

Minutes for Parent Council meeting: Wed 21st March 2018

Date and time: 21/03/18 6:00 PM (Edinburgh) to: 21/03/18 8:00 PM (Edinburgh)

Present: Grant Abbot (HT), Emma Douglas (BA – Minutes), Derek Cornwall (Chair), Richmond Davies, Michelle Primrose, Kirsty Roger, Hazel Young, Angela Grant, Cllr Harry Cartmill

CC: amanda.heatherill@westlothian.org.uk

Location: Bathgate Academy, Conference room

Projects/Tags: Parent Council

Access meeting at: <https://app.meetingking.com/meetings/241252>

Topics

1 Apologies

Note

Gillian Morgan and Jacqueline Harkins

2 Matter Arising

Note

Minutes to be initially sent to Derek, who will review and make any alterations, copy as a pdf, and distribute to parent council members and send a copy back to the school for entering onto the web site. Any other changes highlighted thereafter can be corrected at next meeting under matters arising.

Note

Derek asked for digital leaders to help with a Parent Involvement Matters video to be available for the September 2018 parent council meeting to give the new S1 parents more information and increase the awareness about the importance of parents being engaged with their child's education and school.

3 Chair's feedback session

Note

Refer to Chair's feedback paper for detailed information,

In summary: School's Contact Chair Web page - no parents made contact with Derek since last meeting. Article in Spring newsletter to let parents know about the Parent Council activities and link to contact the chair.

Benchmarking - Derek has been out to various Parent Councils to get ideas from various different schools. All focusing on parent involvement and interaction with the school.

Attended a Parent Council Essentials workshop run by the Scottish Parent Teaching Council (now Connect) held at Balbardie PS, Derek explained how the parent council approach at the Academy is different from primary schools, where the focus is on working with the school to address key themes, rather than predominantly fundraising. Derek and all Chairs from feeder schools are going to meet up 3 times a year to benchmark and share ideas.

Safety online awareness night, only a handful of parents attended which was disappointing.

Local parent forum at Armadale, main topic was instrumental music and strategies for winter weather, most people were happy with the way the school closure etc. was relayed. Grant asked for feedback on how parents felt about the way the school handled the communication regarding the school closure. Parents felt the notification was a bit late but realise this was a Council decision not a school decision.

Note

Instrumental music was a large part of the discussion at the parent forum. Originally was going to be a cut across all music groups however after a petition the Council officers were asked to look at different ideas. A huge debate at the parent forum about the proposal to cut strings and percussion. Parents have stated through the recent budget consultation process and

again at the forum that rather than lose the services consideration could be given for parents to fund this service and have advised Cllr Cartmill that this should be considered as a funding option. Councillor Harry Cartmill explained that no Councillor wants to make cuts but these cuts need to be made. The Council have £75 million cut to be made over the next 5 years. A Council rule if you make a decision then you can't relook at it again for 6 months unless there is a material change, Harry feels parents happy to make a contribution would be a material change therefore the ruling group has asked officers to look at how charging would work and come back with at least skeletal proposals so they can then have a consultation on how they can save the percussion and strings provision in advance of the executive meeting 17 April. Parents raised the point that it should be means tested so it doesn't end up elitist; Grant admitted this was his concern. If means tested parents concerned this would come out of other school budgets.

Councillor Harry Cartmill informed that Falkirk Council charge for instrumental music currently and that he had tried to make contact to request further details from them, but had no reply as yet.

562 children are going to be affected if the strings and percussion are completely cut within West Lothian schools.

4 Discussion Topic - PC Web Page

• **Note**

Derek asked PC members to email him with any suggestions for changes to the PC website. Suggested putting links in this section even if the information is given in another parts of the school's website to increase visibility. Meantime web site remaining as is to allow a stable platform for Parent Council Logo competition data to remain intact.

5 Head Teacher Update

• **Note**

Exam leave about to start 27th April. Study support during the Easter holidays and study hall Mon-Thurs night, averaging 17 children per night which generally increases the closer they get to the exams.

5.a Progress Report Senior Phase Consultation/Views

Grant provided an overview of early intervention reporting system being considered by the school. Focus would be on expected attainment following a risk assessment each year and be presented to allow parents to review their child's progress via Didbook portal on a traffic light indicator of red, amber and green. The system would also show a child's attainment tracking so that intervention could be undertaken with recommendations from the school. Parents thought this was a much improved reporting system and were keen to be involved in its further development particularly with senior phase parents and hopefully the system will be rolled out across all S1 TO S6 over the 2018/19 school year. Grant agreed to review Senior merit recognition events within the school.

6 AOCB

6.a Newlands Dress Down Day 1/6

• **Note**

PC wondered what the school do to recognise Newlands Day. Grant and the School Captains attend the Oraton, number of pupils chosen to be part of the pageant. Michelle explained the Procession committee have to fundraise tirelessly so wondered if the school could have a dress down day with the money going towards the Procession committee. Grant explained that as a school they reduced the amount of dress down days to reduce the costs to parents. PC think it's a good idea for the school to engage with the community and donations are purely voluntary and if all schools in Bathgate did this it could help fundraise for a community event. Grant happy to discuss with other head teachers and asked that the Newland's committee write to the school in the first instance. Derek also offered to make contact with Bathgate School parent council chairs to advise of the proposal being made.

