

THE PARENT COUNCIL OF ST NINIAN'S HIGH SCHOOL

PARENT COUNCIL MEETING

10th SEPTEMBER 2022

Present: J. Stewart (Joint Chair) ("JS")
S. Reid (Joint Chair) ("SR")
A. Wilmott (Vice-Chair) ("AW")
G. McLaughlin (Church Representative)
Michela Pagliocca
Joanne Logan
Christopher McLaughlin
Mo Wright
Julie Flaherty
Lynsey O'Dwyer
Jennifer Clare Abalo
Mairead Brophy
Chimeze Umeh
Dougie Wilson

Apologies: Samantha MacConnell
Pauline Hessel
Katrina Adams

School: G. O'Neil (Head Teacher) ("Mr O'Neil")
J. Cumming ("JC")
T. Creighton

Church Canon S. Baillie

1. Welcome

The Office-Bearers ("OB") welcomed all the Parent Council ("PC") members in attendance, and members of the Parent Forum who had taken time to come along.

2. Apologies

A note was taken of the PC members in attendance and of intimated apologies.

3. Adjustment/Approval of Previous Minutes

Draft Minutes of the PC meeting on 15th June 2022 were tabled for adjustment/approval. No adjustments were intimated. The Minutes were approved.

The OB undertook to publish the approved Minutes on the PC website.

4. Parental Engagement & Communication

The OB reported to the Meeting that, over the last year, the PC has sought to improve parental engagement and communication in various ways: (i) setting up a dedicated email account (pcstniniangiffnock@gmail.com); (ii) setting up a Facebook Account; (iii) setting up a Twitter Account; (iv) refreshing the PC webpage on the School's website (to include copy Minutes of PC meetings); (v) requesting email notifications from the School on specific issues.

Thoughts were invited on the effectiveness of these steps – and on ways to improve upon these methods of communication.

In a similar vein, the OB invited discussion on the effectiveness of communication between the School and parents – and on ways to improve upon that communication.

For example: (i) is Twitter/FB/Email/Website the best means of communication; (ii) should there be a centralised, comprehensive, readily accessible Calendar of Events and Calendar of Extra-Curricular Activities; and (iii) is an App available to allow parents to have up-to-date knowledge of class homework?

Concerns were expressed by PC Members at the mode and disparate nature of the School's communication with parents – in that the School appears to communicate with parents via Twitter (not Facebook); and that multiple communications emanate from individual Departments as well as from the School's main office. Many parents do not use Twitter; mixed views were expressed about that platform; and those parents who do use Twitter may feel compelled to “follow” multiple Departments in order to ensure that communications are not missed. It was suggested that this can result in a deluge of information from disparate sources. An example was given of a child missing out on a netball trial, due to the fact that the parent was unaware that that particular Department/Club required to be “followed” on Twitter.

Mr O'Neill explained that particular important communications for parents are made via email. He acknowledged that solutions might be available at least to alert parents to the existence of separate Departmental Twitter accounts (including possibly the creation of a “PIN” account by the School).

Generally, it was acknowledged that Twitter was easy and accessible for teachers, albeit it could lead to “over-load” for parents who had to follow multiple accounts. It was also acknowledged that there was a need to encourage children to take personal responsibility for both retaining, and relaying to parents, relevant information.

Mr Creighton highlighted the existence of Yearbook Teams pages, which is accessible to, and can be down-loaded by, parents.

Mr O'Neill reported that Information Evenings are taking place with each year group, at which he and the School staff would try to pick up on some of these communication concerns.

Separately, the OB asked whether an App might be available to allow parents to keep up-to-date with homework. Reference was made to the use of such an App at Woodfarm High School and St Andrew's. Historically, homework diaries had been maintained by children, but in practice it was felt that these diaries are not being kept up-to-date in many instances.

Mr O'Neill commented that the use of such an App would double the work-load for teachers. Reference was made by him to the accessibility of Microsoft Teams, which would allow parents to monitor homework.

Mr Cummings commented that staff are currently preparing "time-lines" for block tests for each individual department. These time-lines should be available to parents by end of September 2022, and may assist in allowing parents to keep up to date with forthcoming tests. Mr Cummings suggested that aggregating the information would be excessive and unmanageable.

