a month after the preliminary round of elections, the public meetings on the islands were instigated by the EIS - with council members and education officials in attendance. Central, Lothian, Highland and Fife regions provided speakers on request to meetings convened by schools or PTA's, having advised the schools that they SHOULD convene such meetings and that representatives of the Director of Education would be very willing to attend and speak. Dumfries Borders and Tayside also used the local radio station to "advertise" the boards, while Fife Regional Council featured school boards in a full page spread in its regional newsletter, which is distributed to every home in the region.

All but one region, Lothian, regularly sent education department representation to most of the regions school board meetings. Support staff from small authorities, such as Orkney or Shetland attended nearly all the meetings, while the units of larger regions provided representatives of the unit or the Directorate of Education to all early meetings, and, less frequently to well-established boards' meetings. Lothian chose only to send unit members to meetings when there was a major topic under consideration - such as opting out or major building projects. To regularly attend meetings of all the school boards in the region would simply have been impracticable, in view of the number of meetings involved.
Tayside and Strathclyde established support units based at their divisional offices.

All authorities except Central Region and Western Isles had issued their newly-elected councillors with introductory information about school boards. Borders, Fife, Lothian, Strathclyde and Tayside had arranged meetings between their officials or education committee chairmen and school board chairpersons. These meetings ranged from a strict agenda, to an "open" meeting, but all the units which have experimented with this type of meeting had been very pleased with the results. Strathclyde and Tayside held the meetings at a divisional level, while Lothian split the meeting into three – two primary meetings and one secondary meeting. Central, Dumfries and Galloway and Highland are presently considering or planning such meetings - Highland anticipates that it will require seven different venues throughout the region to ensure that everyone has an equal chance of attending.

Dumfries and Galloway (which set up a number of 'pilot' school boards a year before the legislation came into force) and Central have commissioned surveys among their school board members of training requirements. Although Orkney is also considering conducting a survey, most other units felt that it was too early yet to do so, or were confident that they were in touch with a "member on the board".

As far as the initial launch of the boards is concerned, it would appear that in most authorities support units have been making considerable efforts to promote public awareness and understanding of school boards.

**Information**

Apart from advice and information delivered informally over the telephone or through the post, support units have been preparing written information for their school boards, aimed at answering most of the boards' routine queries. Roughly half the support units have distributed binders with loose-leaf inserts, on different topics of education in the region. This method allows for sheets of information to be reissued and updated efficiently and economically.

Central, Grampian, Lothian and Orkney all distribute newsletters from the support unit to their boards, offering advice, information and most importantly in the early stages of board development, encouragement. Shetland plans to produce its own school boards newsletter in the forthcoming academic year. Borders has distributed the SED School Boards Newsletter to date, but launches its own regional newsletter in September 1990. Dumfries and Galloway, Highland, Orkney and Shetland regularly distribute circulars or reports to
boards on current educational issues, while the Western Isles is presently considering publishing a newsletter to its boards.

A more sturdy and informative publication is the regional booklet, either on one particular topic (Money Management) or on several themes - Grampian, for instance has four booklets in print, covering:

1. A-Z of Education in Grampian
2. The Primary Curriculum
3. The Secondary Curriculum
4. A Secondary Curriculum Index for School Boards

Borders, Strathclyde and Tayside have booklets available to their school boards, and Highland, Lothian and Shetland are presently preparing regional booklets for their boards. Central Region has issued a supplementary booklet to the SED manual and aims to update this regularly.

Dumfries and Galloway, with the advantage of a year's extra experience, and Western Isles have produced their own videos on school boards for circulation among boards. Highland, with school boards scattered over a wide area, is looking at this possibility.

Finally, some units have built up their own reference materials - such as academic literature, educational books and handbooks - for school boards to consult; the kind of information that all boards would ideally possess, but which is much too expensive to issue to each board individually. These usually operate informally, but as the head of the unit in Highland has discovered, it is almost entirely his own personal library out on loan. It might be an idea to have more of these "resource" libraries and to operate them more formally. Lothian is presently considering this possibility.

Training

School boards are free to determine their own training needs and provisions and are given their own training budgets. But this does not prevent education authorities taking their own initiatives and nearly all of them have done so. Several Colleges of Education are offering training courses independently of the SED training scheme.

Both Shetland and Western Isles were wary about launching into a training programme too quickly, and beyond training tutors, Western Isles has concentrated its resources in other projects. Shetland runs its first authority-wide training in late 1990, using the resources of the Northern College of Education. All the other regions had organised
courses connected with the training modules prepared by the Scottish Education Department and distributed by its school board support unit.