6.b Parent Council, pupil logo design competition

• **Note**

Could get pupils engaged which will then lead to increased parental involvement and awareness of parent council activity. Opening the competition after Easter and keep it open until middle of June, logo can be a drawing or computer design. Winner will receive £100 McArthur Glen voucher and an award certificate from a local graphics company who will be on the judging panel. Grant said the competition can be advertised on the webpage and over twitter. Entries can be handed in to the office. Flyer or poster to be placed around the school which cuts down on the amount of information for the pupils to read, Grant and Hazel suggested using very straight forward language and cutting down the amount of information for the pupils to give to read. PC agreed this is a good idea and Derek to provide draft competition poster

6.c Chair's message

Note

Derek wished that a message be placed on school's web site which read:

"We recognise that not all parents need to be on the parent council, but every parent needs to feel engaged with their child's education and school."

Grant agreed to place on parent council section of school's web site.

7 Future Possible Items

Note

Pupil Equity Fund and School Improvement plan to be added to the listing.

Previous Listings: Pupil Parliament, Supporting your child....., Teacher updates on faculty, Course Choices explained, Virtual Campus, Budget Implications.

PC will review their key themes set for this year and set dates for future parent council meetings at next PC meeting in May

The next local Parent Forum group is being held at Bathgate Academy on 23rd April 7 – 9 pm

8 Date of next meeting

Note

16th May 2018 6pm, Conference Room is the next Bathgate Academy Parent Council meeting

O

Open tasks from previous meeting(s)

Task

Ideas for items to be included. Altered etc on the Parent Council section of the website to be emailed to Derek due 21/03/18

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grant abbot send you this message via MeetingKing. [Unsubscribe](#).



Bathgate Academy Parent Council

Chair's Feedback

March 2018

1. **Web Page Parent Responses – Nil**
2. **Benchmarking with other Parent Council's – Attended Deans Community High School, Linlithgow and Armadale Academies Parent Councils.** Made most welcome at each of the venues and opportunity to exchange ideas and share best practices. What is apparent is that there is not one template that fits all and that schools PC operate better and are set up to suit their own individual needs and requirements. Pupil engagement at PC is another area where this differs from school to school as does the low number of parents attending PC meetings but all agreed that Parent Involvement was more of a focus for PC rather than PC attendance.

Chair wishes to send a message out as this ethos was also universally accepted at the National Parent Forum of Scotland event recently.

3. **Parent Council Essentials Workshop – Hosted by SPTC and held at Balbardie Primary School.**
 - This was a very successful evening and covered the roles and responsibilities of Parent Councils, how they work and what they can get involved in. The evening concluded with busting a few myths surrounding parental involvement.
 - Every feeder school for Bathgate Academy was represented
 - I was able to advise delegates on the key theme approach taken by Bathgate Academy Parent Council compared to the primary school approach of mainly fundraising and how much the head teacher could utilise.
 - Outcome of meeting is that the Chairs of all BA feeder schools are arranging three session per year to benchmark ideas going forward
4. **Workshop Session – Stay safe online** only attended by a handful of parents which was disappointing as the presentation by the Police and Barnardo's was very interesting along with sessions being carried out by teachers with pupils.
5. **National Forum of Scotland, Edinburgh, Parent Involvement: One Year On**

Attended by over 90 delegates and exhibitors across Scotland with keynote speeches from Deputy First Minister John Sweeney and Marinieves Alba a Children's Aid School Director, New York City. This was followed by a variety of workshops to attend.

Workshops attended were the Children's aid and Parents Networking Scotland which were very good in sharing ideas and knowledge across the varying groups and school sizes with some as little as 43 pupils in smaller communities.

Crèche facilities were available up to 14 year olds with arts and crafts and a tour of the stratosphere was provided.

6. Local Parent Forum, Armadale Academy 14th March

Being my first attendance at this event, only around 25 parents turned up and items on the agenda were Instrumental Music, Strategy for winter weather and Local Government Benchmarking Tool.

Instrumental Music - Discussion for nearly 90 minutes was held on Instrumental Music and the proposal to remove Strings and Percussion, leaving only Brass, woodwind and Piping as budget reductions from £994k to £500k are being enforced.

There was a petition handed to the Council with over 2600 signatures and Council Executive deferred the matter to see what instrumental music services could be provided with the reduced budget figure of £500k.

However at the Education Services scrutiny Panel the officer's proposal above did not take account of any other income stream from charging Parents across the Board in attempts to retain level of services. Council Executive to meet again on 17/4 so further opportunity to influence Councillors to scope out possible charging of services and consult all stakeholders before making drastic removal decisions to certain types of Instrumental Music provision.

As it's a five year budget see no reason why this decision cannot be deferred until proper consultation and different income streams can be appraised as this was not included in the paper submitted to Scrutiny Panel. Comments have been made not being able to charge for services as it's a labour manifesto however they have implemented a charge £25 for Bulky uplifts which was free previously so contradicts this statement.

Strategy for Winter Weather – In the main parents that attended were happy with the early notification processes applied during the recent school closures but more focus would be made utilising using social media, twitter accounts and the group call restriction of one parent notification.

Local Government Benchmarking Tool – Summary extract of West Lothian Council attainment figures compared with other Council areas and Regional Improvement Collaborative.

Derek Cornwall, Chair, Bathgate Academy Parent Council

21 March 2018