5. Proposed Development in Eastwood Park

At previous meetings, the PC had expressed the desire to open a dialogue with the Operating Trust and ERC to discuss and identify, in detail, how the School and its pupils might benefit from the proposed development works at Eastwood Park (the demolition of the existing theatre & leisure centre, and the construction of a new leisure complex), such as:

- (i) by specific vocational opportunities for pupils; and/or
- (ii) by affording SNHS pupils curricular access to facilities within the new development (such as to drama, sports or library facilities, or to business/management experience (in retail, leisure management, catering) or the like).

To that end, the OB had exchanged correspondence with ERC.

The OB tabled copies of its letter dated 10 June 2022 to the Director of Education, ERC and the Director's reply dated 24 June 2022 (see Annex 1).

The OB reported that, as far as they were aware, no further progress had been made in relation to the proposed development. It remained to be seen whether the development would materialise in light of the current economic climate. It was understood that a full report was to be submitted to ERC by end of October 2022.

AGREED ACTION

The OB shall continue to monitor progress, if any, with the proposed development.

For ease of reference, the previously-agreed action points were as follows:

- 1. The OB shall seek to arrange a meeting with representatives of the Operating Trust (and/or ERC) to discuss and identify how the School and its pupils might benefit from the Eastwood Park development, such as, for example (i) by specific vocational opportunities for pupils; and/or (ii) by affording SNHS pupils curricular access to facilities within the new development (such as to the development's theatrical/drama, sports or library facilities).**
- 2. The OB shall seek to be informed by the lead contractor/ERC as to the precautions that BAM/ERC intend to put in place (presumably conform to a Construction Management Plan) to ensure the safety of children and staff during the construction process.**
- 3. More generally, the OB shall (i) reiterate to ERC the PC's interest in the development, (ii) request an update (including estimated timescale) on the drafting of the Construction Management Plan, (iii) request the opportunity to be consulted on the drafting of that Plan, and (iv) seek clarification of**

- ERC's "master plan" (if any) for Eastwood Park (including, but not limited to, ERC's plans, if any, as to the future development of the School, the accommodation footprint, car parking facilities, and upgrades to the façade).
4. Mr O'Neil shall inform the PC of his assessment of the needs and deficiencies of the School (in terms of both physical estate and intangible resources) in the short, medium and long term – with a view to seeking to ascertain the extent, if any, to which those needs and deficiencies might be capable of being addressed (in whole or in part) by means of negotiated access to the completed leisure complex development.

6. School Uniforms: Scottish Government Consultation

The OB reported to the Meeting that the Scottish Government ("SG") has announced its intention to introduce statutory "guidance" in Scotland which aims, it says, to address "equalities issues" around uniform policy and "reduce the cost of school uniform".

It has opened a consultation on the issue. The consultation closes on 14 October 2022.

The consultation seeks views on: what should be included within the scope of the "guidance"; the role that school uniform plays within the ethos, culture and day-to-day school life; the considerations available to schools and education authorities in reducing school uniform costs; the draft principles which are intended to be incorporated as part of national school uniform policy.

The consultation is open to anyone with an interest in school uniform policy, but especially pupils, parents and carers, education authorities and education authority schools, and those who provide school uniform items. These will be taken together with the findings of this consultation to inform future policy and guidance development.

According to the Consultative Document, the SG does not intend that school uniform items will be mandated at national levels. Instead the SG states that the national guidance will "inform" local authorities and school policies. Likewise, the Consultative Document states that it is not intended that there will be a national school uniform policy which is applied in all schools, nor is it said to be intended that school uniform in Scotland will be abolished.

The OB recommended that the PC should aim to respond to this Consultation. The OB are preparing a brief draft response for circulation to PC Members.

Views were invited from those in attendance at the Meeting. A vigorous discussion followed.

There appeared to be a clear consensus that (i) the School's Uniform Policy should be maintained; (ii) affordability issues should and could be addressed by separate initiatives such as the Uniform Exchange; (iii) competition, in the marketplace, in the

supply of uniformed items was all to be encouraged, provided quality was not compromised.

Mr O'Neill reported that the School's Uniform Exchange initiative appeared to have been well received to date, whereby racks of good quality blazers had been made available at parent events for parents to take as they wished, on the basis of nothing more than an unsupervised on-line "honesty" contribution at a later date. Much stock had been taken; some stock remained available; storage of the surplus was not problematic at this stage.