All but two authorities had taken advantage of the SED's arrangements for providing tutor training; Borders and Shetland, chose to train their own tutors at local colleges and Strathclyde and Central supplemented their SED trained pool of tutors with tutors trained at colleges of education. This situation is still changing, however, and each region is monitoring the training demands of its school boards. SED is also monitoring the take-up of training through an independent research project presently being undertaken by SCRE, with the intention of providing more units or modular training if the need arises.

In addition, all the regions ran the preliminary training courses for headteachers at the very start of the school boards programme, and Borders, Central and Tayside have since followed this up with a training course for new headteachers and deputy headteachers.

At the administration end of things, Borders, Grampian, Orkney and the Western Isles have run special training courses for Clerks to help the people in these essential posts cope with the week to week running of the boards. Fife, Dumfries and Galloway, Central and Highland are planning to run similar courses in the near future. Central has already run a course for board treasurers, and Grampian is planning to run a similar course soon.

Administration

Three main strategies have been adopted by support units regarding how boards handle their monies.

a) all cash to the board
b) petty cash only to the board
c) no cash at all to the board

Central, Dumfries and Galloway, Grampian, and the Western Isles all give their boards their full allocation of funding, to open bank accounts with, and handle independently of the support unit. Highland region allocated all but a small percentage of boards' funds directly to the boards. The retained funds go towards regional initiatives which support all the region's boards. Orkney, Strathclyde and Tayside only give the boards enough petty cash to cover the cost of running the meetings, while the remaining boards, Borders, Fife and Shetland take care of all the funding. In this case, the accounting is carried out through the finance department of the regional council, in the education account. Lothian did this in the first
year of operation, but have now decided to give the boards their travelling and general running expenses, but to retain the training funding within the unit. However, authorities are keeping their practices in this area under review.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

There is likely to be a continuing need for school boards to be well publicised at national and local authority level among successive generations of parents. A major failing of school councils, which school boards replaced, was that they were not at all well known nor understood by the public. **We recommend that central government and education authorities keep their school board publicity under continuing review and explore new avenues of publicity, including use of mass media, as a means of engaging public interest and attracting new school board members.**

Recommendation 2

Education authorities in Scotland have been encouragingly active in the support they have been giving to school boards, with most having made some efforts to publicise boards, provide them with information and offer some kind of training and administrative support. Each authority has chosen to approach these aspects in its own distinctive way, presumably in reflection of local needs and circumstances. **We recommend school board support units from all authorities hold meetings with one another from time to time to share experience, ideas and information with a view to developing their own services.**

Recommendation 3

Although all authorities appear to have some sort of information resource for school board members, provision for the most part appears to be at all ad hoc and informal level. Ideally each school board should have its own stock of educational and other publications to refer to and appoint its own librarian to develop this. The board's budget is likely to limit this to a bare minimum however. **We recommend that education authorities, in liaison with public or school library and other services (e.g. community education), establish local resource centres (at divisional or district level), at which school board members can borrow or consult relevant publications and papers.**

Recommendation 4

Virtually all authorities appear to have been involved in the running of training courses at some level, mainly at headteacher and tutor training levels. School boards are largely responsible for determining training needs and have various materials, mostly devised nationally, to draw upon. However, they will need continuing guidance in this process, and access to sources of expertise in making appropriate use
of available materials or in devising their own training programmes. We recommend that education authorities, in liaison with community education staff, make arrangements for giving school boards, including individual members, and especially board clerks, access to advice, information and support in connection with their training.

Recommendation 5

At present each school board support unit issues guidelines to boards on how their funds for administration, training and other outgoings should be spent. Some authorities hand over all of this money to the school board to administer, but others give the school boards charge over petty cash only, while three authorities retain charge of board’s funding, and administer boards’ financial transactions from educational headquarters - on the boards’ instructions.

While we appreciate that some authorities do not wish to burden their boards with too much administrative responsibility, we believe that these boards should be entrusted with the administration of their own finances. It seems cumbersome - and contrary to the spirit of the school boards legislation - to require school boards to apply to the education authority each time to authorise and arrange the issue of payments. We recommend that education authorities which do not already do so put school boards fully in charge of their budgets - perhaps, like Lothian, by phasing this in.
Borders has one of the smaller educational "portfolios" in Scotland, and so was able, in February of this year to hold a meeting of most of the boards' chairmen, with senior representatives of the region's education committee. The chairpersons of each board were there to represent and put forward the concerns and comments of their board members, so the School Boards Unit viewed this exercise as a preliminary survey of how things are going with each school board. Further meetings are planned to include the newly elected board representatives from the spring elections, which brings the number of school boards in the region to 62. When the council had five new councillors elected in the May elections, the unit briefed the new councillors on the region's boards and provided them with an information pack.

