**Port Ellen Parent Council**

**Minutes of meeting – Discussion of Transformational Change**

**8th December 2021 6.00pm**

**In Attendance**

Tina Cunningham (Chair), Bonnie Wood (Secretary), Linda Kirkpatrick (Parent Member), Maureen MacDonald (Headteacher)

**Apologies**

Katie Bonar, Maria Heads, Larah McKay

**Discussion of Meeting – no formal agenda.**

Unfortunately, there were very low numbers in attendance at this meeting, all were in agreement that this consultation was very poor timing with a short turn around to get feedback with Christmas and COVID. The 4th of Feb is not far away and the whole process seems very rushed.

The Parent Council need to be voice of all the parents in the school – quite a pressure to get feedback back in time for the deadline.

Members at the meeting had reviewed the film made and agreed that it made a very clever selling point – ‘more teachers in classes’, however members felt for Port Ellen School the new proposal would not make any difference.

Discussed various scenarios for the potential Islay Cluster and the differences the model could have across the region particular in terms of pay. E.g. Single Head School – under 30 pupils, the Head has a teaching remit approx. 50/50 and their salary will reflect this on e.g. a Scale 1-2. However e.g. Large Secondary / Academy – salary scale 10. Under the new proposal the scenario could be that the Single HT head could become the Head of School and have no teaching time.

In the case of Port Ellen, Mrs MacDonald is Headteacher of two smallish schools, in the proposed new model Argyll and Bute are looking for existing head teachers to apply for Executive Headship role. Therefore if Mrs Macdonald was not the Executive she would need to decide between the two schools which she would want to be Head of School for, plus have a specialism. The proposal seeks to reappoint and restructure much with existing staff, and it was felt that you couldn’t suddenly have someone that is highly skilled in specialist areas and receive lower salaries – it just isn’t attractive or morale boosting. Whilst HTs have a conserved salary for 2 years it is then reduced – this is not included in presentation and again is a massive hit for morale.

The PC were concerned that this is not an attractive offer to staff who are already under immense pressure, particularly due to Covid over the last two years. A&BC state that it is difficult already to recruit Head’s and this proposal seems to create additional recruitment challenges which are not attractive to prospective or existing employees.

It was asked if this model is operating elsewhere? At this stage just thought it is Argyll and Bute. The Parent Council felt that A&BC should be learning from best practice and existing working examples, not creating something completely new in isolation which is how it feels.

It was noted that 25% of head teachers are over 55 and head teachers tend to retire at 60 therefore natural wastage due to retirement could be a way to reduce staff easily to keep within budgets.

Noted that one of the ‘selling points’ in the proposal is that School Roles are reducing. Port Ellen has a school role that is maintained and is not decreasing like the presentation suggests. PE has the biggest English Role on Islay and other schools are larger than they have been for some time e.g. Small Isles.

It was noted that there are positives in the proposal e.g. Standard for Headship – which Maureen already has.

The roles of the proposed ‘Head’s of Schools’ need to be fully defined and made clear. Day to day management must remain in the school.

The Specialist Roles within the new Heads of School needs very careful consideration they include Primary, Secondary, early level, Inclusion & Equity. Would it be better to have eg STEM, numeracy, literacy etc. Does the inclusion and equity remit include UCP’s? Currently 27 across the two schools for Mrs MacDonald. Too heavy a remit for one person perhaps especially as it is a lower role. Salaries need to also reflect specialisms as not all are equal by any means.

The PC asked what the Teaching Unions view was on the proposal and understand EIS are against it.

Needs to be a training package in place for Executive Heads as no (very few) staff at that level.

Agreed it would be good to get another meeting, formal questions, meet with Bowmore – consult with parents.

**Action: Tina to draft letter to parents;** The sooner we get it out to parents for feedback the better. Suggested letter to Parents before Christmas break should say something like; Parent Council have been in dialogue we have watched the video seen the presentation we think everyone is busy so therefore we will write to you w/c eg 10Th jan to give you time to digest this and discuss the impact on our children on island.

Noted that Argyll and Bute’s aim is to make the area an attractive place to live and work this won’t make an attractive place to live and work with good salaries as it is a ‘poorer’ deal than in other areas across the county.

Discussed community feedback – we have Larah and Grace as co-opted members.

**Action: Maureen** will feedback to say the video is too big to ‘download’ should be a click to play.

**Action: Bonnie** Open Facebook page Thursday 6th close on Thursday 20th Meet

AGM postpone Thursday 17th Feb.

Meet on Thursday 20th to collate feedback from FB page.

**Action: Tina** Agreed to email chairs of all the parent councils to say what we are doing and shall we all have one together after end of Jan.