Mr O'Neill confirmed that, as far as he was aware, there was no exclusive or preferred or nominated supplier arrangement of any description between the School and any third party supplier. He kindly agreed to check with ERC to see whether any such arrangement was in place between ERC and any third party supplier.

It was observed by some PC Members that parents would be at liberty to source a suitably-coloured burgundy blazer from any retailer and to arrange for the School badge to be sewn on separately (of which stocks are held by the School).

7. Diocesan Parent Forum

The OB reported that the Diocesan Parent Forum is a new initiative, established by Bishop John Keenan and the Diocese of Paisley, which is intended to bring Parent Council representatives (for each of the Catholic primary and secondary schools in the Diocese of Paisley) in closer communication with the Diocesan Education Department.

The OB reported that the Forum has terrific potential to support and promote the importance of Catholic education, as well as the primary role of parents as the first educators of our children. The personnel enlisted by the Bishop on his Diocesan Education Department (including Neil Roarty, Stephen Parsons, and Anne Marie Mullan) are of the highest ability and experience; the materials produced so far by the Team are of exceptional quality; and the initiative, though currently in its infancy, has real potential to assist parents in the promotion and delivery of Catholic education. The OB recommended that the initiative be fully supported.

The next meeting of the Forum is on 23 November 2022 at St Mirin's Cathedral, Paisley.

The OB tabled a copy of the Forum's Education & Youth Calendar, showing some of the events already arranged and planned (Annex 2).

8. The 2022 Exams: How did pupils, teachers and parents get on?

Mr O'Neill gave a presentation showing results from the recent 2022 Exams for S4 to S6. While overall results were down on the previous two years (which had been assessed by a different methodology due to the pandemic), he welcomed the results across the board as excellent by any measure. The data will be analysed to identify scope for improvement.

Mr O'Neill emphasised the time and exceptional hard work invested by the teaching staff, in advance of these exams (notably in "tracking" and "monitoring" the

performance of children in the lead-up to the exams, in order to address any perceived weaknesses or under-performance).

The Meeting expressed its heartfelt gratitude to Mr O'Neill, his Deputies and the entire teaching staff for their dedication and hard work in preparing our children for these 2022 exams.

9. **Strikes: What next, and what contingency plans are in place?**

The OB observed that a strike by non-teaching staff had narrowly been avoided – but asked Mr O'Neill what contingency plan was in place (or would be in place) if the threat of further strikes re-emerged (either by teaching staff or auxiliary staff).

Mr O'Neill confirmed that there was no contingency plan in place. Children would be left to pursue "self-directed learning".

Mr O'Neill encouraged children, in such an event, to focus on revision.

10. **Head Teacher's Report**

Mr O'Neill reported to the PC that children were settling in to the new terms. All children were now back in the building following the relaxation of pandemic restrictions. This was very welcome, not least as it was easier for staff, management and police.

A Calendar of Events and List of Clubs had been prepared and published (by Mr Creighton). Clubs were now up and running.

The School has taken delivery of a mini-bus. This has relieved pressure on transport issues, though only two Deputies are currently licensed to drive it.

The Inaugural Mass was a big success.

S4 is preparing for work experience and expeditions (to London and Liverpool); S6 is working with Canon Baillie on Caritas; the "Music from the Movies" Evening is coming up, as well as a Vocations Mass; and School reports will be issued shortly.

Staff and children are working hard on prelim examinations (scheduled for last week in November/first three weeks in December).

11. **Parent Questions**

The OB tabled the following questions/comments, as received from parents, and invited discussion from the Meeting:

- (i) *"Could the school please clarify why children are asked to cover their jotters? This seems very old fashioned, an unnecessary cost and a waste of paper. Could this please be stopped by all Departments?"*

Some members expressed support for the practice of covering jotters; others were less enthusiastic. Mr O'Neill explained that this was not a School-wide requirement. It was a matter left to the discretion of individual teachers."

- (ii) *"Could children/parents please be provided with the teacher reports before having to pick their subjects for S2? The written detail on the reports is useful when discussing subject choices with our children. Last term, the S1 children made their choices before the reports were issued."*

Mr O'Neill confirmed that parents will sign off on their child's choices only after Reports are issued.