Borders is one of several regions that has immediately recognised and addressed the importance of proper training for the Clerks of school boards, and it also ran the training course for Headteachers before the boards were elected. In this area, the unit has organised courses for Deputy Headteachers and newly appointed Headteachers, and carried out a survey among the region's Headteachers. Borders was one of the few regions that did not take up the SED on its offer to finance the training of "Tutor Trainers", at specially run courses, and is presently undertaking the training programme on its own. It is, however, running the SED training modules for school board members, and actively promoting participation in these. This arrangement keeps travel and general inconvenience to a minimum.

In the run-up to the establishment of school boards in the autumn of 1989, the School Boards Unit adopted the "Roadshow" approach in the launch of the boards, and members of the unit have visited schools and attended school board meetings throughout the region. Borders has made extensive use of its local radio station to publicise the boards and to maximise parental involvement in the board elections. A booklet is presently being prepared to supplement the school board manual, and to include Borders-specific information. This is in addition to the folder of information initially distributed. The unit issues a newsletter to the boards in the region, and has a pool of literature which would be too expensive to distribute to each school individually, which the boards may borrow from. Borders has opted to retain the handling of school board finances within the region's finance department, but provides the boards with accounting guidelines and advice, and the boards have the spending responsibility. The boards are welcome to use the facilities of the department of Education, and this cuts down the administrative costs.
Central region also set up a Schools Boards Unit to provide "centralised information and support" for the region's boards. Before the establishment of the region's 111 boards, the unit chose not to adopt the "Roadshow" approach, but willingly provided speakers for meetings, when parents requested a representative of the Director of Education. Members of the unit already regularly attend school board meetings.

With regard to publications, Central has a newsletter which it sends out to its boards. This acts as an advice document, and the unit aims to answer the boards' general queries and concerns through the newsletter, which also explains any new policies that the education committee plans to introduce. Individual queries are handled through correspondence with each board.

The unit organises and runs the SED training modules, and has a pool of 29 Tutors, from the SED Training scheme, and local training. The unit ran the Headteachers' training course and in response to the initial experiences of the regions' boards, is planning to run a Clerks training course. Central has already run a training course for its boards' treasurers. The unit gives the boards guidelines on how to allocate its spending budget.
Dumfries and Galloway

Director: Bill Fordyce
Schools: 9 Nursery
118 primary
16 Secondary
1 Special
2 Colleges
Boards: 95

Dumfries and Galloway had the advantage of hosting the pilot scheme of school boards in Scotland, and thus has the added experience of the pilot boards to work upon. The region’s School Boards Unit now supports and provides information to 95 boards. The launch of the region-wide school board initiative was mainly through the "Roadshow" approach, when representatives of the Director of Education (if not the man himself) would visit public meetings at schools, hosted by local PTA’s or Headteachers. There were also several promotional features on local radio. The possibility of board chairpersons meeting education department officials is presently under consideration. The majority of board meetings are attended by a representative of the Director of Education, and the unit provided newly elected councillors with an information pack on school boards in May.

The unit has commissioned a formal survey to identify the training needs of the school boards, which will form the basis of future training programmes. Presently, the 16 SED training modules are on offer at several venues on different dates, and some 250 board members have participated to date. Tutors trained under the SED training scheme run these courses. The Headteachers course ran early in the programme, and the unit intends running a course for school board clerks in the autumn of 1990.

In literature, the unit operates a "library" service to boards, offering publications on PTA formation and support, home/school links material and general educational issue. The unit issued loose-leaf binders to board members entitled "Policies and Practices - Guidelines for School Board members", with inserts on aspects of the prevailing educational policy of the region. Rather than a formal or regular newsletter, the unit issues ad hoc reports to the school boards whenever an issue arises that is not covered by the existing material. With two years' experience of boards to draw upon, the unit feels that it is a worthwhile and timely exercise to make a video on the regions’ boards, one of only two boards who have yet taken this initiative.

