



Bathgate Academy Parent Council

Minutes of Meeting

Wed 15th January 2020

Attendees:

Grant Abbot (HT), Tracey Bredski (T), Derek Cornwall (Chair), Richmond Davies, Morag Dickie, Christine Downie, John Findlay, Susan Griffin, Tracey Ironside, Cllr Charles Kennedy, Delyth MacDonald, Leigh Maybury, Helen Neary, Hazel Young

Topics

1. Apologies

Received from Jacqueline Harkins, Kirsty Roger, Cllr Harry Cartmill,

2. Minutes & Matters arising

No matters arising and minutes were approved.

3. Chair's Update

Derek advised that he did attend the Parent Council recruitment session on 5th December 2019, however this turned out to be a recruitment session for appointment of Head and Deputy Head Teachers. Derek sent email to Education Customer Services to advise that future sessions be made clearer on the email subject line and an agenda be attached as Derek had already attended this training a few months previously.

Derek informed all that he had been approached by Donna Brunton from Fast Forward via the School Parent Council Chair contact form that she wished to carry out a presentation to Parents/Carers on Gambling and Young People Advice across West Lothian area. Derek advised Donna that this would be best achieved at a future West Lothian Parent Forum meeting where parent council chairs can then disseminate to their respective parent council. Derek forwarded her email to Education Customer Services for consideration.

Derek advised that a parent council folder has now been put on the table at the school's front reception area where parents/carers can read past minutes of parent council meetings, look at reports about learning together and cost of the school day etc as well as view the current school improvement plan.

4. House Captain's Update

Grant introduced Chris as one of the House Captains that was able to attend our meeting. Chris stated that the new House Captain Team set up rather than appointment of two School Captains was much improved and allowed the group to better engage.

Chris advised that pupils had been involved in raising funds for Children in Need and over £500 had been raised recently. Pupils have also been involved in a YPI (Youth and Philanthropy Initiative) event which allows pupils to research charities and raise awareness where the chosen winning charity Memory Café was awarded £3k.

Four House Captains also attended an event at Deans Community High School where other House Captains from other schools in West Lothian were in attendance. This allowed for an exchange of ideas and share knowledge of activities at other schools. Derek advised that this was a great initiative and allowed for pupil benchmarking across schools.

Chris advised that Prom preparations were underway and thus far all going to plan. Pupils are also exploring a possibility of setting up a foodbank in Boghall and Blackburn areas but this is still being investigated and further details in due course.

Derek thanked Chris for his excellent update and rewarded Chris with a Parent Council logo inscribed pen for his report and enthusiasm for staying the rest of the meeting.

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. He has sent offers of appointment to 4 new teachers (1x Science, 2 x PE, 1 x Support Hub) which Grant hoped to be in place during February 2020. A question about use of any upcoming probationary teachers was asked and Grant explained the Teacher Induction process but this is down to individual teacher choice.

With regards to CDT the school has had unprecedented staffing issues within this department as per further 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 should there be any material change to the recent letter sent.

- b. **VSE and Snapshot Presentation** – Grant advised that a Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) exercise over 2 days was being carried out after the February holiday. This involved Head teachers and teachers from other schools to validate progress the school's has made in the Learning and Teaching Indicator 2 that was highlighted during the HMI inspection in February 2019. Grant will update further at our next meeting in March.

There is also a Curriculum Review being carried out and Derek will be involved as Chair of Parent Council in that process along with some parents. Grant to advise

Derek of a future date and time of this review so that Derek could send out invites to Parent Council members that wish to be involved.

- c. **Parents as Pupils Feedback** – Grant advised that some Parents had recently participated in a S1 timetable session at the school, working their way around the school learning S1 subjects just the same as pupils. This provided parents with an insight into their child’s school day and feedback from parents was positive. This initiative has attracted some media interest and from other schools and further Parents as Pupils days are planned for the remaining year groups.

Positive & Attainment sessions are also being incorporated into the forthcoming parent nights in order to maximise staffing resources rather than having separate learning sessions and parents can choose to attend via the parents evening booking portal.

- d. **Preliminaries** – Grant explained that Prelims have now started within the school and will cover the next three weeks. Nat 5 and SQA invigilators have been used to free up staffing resources and 4th year pupils have familiarised themselves with the set up within the Hall so they know what to expect come actual exams in May/June.

- 6. **Discussion Topics– PC Web page refresh** – Derek asked for any suggestions to improve the school’s parent council web pages and clearly homework had been done by parent council members as a number of suggestions were proposed which Derek took note and will implement/consider placing onto the web site before the school term ends in June.

This should ensure that communication channels via the parent council are not restricted to the school app but are also on the school’s web site as well. Derek thanked everyone for their contributions.

- 7. **2020 Parent Involvement “BACKUP” Poster** – Derek highlighted that 2020 needed to be the year that the parent council published a poster which was school neutral promoting parental involvement and how parent/carers can back up their child’s educational experience. Full Circle graphics had drafted 3 posters and parent council members selected a preferred poster to use and gave comments of some changes required. Derek will take this back to the graphic designers and Derek to send out a final draft to Grant and parent council members before sign off and publication. The intention is to publish the poster before the end of January 2020 and was seen as best practise.

West Lothian Council have already agreed to distribute the poster to all primary and secondary schools within West Lothian for attention of other Parent Council Chair’s to consider using which makes the poster inclusive rather than exclusive to Bathgate Academy

Derek is also seeking the assistance of the National Parent Forum of Scotland to further distribute across their membership in Scotland as well as advise John Swinney MSP, deputy first minister and chair of Education and Skills.

8. AOCB

(a) Grant advised that S1 pupils were being allowed out of the school at lunchtimes on a Wednesday till Christmas and every lunchtime thereafter.

(b) Grant also advised that the school has provided some funding to share with other schools to have a Community Police Officer at the school for 1 day a week and this is now in place and will contribute at PSE lessons etc to make best use of PC's time.

(c) Derek thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

9. Date of Next meeting

Wednesday 18th March 2020, at 6pm Conference Room