



Bathgate Academy Parent Council

Minutes of Meeting

Wed 13th November 2019

Attendees:

Grant Abbot (HT), Derek Cornwall (Chair), John Findlay, Susan Griffin, Zhanna Grtankorg, Jacqueline Harkins, Lubomir Hrtanek, Tracey Ironside, Delyth MacDonald, Mark McCallum, Helen Neary, Hazel Young

Topics

1. Apologies

Received from Tracey Bredski (T), Cllr Harry Cartmill, Richmond Davies, Leigh Maybury, Debbie McCulloch, Michelle Primrose, Karen Smillie

2. Minutes & Matters arising

Derek advised that Cllr Cartmill was very much appreciative of the email sent to him on behalf of the School and Parent Council during his recovery process.

Grant advised that the Polar Academy TV 4 part documentary had been well received since its airing and there is a possibility that the TV Company will do a follow up at a later date.

Grant has been in touch with local Councillors to arrange a suitable date to visit the school to provide an insight into the work being undertaken.

No other matters arising and minutes were approved.

3. Chair's Annual Report and Re-election

Derek presented his Annual Report to the Parent Council summarising the work undertaken over the last year 12 months and thanked everyone for their assistance and contributions which has helped to improve our children's educational experience.

The re-election of Derek as Chair of Parent Council for year 2019/20 was approved by members present.

4. House Captain's Update

Grant introduced Natalie and Ewan as the two House Captains that volunteered to attend. Derek stressed the importance of having the House Captain's update on the agenda as it was an opportunity for Parents to understand the work being carried out by pupils but also to establish if Parent Council involvement would assist pupils on activities.

Natalie and Ewan gave a comprehensive update on activities being carried out that gave pupils opportunities they need and arranged events within the school. The following subjects were covered:

House Assemblies, House Captain Speeches and election, Charity work via Poppy day, Dyslexia, Children in Need, P7's Transition Treasure Hunt, P7 Caley, Pupil Parliament, 6th Year Prom at Airth Castle, Prelims, School Music Group, Sport-a-thon that raised £5250 for SAMH & PE Dept, West Lothian Calendar Competition, Swimming Team retaining trophy.

Derek thanked Natalie and Ewan for their update and asked them to advise Grant of any items they wish to be added at future meetings as studying may prevent them from attending meetings going forward.

5. Head Teacher update

- a. Staffing & CDT update – Grant advised parent council members of the staffing issues within the school and the latest advertised posts and cover arrangements being made. With regards to CDT the school has had unprecedented staffing issues within this department as per letter sent out to parents/carers recently. The school is concentrating in providing a CDT service to senior level pupils and that Grant would keep Parents/Carers advised of CDT developments over the coming months. Grant also recognised that Parents/Carers have contributed to CDT activities and that if the subject was withdrawn then refunds would be provided, but all other options would be explored and exhausted first as the school wished to retain a CDT presence.

Grant also advised that Parents night time schedules for each year group could also be adjusted to lessen the impact of increasing 1st year attendances up from 61% to 65% last year and post minute 74% this year.

- b. Awards Ceremony update – Grant advised that the timing of these awards would be moved to September after the exam results have been established rather than awarding on Preliminary grades. Other schools in West Lothian have already adopted this approach as the awards are then based upon actual exam results which eliminate any possible deviance from Prelim to Actual grades.

6. Discussion Topics

- (a) **PC Communication with Parents/Carers** – Derek advised members that in light of the recent parent council communication survey that showed 65% of parents/carers use the school app, he had concerns that not all parents/carers are being targeted in any communication releases sent out by the Parent Council and to consider other

approaches that would fill the gap. This was an item of discussion at the School Inspection in January with the Chair of the Parent Council.

Emailing parents are free and this would cover all parents/carers but the list might not be up to date was an option as was sending out a group call but this costs approximately £80 and that other avenues could be adopted by placing notices in local businesses, leisure and community partnership centres.

Twitter is also used to celebrate the achievements of each department within the school and parents can follow specific departments or the whole school. There is also a link sent to the school app when twitter articles are posted so that parents using the school app only can also view twitter releases.

The use of a number of parent council members to carry out a one question survey to capture school app usage at an event when large numbers of parents are present within the school was another method of gleaning app usage information.