The unit does not oversee the accounts of the separate boards, but gives each board its allocated sum in one installment at the start of the academic year. The boards then operate their own cheque accounts, but render their accounts to the unit at the end of the year - for information purposes.
FIFE

Director: Magnus More
Schools: 93 Nursery/Classes
        145 Primary
        19 Secondary
        31 Special/Units
        4 Colleges
Boards: 140

Fife Regional Council regularly produces and distributes a Regional Newsletter to the homes of the region, and featured a full page article on school boards in the early summer of 1989, as part of the region's school boards launch. The Education Directorate and School Boards Unit had already, in the Headteachers' training course, encouraged the region's Headteachers to develop their own school's board launch, and readily supplied senior education officials to speak at any meetings convened by Headteachers or PTA's.

Like Borders, Fife has held a meeting of the chairmen of its school boards with the chairmen of the Education Committee and Headteachers.

Officials attend school board meetings, on request, as representatives of the Director of Education. The newly elected councillors to the Regional Council were briefed on the role of school boards.

Each school board member has been issued with an information folder and loose-leaf inserts. In training, Fife took up the SED offer to train Tutor Trainers, and is presently providing tutors for the SED modules it is running. It ran the Headteachers' training course before the boards were set up.

Fife has adopted the approach, at least in the first few years of operation of school boards, whereby the Finance Department of the Regional Council deals with all accounting matters. The boards receive no cash at all, but simply place their orders with the Director of Education (for training course fees, stationery etc) and he oversees all administration.
GRAMPIAN

Director : James Michie
Schools : 55 Nursery/Units
          274 Primary
          38 Secondary
          15 Special
          5 Colleges
Boards : 240

Grampian has 240 School boards to date, and has set up a School Boards Unit within the Education Department to offer support and information to the new boards. The unit stresses that it is particularly keen to provide a quick response to all enquiries, whether by telephone or by post. It adopted a Roadshow approach to its public launch, travelling throughout the region to promote the initiative. Members of the unit attend school board meetings regularly, on request, as representatives of the Director of Education. The unit provided information on the regions' school boards to the newly elected councillors in May 1990.

The unit has paid particular attention to the needs of Grampian's boards for written information. To this end it has produced both a folder with loose-leaf inserts relating to running a school board, and educational policies that members may wish to be aware of. In the boards' early days, a newsletter entitled "On the Board" was produced by the unit and distributed to the boards, and an update to this is presently under consideration. In addition, four booklets are being published specifically for Grampian's school boards covering;

a) An A-Z of education in Grampian
b) The Primary Curriculum
c) The Secondary Curriculum
d) A Secondary Curriculum Index for school boards

The unit is also running the SED training modules for its school board members, and trained Tutors under the SED Tutor Training scheme for this purpose. It ran the course for Headteachers, a course for the training of Clerks, and is planning to run a course for the training of Treasurers. This latter initiative reflects the strategy that this unit has adopted for the boards' finances. Each board is given its full allocation of money in one lump sum at the start of the year, deposited into the boards' bank accounts. While guidelines on how this allocation might best be spent were issued in the first year, the unit now feels that its Treasurers' course should cover this ground more comprehensively.
HIGHLAND

Director : Charles Edward Stewart
Schools  : 204 Primary
         : 27 Secondary
         : 4 Special
         : 2 Colleges
Boards   : 163

Highland region boasts the most widely dispersed school population of Scotland's regions, and its one-man (plus admin) unit has 163 school boards to support. Like several other regions, meetings are planned to take place between chairpersons of the boards and senior members of the Education Committee, but owing to the "Geography" of the region, these are being held at a local level, at seven different venues. The Assistant Director of Education, who heads the unit, attends as many school board meetings as is feasible. In May, the Director of Education personally briefed the new Regional Councillors on the school boards legislation and how Highland region is implementing it.

In publications, folders with inserts have been distributed to board members, and circulars are issued on any topic of educational interest that the unit considers important for the board to be aware of. The production of a video is presently under consideration, as is the production of a booklet of financial guidelines for boards. The head of the unit presently operates what amounts to a personal/informal library, consisting mainly of his own personal literature which board members frequently borrow. He may formalise the system sometime in the future.