- (iii) *"Are the bike shelters that serve SNHS monitored by cameras? If not, should they be monitored? There have been reports of bikes being deliberately kicked while in the shelters."*

Mr O'Neill confirmed that the bike sheds are not covered by CCTV. No reports have been received by the School of any such incidents.

- (iv) *"Mr O'Neil's Calendar of Events and the Schedule of Clubs are excellent. Would it be useful to put these on the website please?"*

Mr O'Neill confirmed that the Calendar and Schedule of Clubs are now on the School's website. Parents should check it from time to time for any updates/error corrections.

(He also clarified that, in truth, it was Mr Creighton who deserved the credit for preparing both documents.)

- (v) *"I'm really worried about the prevalence of vaping among school pupils and around the edges of the School. Has anyone else noticed this? Is the School aware of it and doing anything about it?"*

A vigorous discussion ensued on this issue.

Mr O'Neill confirmed that the School is fully aware of this issue – and adopts a pro-active and zero-tolerance attitude to it. Parents are immediately informed if a child is found vaping or in possession of vaping paraphernalia.

12. **AOCB**

Two issues were noted:

- (i) It was observed that some parents perceived there to be "slippage" in the enforcement of the School's Uniform Policy. It was suggested that this be discussed at the next meeting.
- (ii) A parent requested clarification of when S1 locker keys would be issued. Mr O'Neill confirmed that an email on this subject was sent to parents last week.

The business of the Parent Council Meeting was then concluded.

The next PC Meeting is on **Monday 10th October 2022 at 7pm** in St Ninian's High School.

**SUMMARY
OF
AGREED ACTION POINTS**

<i>The Eastwood Park Development</i>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The OB shall monitor developments, notably following the ERC October 2022 Report to Council. 2. The OB shall seek to arrange a meeting with representatives of the Operating Trust (and/or ERC) to discuss and identify how the School and its pupils might benefit from the Eastwood Park development, such as, for example (i) by specific vocational opportunities for pupils; and/or (ii) by affording SNHS pupils curricular access to facilities within the new development (such as to the development's theatrical/drama, sports or library facilities). 3. The OB shall seek information from the lead contractor/ERC as to the precautions that BAM/ERC intend to put in place (presumably conform to a Construction Management Plan) to ensure the safety of children and staff during the construction process. 4. Generally, the OB shall (i) reiterate to ERC the PC's interest in the development, (ii) request an update (including estimated timescale) on the drafting of the Construction Management Plan, (iii) request the opportunity to be consulted on the drafting of that Plan, and (iv) seek clarification of ERC's "master plan" (if any) for Eastwood Park (including, but not limited to, ERC's plans, if any, as to the future development of the School, the accommodation footprint, car parking facilities, and upgrades to the façade). 	<p>OB</p> <p>OB</p> <p>OB</p>	<p>Oct 22</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

<i>The Scottish Government's Uniform Consultation</i>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Office-Bearers shall prepare a draft response 	OB	14 Oct 22

<i>Diocesan Parent Forum</i>		
1. The PC members shall consider and submit questions or items for discussion at the next Diocesan Parent Forum in advance of that meeting.	All	Oct 22
2. The OB will attend the next Diocesan Forum Meeting on behalf of the PC.	OB	23 Nov 22

ANNEX 1

EASTWOOD PARK DEVELOPMENT - UPDATE



ENCLOSED PAPERS FOR PC MEMBERS ONLY

1. Copy letter dated 10 June 2022 to the Director of Education, ERC
2. Copy reply letter dated 24 June 2022 from the Director of Education, ERC

THE PARENT COUNCIL
OF
ST. NINIAN'S HIGH SCHOOL

Joint Chair:
Jacqueline Stewart
Stuart Reid

Vice Chair
Aundrie Wilmott

c/o St Ninian's High School
Eastwood Park
Rouken Glen Road
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Mark Ratter
Director of Education
East Renfrewshire Council
Eastwood Park
Rouken Glen Road
Glasgow G46 6UG

10 June 2022

Dear Mr Ratter,

Proposed Construction of Leisure Complex within Eastwood Park

As you will be aware, last year, East Renfrewshire Council ("ERC") lodged an application (Ref: 2021/0694/TP) seeking planning permission for the construction of a new Leisure Complex within Eastwood Park, and the demolition of the existing Eastwood Theatre and leisure centre.

