

The Education Network

NEWS RELEASE

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A timely warning for ministers and parents

The Education Network (TEN) has welcomed the new report on secondary school admissions by the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee.

Martin Rogers, TEN Co-ordinator, said: "This is a timely warning for ministers and parents alike. The Committee highlights the problems facing parents with the complexity of current arrangements. It also demolishes the DfES's distinction between testing for ability and testing for aptitude, and recommends withdrawal of specialist schools' power to admit pupils on the basis of testing by aptitude.

"However, both the complexity of arrangements facing parents and the prevalence of partial selection by aptitude would be dramatically increased as a direct result of proposals in last week's five-year strategy to expand the number of Academies and of Foundation Schools, which control their own admissions arrangements. Parents could find that their 'choice' lies between a range of schools each having subtly different admission arrangements, each affecting their prospects differently. Predictability of outcome, which the Committee points out that parents value "very highly", would diminish greatly.

"The majority of the specialist schools currently operating partial selection by aptitude do so as a result of being their own admission authorities. Therefore, a major expansion of the category would lead inexorably to a marked increase in such selection. Most of the Committee's recommendations should be accepted with gratitude!"

ENDS

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Notes to Editors

1. The Education Network (TEN) is an independent policy, research and information organisation set up to develop, promote and disseminate the role and good practice of local authorities in raising educational aspiration and achievement. Around 90 per cent of local education authorities in England and Wales subscribe to TEN.