



Bathgate Academy Parent Council Meeting Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 18 March 2015

Present: G Abbot, I Meek, D Nelson, Y Shaw, Cllr J McGinty, K Smillie, J Harkins, Cllr H Cartmill, D MacDonald, J Baird, M Primrose, E Stewart

1. **Apologies:** Cllr W Boyle, L Bell

2. **Departmental Presentation** – F Scott – PTC English & Modern Languages

F Scott delivered an informative presentation to Parent Council giving an overview of the English and Modern Language departments.

An insight to all areas of the curriculum for both Broad General Education and Senior Phase explained. In English S1-S3 pupils are encouraged to study poetry, prose and media texts. Personal reading programmes are encouraged with the school library offering access to a variety of literature. Individual and class projects are undertaken with pupil presentations carried out on a regular basis. Pupils in S1-S3 will work to enhance listening and talking skills as they progress to Senior Phase.

S5/S5/S6 pupils will study for a range of qualifications from National 3 through to Advanced Higher. Pupils will experience texts in all genres of writing including media approaches. Pupils at this stage are offered the opportunity to develop more in depth individual writing techniques

In Modern Languages all pupils in S1-S3 study French and in S2 taster lessons in German and Spanish are offered. From S3 pupils are offered the opportunity to study a second language. From S4-S6 pupils can opt to study any of these 3 languages at certificated level.

The use of technology such as smartboards, netbooks and mobile phones are regularly used in class to enhance learning. Staff have undertaken relative training to ensure smartboards are used to their best capacity.

English and Modern Languages strive to maintain strong interdisciplinary links with other faculties throughout the school and undertake a variety of activities to this regard.

Both department areas aim to adopt approaches that encourage independent and confident learners challenging breadth and depth.

The wider curriculum is recognised by way of cultural visits including regular theatre workshops and attending theatre productions.

Bathgate Academy holds strong international links with our twin town in France. Pupils from France are visiting 26th and 27th March and will meet with staff and pupils from Bathgate Academy. Group were also informed of the staff/pupil visit to Beijing in 2014

It was explained to Parent Council that strong links are maintained with our cluster primary schools to ensure a smooth and systematic approach to the pupil transition process. A literacy jotter will be utilised in P7 and brought with them for use in S1 offering both pupil and staff the opportunity to review progression in writing techniques.

3. **Minutes of Meeting held Wednesday 21st Jan 2015**

G Abbot offered an update on planning for forthcoming Bathgate Academy 50th anniversary celebrations. It was advised to Group that there are currently 5 working groups and an outline of the aims of each group explained.

Activities will include a retro event whereby pupils will undertake a 1960's themed curriculum and adopt a 1960's style uniform. A community day is being arranged whereby ex staff and pupils will be welcomed to attend. A number of media events are scheduled with pupils arranging a Bathgate Academy Anniversary Facebook page. A commemorative booklet is to be published with any relevant material for content welcomed.

Plans for a commemorative school tie for S6 pupils is also under consideration.

Ongoing planning arrangements will be briefed to Parent Council when available.

4. Head Boy – Head Girl Update – J Mein, C Renton

In the absence of both Jordan and Claire, G Abbot offered an update on their behalf.

It was advised that all fundraising activities in respect to Prom, Yearbook and Leavers Hoodies are well under way.

Recent minor issues with regards to Prefect duties have been recognised and addressed accordingly. The role of Prefects within Bathgate Academy has been enforced to the pupils involved to ensure expectations are met.

It was reported that the change to pupil lunch break times has had no significant impact with pupils appearing to be in favour of change.

Pupils have drawn attention to the content of the PSE curriculum in S5 and S6 and have indicated that as a way forward slight amendments could be made to content of course based on pupil opinions. G Abbot confirms that this point to be relayed to the appropriate members of staff for consideration.

5. Head Teacher Update – G Abbot

As a result of recent staff consultations the decision has been made to amend the new academic session to Wednesday 6th May.

As intimated at Parent Council meeting January 2015, in order to adhere to new study leave guidelines there is a requirement to ensure any pupil not entitled to study leave is being housed appropriately during the exam diet. After extensive consideration and in recognition of the experiences of neighbouring schools last year it was agreed that an early introduction of the new timetable was the most viable option.

In doing so, one of the benefits would be that S3 pupils moving on to S4 will have the opportunity to commence National courses earlier. Whilst the new timetable will be introduced during the SQA exam diet it was reiterated that any pupil on study leave and seeking relative guidance will be given the support required.

G Abbot offered Parent Council an update on current staffing levels within Bathgate Academy.

At present there are 3 PTC positions being advertised for English, Science /CDT and Maths/Computing/Business Education. An outcome of forthcoming interview process will be briefed to Parent Council accordingly.

A request for Probationer Teachers is to be made to the Authority with an update on confirmed allocation to be offered to Group when available.

It was explained to Parent Council that a number of staff absences, for varying reasons, has meant repercussions in respect to staff availability.

Discussions ensued as to said staff shortages within Bathgate Academy and the impact this has had on staff and pupils alike.

Concerns were raised as to continuity and stability for pupils especially in the lead up to the SQA exam period with it being asked what, if any, additional resources are in place to aid pupils.

It was also questioned if there was a facility whereby parents could be given an up to date indication of staffing issues.

It is recognised that said staffing issues are an ongoing concern and given continued address. It was enforced to Parent Council that classes are being covered in house as best as available resources allow.

It was further explained that the shortage of available staff on Teaching Supply Lists and also the diminished recruitment not only within West Lothian Council but also nationwide is having a serious impact on teaching availability.

6. AOB

M Laurie advised that Mrs White expressed her gratitude for flowers recently received on behalf of Bathgate Academy and Parent Council.

Parent Council meeting dates for next session have been arranged and are as follows:

Wed 16th Sept 2015

Wed 18th Nov 2015

Wed 20th Jan 2016

Wed 16th March 2016

Wed 11th May 2016

AOB Continued.

In respect to recent discussions relating to a traffic light sequencing errors between Boghall Drive and Edinburgh Road Group were informed that Cllr Cartmill had liaised with West Lothian Council Roads Department who in turn confirmed that an intermittent fault was traced and rectified. Discussions ensued as to the occasional backlog of traffic in said area to which Cllr Cartmill confirmed that he will further discuss matter with the Roads Department to ensure issue has been fully resolved.

I Meek distributed draft School Session dates for 2016/17 to Parent Council for information. After Group consideration of proposed dates I Meek was asked to take forward the following considerations to the Authority:

6 weeks break at summer and 1 week in February

2 weeks break in October

Further briefings on forthcoming Session Dates will follow as and when available.

Group highlighted the condition of pupil transportation as a cause for concern. It was intimated that this issue has previously been raised at a recent Parent Forum Meeting and is being addressed accordingly.

7. Date of next Meeting – Wednesday 13th May 2015