On 19 January 2022, Outline Planning Consent was granted.

The new Leisure Complex is expected to be enormous. It will extend over an area in excess of eight hectares. It will involve the loss of open parkland, a significant number of good quality trees, and an area of ancient woodland, all on a site that is presently subject to a Tree Preservation Order and partially protected by ancient woodland status. There is a strong presumption against the development of such land.

This major development causes concern to the Parent Forum and Parent Council of St Ninian's High School for two principal reasons:

1. Firstly, the proposed development abuts and encroaches upon park ground and amenity that is currently (and has, for many years, been) enjoyed by the pupils of the School as part of their curricular education and amenity; and it is liable to curtail and constrain the scope for growth of the School's outdoor sports resources, academic and office accommodation, and car parking facilities.
2. Secondly, the proposed development is likely to cause substantial traffic disruption and related inconvenience, with associated risks, to staff, pupils and parents, both

during construction and after completion, due to the limited vehicular and pedestrian access and exit points to and from the Park.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, our hope is that a creative and integrated approach to the operation of the proposed development may yet be capable of being devised, to off-set some of these detriments.

This could readily be done by devising a mechanism whereby curricular and vocational opportunities are afforded to the School's pupils to access the Leisure Complex's facilities, given its unique proximity to the School.

By way of illustration, as part of their education and vocational training, intra-curricular access could be afforded to the School's pupils to the swimming, sports, theatre, drama, and library facilities within the new Complex, as well as to vocational experience in the retail, catering, and business management activities carried on therein.

These opportunities would go a considerable way to recompensing the School, as its closest neighbour, for the loss of amenity and sustained disruption caused by this major development on its doorstep.

Indeed, the creative synthesis of the Leisure Complex's resources with the School's curriculum and renowned teaching methodology could afford a unique opportunity for the School and ERC to set new educational and attainment standards nationally – and, by extension, thereby benefit the wider East Renfrewshire community.

We would be most grateful for the opportunity to meet with you (and with representatives of the proposed Operating Trust), at your earliest convenience, in order that we can better understand ERC's plans and intentions regarding this major proposed development, its likely impact upon St Ninian's High School, and the opportunities (if any) which might be derived from it for pupils of the School, now and in the future.

Yours sincerely,

J. Stewart

Joint Chair

S. Reid

Joint Chair

Our Ref: MR/LK
Your Ref:
Contact:
Tel: 0141 577 8635
Email: Mark.ratter@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk
Date: 24 June 2022



Education Department
Council Offices
211 Main Street
Barrhead
G78 1SY

Joint Chairs
The Parent Council of St Ninian's High School
pcstniniangiffnock@gmail.com

Dear Mr Reid and Ms Stewart

Thank you for your letter dated the 10 June regarding the construction of the proposed new leisure centre within Eastwood Park. From previous discussions and from meetings with Mr O'Neil, I understand the Parent Council's interest in the Eastwood Park Development.

The development is led and managed for the Council by the Director of Environment; as part of this process he chairs a Member Officer working group. Given the recent Council elections the composition of this group will need to be revisited. I attend this group on behalf of the Education Department.

The project is progressing, a preferred contractor has just been appointed, but there is still a long way to go, with a number of critical hurdles to be negotiated before it is clear what the final form and size the centre will take. Chief amongst these is the Stage 3 Design Cost check. As you will appreciate, current levels of inflation and other factors such as Brexit are dramatically and negatively affecting the construction industry, and there remains a high degree of uncertainty over the elements of the project that the Council will be able to realise within the agreed budget.

Once the elements are confirmed, the preferred contractor will be in a position to fully engage with the school. This is likely to be in Autumn, however, I have been in touch with the Director of Environment and he has started this process. As part of the ongoing engagement, I would expect the contractor to provide us with regular updates, we will of course share these with the Head Teacher and the school community, particularly in relation to any potential traffic disruption.

