

Minutes of Auchinleck Academy Parent Council Meeting – 20th March 2017

Present: Peter Gilchrist, Martin Goudie, Hilary Sharpe, Maureen Guthrie, Elaine Taylor, Agnes Nicol, Adele Young, Susan Robertson, Trudy Morrison, Robert Brown.

Apologies:

Elizabeth Rankine, Carol Leitch, Alex Gregory, Jennifer Macara

2. Minutes of previous meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th February 2017 were approved by Elaine Taylor and seconded by Robert Brown.

3. Matters arising:

Adele raised that the committee for the rugby tour needed a constituted group to apply for funding and asked if the Parent Council could be used to apply for the funding. The Parent Council agreed to this request and Adele agreed to let Mr Raby know to proceed.

No other matters arising.

4. Treasurer Update:

Susan confirmed no change from last meeting.

5. Chair Update:

Martin confirmed that there are 2 resignations from the Committee. Elizabeth Rankine is resigning from the Committee after many years of service and Alex Gregory is standing down from her role as Secretary with immediate effect. Maureen will send the minutes to Martin for circulation until September, when the committee will be re-constituted.

6. Head Teacher Updates:

Peter discussed the Summarised Inspection Findings.

Scottish Attainment Challenge discussed along with closing the attainment gap. A lot of the funds available will need to be spent on the children from difficult economic backgrounds. The challenge is to stimulate the interest of the children in this situation. £89,000 can be spent by the School. Peter has stated that he would like more help for the young people. Currently it can take 8-10 months to get support.

Peter wants to employ an integrated family support worker. Previously employed Morag Sim but the funding was pulled. He would also like to appoint a Principle Teacher of attainment. Peter asked how did the Parent Council feel about the above?

Adele asked if it was possible to share resource with Cumnock Academy and Peter

confirmed that they were in discussion with Angus. Peter's concern is about employing the right candidate, confirmed that the cost would be £26,000 + benefits.

Trudy raised what about the children in the middle regarding performance?

Martin raised that the closing of the attainment gap that there were 2 ways to look at it.

1. Closing the gap from the lowest to the highest.
2. Closing the gap of overall performance.

Peter confirmed that he had an issue personally that he would like the overall attainment to improve. Martin said that what irritated him was the politicisation of Education which therefore misses the whole point. Sustainability is also an issue if the funding is not supported beyond the end of the Parliament. Maureen raised that there were specific issues in some classes where behaviour was impacting attainment of other children.

Peter confirmed that he can't exclude anyone from Education. Peter is looking at the possibility of supporting children in a different way.

Alex joined the meeting at 7.50pm.

Adele raised if there would be a link up with the Primary Schools to see how to plan the overall spend of funds. Peter confirmed that an Executive team has been set up with Lynn McLean, Fiona Black and Peter Gilchrist with the function of sharing, support and challenge how the funding is being used. They will feedback through Teresa Porter to ensure no overlap or waste of resources.

Alex asked "How Peter would be held to account around the spending of the funds?"

Peter confirmed attendance and attainment over the period of this Government. Peter's concern is that it will take years for the difference to be seen and would the funding be sustained?

Martin confirmed that we support anything which would support raising attainment.

Martin asked "Could you use it to pay parents to get children to come to School?"

Peter stated everything has been discussed.

Alex stated that she had a bee in her bonnet about the English Department. Surely it would be good to attract good teachers to the School. Could the money be used to support this?

The Parent Council stated they would support this type of incentive. A discussion continues around English and French, the shortages within these and challenges for the School and difficulty in recruitment. Martin stated that he felt the education system was flawed around teaching children to pass exams and not learn the subjects.

Martin raised that since only into 2 years of new exams it was difficult to compare attainment.

In summary , Peter's proposal being discussed with leadership team is:

Principle Teacher of attainment

Home school links worker

Council mental health worker

Behaviour support base

Alex raised that a Focus Group and engagement around recent meeting which was planned but did not go ahead. Engagement of parents is an issue. Adele confirmed that she did not get the notification around the Raising Attainment meeting.

Peter confirmed that the School now have 60% of parent e-mails now, are using texts, twitter instead of letters to get messages out.

Alex confirmed that one of the reasons she joined the Parent Council to get more information about the School and what was going on. Not everyone has time to attend Parent Council Meetings. Maybe having an open dialogue with parents would help. Alex felt that the Parent Council could have a role in taking this forward.

Trudy suggested that calling the meeting a Raising Attainment meeting is Education speak and language should be considered. Maureen suggested it might be an idea to have Parent Meetings in the local communities to engage with all parents and Parent Council could support.

Adele discussed that Social Media was a useful medium at Drongan which has worked well but does present challenges with some Individuals. Martin raised concern around whether Social Media would assist the issue.

Martin said that he would be happy to attend any meetings in the Community if it would help get to more Parents.

How many use the website? Peter confirmed currently 30%.

Suggestion around were there any pupils who have left the School with previous behavioural difficulties who have turned their life's around or prison example was also used to engage children/parents positively around shaping the future.

Alex asked if there was going to be a focus group. Peter confirmed that the input from tonight is fine at the moment and he will re-visit at future meeting.

7. AOCB:

Alex stated that Adele's apologies were not noted on the last meeting.

Alex tendered her resignation. Adele raised that there were 3 parents at the Parent Council at Primary who have already confirmed they would not want to attend Parent Council at the Academy. Alex confirmed that she feels we need a better representation of Parents at our meetings. Having an open dialogue to engage with more parents would help.

Martin confirmed that he would like to get an invite to the Primary Parent Councils to encourage attendance. Martin agreed to have a look at Social Media options for the Parent Council and how this could be administered.

Robert confirmed that he had got a refund from parent pay of £25.00 and that Laura Mair was excellent at dealing with this.

Adele raised that Miss Grove has said to Owen a few times because of his attendance (due to him being in Florida for 3 weeks) he may not be able to attend Prom. He has been pulled out twice specifically around this and Adele feels this is unfair as it has only been one absence.

Martin thanked everyone who has agreed to attend the Grange on 8th May 2017 and to meet there on the night. Plan is to have our own meeting the following week.

8. Date of Next Meeting:

15th May 2017 at 7pm.

End of Meeting