The unit offers the SED training modules and has several Tutor trainers distributed throughout the region. A Headteachers' course has been run, and a Clerks course is planned. The unit allocates each school board its entire budget, with advisory guidelines on how it might be spent. Each board has its own bank account, and conducts all its financial transactions independently of the Council. The unit does return a very small percentage of each board's funding for financing regional initiatives, like the Chairmen Meetings.
LOTHIAN

Director: David Semple
Schools: 139 Nursery/Classes
        243 Primary
        51 Secondary
        19 Special
        5 Colleges
Boards: 247

Lothian has 247 school boards throughout the region, which is dominated by the capital, Edinburgh. The Region set up a School Boards Unit within the Education Department, and like Central region, adopted an "on request" service of guest speakers from the unit to attend meetings before the boards were set up, rather than the Roadshow or Public Meeting approach that other regions adopted. Unusually, due to the large number of boards in the region, education officers took a conscious decision NOT to attend school board meetings, and will only attend them when there is a serious issue under debate (opting-out, major building projects). To counter this, the unit answers all queries from boards that arise from meetings and feels that this arrangement is presently operating well.

The unit organised a series of meetings between chairpersons of school boards and the chairmen of the Education Committee. There were three in all - one Secondary and two Primary meetings. When the new Councils were elected in May, the unit notified any board Clerks with new Councillors, and briefed the new councillors on their right of attendance at board meetings.

The unit produces a newsletter called "Springboard" for the region's school boards, covering issues like Education Committee decisions, school board elections, Further and Community Education developments and local events. The unit is in the process of preparing a finance manual for the school boards, and is planning to provide a literature and resource library at the unit offices.

The unit offers a very comprehensive package of the SED training modules, each available at various venues throughout the region, and on several dates. The Headteachers' course also ran, and Training Tutors were trained through the SED scheme.

In the first year of school board operation, the boards were issued with no cash at all, and all their financial transactions were carried out by the unit through the Council's finance department. A change in policy means that the boards will now be allocated their travelling and general administration funding, but the unit shall continue to oversee spending on training. This change came about as the boards became more confident and competent, and it is simply practical to retain the entire running of the training courses, including their funding, within the unit.
ORKNEY

Director : Reg Henderson
Schools : 17 Primary
         3 Nursery and Primary
         1 Special
         1 Secondary
         1 Secondary and Further Education
         4 Junior Secondaries
         1 College
Boards : 22 plus 1 Interim Board

Although with one of the smallest school "portfolios" in Scotland, and the least number of boards, the Orkney region's Education Committee still opted to set up a special School Board Unit to support the islands' 23 boards. The unit had a public launch before the boards were first established in the autumn of 1989. Members of the unit regularly attend the school board meetings, and a formal survey of the board members' views is being considered. The unit provided the new members of the Council with a comprehensive information pack, introducing them to the school boards legislation and the islands' boards. The boards are regularly issued with an information/advice newsletter, which often features articles on home/school liaison.

The unit is providing the boards with the SED training modules - on demand - and through the SED scheme, has Tutor Trainers to run the courses. The course for Headteachers ran early in the school board programme, and the unit also ran a special training course for the board Clerks.

The unit oversees most of the boards' administration spending, and the Council's financial department handles each board's account. 25 is allocated to each board for use as petty cash.
Like Orkney, Shetland has a small school portfolio, with 29 school boards distributed throughout the islands. To launch the school board programme, the EIS instigated a series of public meetings. The special school boards support unit only came into being one month after the initial round of elections. The authority’s adviser to school boards regularly attends board meetings, and does not yet feel the need to conduct a more formal survey of board members’ opinions, as they usually hear any worries or complaints first hand at these meetings.

The unit issues and distributes any important policy documents, and plans to produce a newsletter on an ad hoc basis. The newsletter will be open invitation for board members, or parents, to reply directly to the unit, and is proving successful to date. A booklet for Shetland’s school board members is already underway.

In training provision, the unit will offer the SED training modules, from November 1990, although chose not to have Tutors for these courses trained through the SED scheme, but by the Northern College of Education in Aberdeen. The Headteachers course ran at the start of the school boards programme. As yet there is no perceived demand for a Clerk’s course, as the unit keeps in constant touch with the Clerks and addresses any queries individually. The guidelines which are issued to Clerks are very specific. The unit is monitoring this area though, and should the need for a special course arise, it will be organised.

The unit decided not to issue each board with individual administration cheques, and in these early stages of running boards, are acting as the boards’ bankers. All spending by the boards is carried out through the unit, and the unit issues each board with a quarterly budget statement of its "account". Again, this method is being monitored, to see if it is the best budgeting system to use in Shetland.
STRATHCLYDE

Director : Frank Pignatelli
Schools : 274 nursery
         902 Primary
         185 Secondary
         145 Special
         21 Colleges
Boards : 1100

There are over 1000 school boards in Strathclyde, so running these
is an altogether different matter to running less than 30 in
Shetland. However, some of Strathclyde's school boards are in the
islands of Argyle, and share the characteristics and problems of
Shetland, while others are in the rural farmlands of Ayrshire and
Lanarkshire, sharing the experiences of school boards in the
Borders. As the largest Education Authority in Europe, not only
does Strathclyde administer for the schools in Scotland's largest
city, Glasgow, but it tends to the educational needs of nearly half
the population of Scotland. The authority has its central
education headquarters in Glasgow, and divisional headquarters in
major towns throughout the region. School board units have been
set up in these offices, with a central co-ordinating unit in
Glasgow.