Derek to send out an email to Parent/Carers advising that future communications from the Parent Council will be posted on the preferred School App with the School Web site being also used for those not using social media or app devices.

- (b) **PC Web page refresh** - Derek asked that the Parent Council pages within the School's web site be refreshed this year and asked all parents to provide suggestions on how our web page could be improved. This was an opportunity for Parents to influence the shape and feel of the Parent Council web page and comments/suggestions will be taken at our January 2020 meeting as this allows time to update the web page before the school year ending in June. Question was raised whether the PC had a constitution and Derek advised that the parent council operates without one but this could be a matter for a future agenda item.

- 7. **Chair's Seasonal Gift** – Derek handed out a pen to those present which had the Bathgate Academy Parent Council logo printed on it and thanked everyone for their contributions at Parent Council meetings. A pen was also given to the House Captains, Grant and his management team and for Casey, the pupil that had designed the parent council logo.

8. AOCB

- (a) Derek advised that a Placing in Schools Appeal Committee were looking for Parents to sit on their Panel and Derek will release further information via the school app.
- (b) Derek is to attend a Parent Council Recruitment session within the Civic Centre on 5th December 2019 and future dates are available in 2020 for any other Parent wishing to attend. Derek will attach further information to the minutes.

9. Date of Next meeting

Wednesday 15th January 2020, at 6pm Conference Room



Bathgate Academy Parent Council

Chair's Annual Report 2018/19

It has again been a busy year for our Parent Council, working closely with the school, teachers and pupils and it has been a real privilege to be part of a process that improves our children's educational experience.

Working with the community, pupils and their families helps bring everyone together and makes everyone feel that they are contributing towards their child's wellbeing, a key theme adopted by the parent council over the 2018/19 school year. Each month our parent council released wellbeing articles via the school app to parents/carers highlighting support and advice on wellbeing issues.

Our school was inspected by HM Inspectors from Education Scotland in January 2019 and Parents/Carers played an integral role in meeting with the inspectorate, completing surveys and supporting the work of our school.

Bathgate Academy has been represented at the local parent forums run by West Lothian Council and this again is an opportunity to listen and learn about issues facing local communities from an educational perspective. Our Parent Council continues to send out articles from the National Parent Forum of Scotland via the school app that maybe of interest to parents/carers and the most recent was a Q&A session with deputy first minister John Swinney on any aspect of their child's education.

One of key themes last year was to highlight the work of the Parent Council and three roller banners were produced on Parent Council activities, Wellbeing and the school's online payment system, IpayImpact. These provide a firm foundation in promoting parent council activities and are generic by design so can be displayed within the school time and again.

We carried out a pupil led parent/carer communication survey to determine usage of the various communication methods to make sure that our communication approach is continually suited towards the needs of our Parent/Carers.

This year we will be refreshing the shape and feel of our Parent Council web page within the school's website to ensure that it portrays all aspects of our Parent Council work which in turn will hopefully increase our Parent Council profile.

I would like to thank the support provided from parents, teachers, pupils and the local community over the past 12 months which has helped improve our understanding of our children's educational requirements and identified areas of improvement which can only result in a better educational experience for our children. Without all of your help, this would not have been achievable.

Lastly I have thoroughly enjoyed the role of Chair of Bathgate Academy parent council and I am more than happy to continue as chair over the school term 2019/2020.

Appendix One

Parent Council Recruitment Training

From: Isbister, Stuart On Behalf Of Education Customer Services
Sent: 26 August 2019 10:02
To: Education All HTs
Subject: Parent Council Recruitment Training - 2019/2020 - [OFFICIAL]

DATA LABEL: OFFICIAL

Dear Headteacher,

We have set up the following dates for Parent Council Recruitment Training, all are 5.15pm to 6.15pm here at the Civic Centre;

Thursday 3rd October 2019
Thursday 5th December 2019
Thursday 19th March 2020
Thursday 7th May 2020

Can you please forward this to your Parent Council Representatives, and if they wish to book a space, please ask them to email us at EducationCustomerServices@westlothian.gov.uk stating their name and which school they represent.

Many thanks

Stuart Isbister
Senior Customer Service Officer
West Lothian Council - Education Services
West Lothian Civic Centre
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