In addition, once the scope of the development is confirmed, the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust will also be in a better position to finalise the operational programme for the leisure centre. We already work closely with the Trust in terms of our vocational programme, for example sports leadership and lifeguarding courses. I am sure that they will continue to support the Council as partners to accommodate such usage as we prioritise, within the constraints of their existing commercial programmes, customers and their needs.



Mark Ratter, Director of Education, East Renfrewshire Offices, 211 Main St, Barrhead G78 1SY

In partnership with our schools, we review our curricular pathways on an annual basis. This includes looking at the range of courses that are available in light of the latest labour market information and based on feedback from existing learners. In doing so, we always seek to maximise the opportunities available for young people, through our links with colleges, employers and third sector organisations; this includes maximising the opportunities available through the Council and via the Trust. We will shortly be undertaking the review for courses starting in 2023 and I know Mr O'Neil will highlight any gaps or areas that we need to develop in relation to the curricular provision for the young people of St Ninian's High School. He already links regularly with members of the Quality Improvement team who oversee the vocational provision. They would be happy to attend a future meeting if that would be appropriate and helpful.

Finally, you will know from our Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy that we are keen to collaborate with parents and will seek to do this with St Ninian's parents as part of our ongoing review of the curriculum.

I hope you enjoy a restorative break over the summer period.

Yours sincerely

Mark Ratter

Mark Ratter
Director of Education



ANNEX 2

DIOCESAN PARENT FORUM

1. Diocesan Parent Forum Education & Youth Calendar



Diocese of Paisley - Education and Youth Calendar: 2022-23

Month	Date	Day	Time	Event	Location	Target Group
AUG	15	Mon		The Assumption		
AUG	24	Wed	4pm	Welcome to New Session	St Mirin's Cathedral	All staff – particularly NQTs
AUG	25	Thu			St Mary's, Greenock	
SEP	2	Fri	10-2.15pm	Vocations Conference	Cathedral Halls	S6
SEP	11	Sun	2pm	Youth to Lourdes Meeting	Diocesan Offices	
SEP	11-18			Vocations Awareness Week	School-based	S1-S6
SEP	14	Wed	10am	P7 Vocations Mass	St Mary's, Greenock	P7 (Inverclyde)
SEP	15	Thu	7pm	Diocesan Mass for Vocations and to mark the 75 th Anniversary of the founding of the Diocese	St Mirin's Cathedral	S1-S6 pupils (Primary pupils welcome)
SEP	16	Fri	10am	P7 Vocations Mass	St Mirin's Cathedral	P7 (Renfrew & E Renfrew)
SEP	16-17	Fri-Sat	tbc	Learning Retreat (overnight) on Catholic Social Teaching on migration and hospitality	St Ninian's HS	S4/S5 (National)
SEP	21	Wed	9.30 - 2.30pm	Aid to the Church – Youth Rally	Motherwell Concert Hall	S1-S6
SEP	28	Wed		Diocesan Pilgrimage to the Relics of St Bernadette	Carfin or Sancta Familia Livestream	Primary School Representation of P7 pupils
OCT				Mission Month	School-based	P1-S6
OCT				October UK Rosary Mission	School-based	P1-S6
OCT	6	Thu	7pm	World Youth Day 2023 Information Meeting	Diocesan Offices	Must be 18 at the time of departure.
OCT	7	Fri		UK Schools' Rosary Rally Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary		P1-S6
OCT	7	Fri		Missionary Children's Masses	School/parish	Primary Schools
OCT	23	Sun	2-6pm	Primary School Reflection	St James', Paisley	P4-P7
NOV	1	Tue		All Saints Day	School-based	P1-S6
NOV	6	Sun	2-6pm	S1-S2 Reflection Time	Diocesan Offices	S1-S2
NOV	16-30			Catholic Education 'Week' (Communion, Participation, Mission)	Schools and parishes	All schools
NOV	18	Fri		WYD 2022 School Celebrations	School-based (V.E Youth to provide resources)	Primary and Secondary
NOV	20	Sun	2-6pm	WYD Diocesan Celebration	St Mirin's Cathedral	S3-S6
NOV	23	Wed		Red Wednesday (ACN)	School-based events	All schools
NOV	27	Sun	2-6pm	Primary Advent Day	St John's, Barrhead	P4-P7
DEC				Advent Reflection Service	Link to YouTube	All teachers