Public Meetings were held throughout the region to introduce
school boards, and members of the units attended these meetings as
representatives of the Director of Education. Members continue to
attend school board meetings on request. Meetings have been held of
board chairpersons at a divisional level with senior members
of the Education Committee.

The units notified the Clerks of their division boards if a new
Councillor was elected to their area in May, and these new
Councillors were briefed on the school boards in their area. The
units issue information sheets to boards which may be included in
school boards' own newsletters. The central unit has published a
booklet entitled "WELCOME ABOARD", introducing the board members to
both the region's education policies and to some of the
practicalities of the school board legislation.

The region has access to three of Scotland's Colleges of
Education - St. Andrew's, Craigie and Jordanhill, and both the
school boards and their support units may avail of the resources at
these colleges. The SED training modules are offered by the region
and are run by SED trained Tutors and a supplement of Region-
trained Tutors. The Headteachers' course was run successfully, but
there are no plans as yet to run a course for training Clerks.

The boards receive petty cash for the month-to-month running of
their affairs, and are advised on the monies available for
Training, Clerk's Fees and travel expenses, although the financial
transactions for these are carried out through the Region's Finance
Department.
TAYSIDE

Director : Alexander B. Watson
Schools  : 17 Nursery
          190 Primary
          32 Secondary
          7 Special
          3 Colleges
Boards   : 163

Tayside region launched its school boards with a series of public meetings, and now has 158 boards. To provide advice and support to these boards, Tayside set up one central Support Unit and three divisional units. Each of the divisional units have since held successful "Open Meetings" of the board chairpersons in their division, with senior members of the Education Committee.

Rather than conduct a formal survey among board members at this early stage, the units are picking up on issues, problems and comments reported in the minutes of the board meetings. The minutes are sent to the support units for information and circulated to the Education Directorate and the Directors of Law and Administration.

When the new Regional Councillors were elected in May, the unit informed any new Councillors of the boards in their area, and also informed all the Clerks of the boards who their elected representative on the Regional Council is. The unit is presently planning a publicity campaign for new electoral rolls in August.

The units issued SED material to the boards when they were first established, and have since added a Clerks manual to this. In training, as a result of the SED scheme, the units offer the SED training modules, and have Tutor Trainers to run these. Tayside presently gives each school board petty cash from its annual allocation, but any other expenditure is carried out within the education account at the regional department of finance, a system which is reported to be working well to date.
WESTERN ISLES

Director: Neil Galbraith
Schools: 41 Primary
         9+3+2 Secondary
         1 Special
         1 College
Boards: 48

The Western Isles, like Shetland and Highland, has a relatively small number of schools, with 48 school boards. The region decided on the Roadshow approach in its launch of the school boards, which was a practical solution to the problem of reaching quite a small number of people over a large area. A special Support Unit has been established at regional headquarters to offer advice and information to the region's boards, and members of the unit regularly attend school board meetings. There has not been the need for a formal survey, or of a formal meeting of board chairpersons and the chairmen of the Education Committee as yet, because the unit feels, that by attending about one third of the region's board meetings, it is successfully "keeping its finger on the pulse" of the islands' boards.

The unit is in the process of making a video for future distribution to the islands' school boards, and a booklet is being planned to give written advice and Region-specific information to the boards. The unit also distributed a "sample newsletter" to all boards, to encourage them to start up their own board newsletter, as part of their role in home/school liaison.

In training, although the SED has trained Tutors to run the SED training modules, no training courses are planned to take place yet. The unit is providing training on an "on demand" basis, and does not feel that there is sufficient demand yet to run the courses. The Headteachers course ran prior to the establishment of the boards, and there has also been a special training course for Clerks.

The unit gives the boards their entire financial allocation in cash, and the boards open their own bank accounts with this funding. The money is delivered in three installments, and the only restriction on this method of self-accounting is that boards should not "go into the red". The boards report to the unit on how and why they spend their allocation.