

East Lothian Council
Services for People, Department of Education
DRAFT

East Lothian Association of Parent Council Members Meeting held on
Monday 15th December 2014, Brunton Hall, Musselburgh

Present:

Colin Henderson, Chair, (Pencaitland PC), **Val McIntyre** (Principal Officer), **Darrin Nightingale (Head of Education)**, **Richard Parker [Education Services Manager]**, **Shona Blakeley** (Campie PC), **Joanne Bloomfield** (Stenton PC), **Iain Clark** (Pinkie St Peters PC), **Pam Floyd** (North Berwick High PC), **Jacqui Stone** (Elphinstone PC), **Elaine Towler** (Haddington Infant PC), **Juliet Williams** (Law Primary PC), **Claire Pedder** (Ormiston PC), **Trisha Higginson** (St Martin's RC PS), **Katie McFarlane** (St Martin's RC PC), **Karen Leitch** (West Barns PC), **Lesley Townsend** (West Barns PC), **Gordon Crawford** (Yester PC), **Nat Spring** (Dirleton PC), **Councillor Shamin Akhtar** (Convenor of the Education Committee), **Laura Muir** (Clerk),

Apologies:

Athelstaneford Parent Council, **Alastair McConnachie** (Ormiston PC), **Sharon Malcolm** (Cockenzie PC), **Lynn Paton** (Prestonpans Infant PC), **Joyce Marlow**, **Gaynor Allen** (Musselburgh Grammar PC), **Carol Snow** (NPFS Rep), **Ailsa Swinburne** (East Linton PC)

		Action
1	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>Colin Henderson welcomed everyone to the East Lothian Association of Parent Council Members Meeting and introductions were carried out.</p>	
2	<p>Apologies and Approval of Minutes</p> <p>Apologies were noted as above. The minutes of the last meeting were approved without change.</p>	
3	<p>School Catering</p> <p>Lorraine Faulds was due to attend on behalf of Joyce Marlow but had to offer her apologies at the last minute. However, she provided a response to the queries raised by Haddington Infant Parent Council, which was discussed under Matters Arising. Lorraine Faulds will attend the next ELAPCM Meeting in January to answer any questions and/or provide further information.</p>	
4	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>Noted below are the questions raised by Haddington Infant Parent Council and the response received from Lorraine Faulds.</p> <p>a. "Many parents at our school have expressed concerns about the reduction in variety, choice and potentially quality arising from the new menu which has been created to ensure the anticipated increase in numbers can be catered for from January 2015"</p> <p><i>I appreciate the parents' concerns at the changes in the menu. There will be no reduction in the quality of the ingredients that we use as we are bound by the Soil</i></p>	

Association, Food for Life Bronze level award criteria, which requires meat to be to Red Tractor or Farm Assured quality, fish needs to be from sustainable sources and fruit and vegetables should be local where possible. Another main factor is that at least 75% of the dishes on the menu must be cooked from scratch. Our menu is analysed using a specialist software program to ensure that it also meets the Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) regulations which are very tight standards set by the Scottish government. The choice has lessened in that we initially only had baked potatoes on twice over the 3 weeks cycle. This was in preparation for the volume of meals expected in January with the introduction of UIFSM (Universal Infant Free School Meals), logistically most kitchens would be unable to cook and serve the amount of potatoes that would be required. Very quickly after the menu was introduced we realised through feedback from parents and Head teachers that Tuesdays were a problem as the choice was limited. The choices on the Tuesdays are from experience the most popular dishes however as this was highlighted as a problem we changed it so that baked potatoes are available on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The menu was devised by a group of our cooks who know what the children on the whole like to eat and who also have the expertise and knowledge in cooking for large groups. Whilst we appreciate not all schools will be catering in large quantities it is expected that meal numbers will increase considerably and it would be impractical for smaller schools to have a different menu from larger schools.

b. “Also concerns about time allowed for children to collect and eat their lunch if uptake is high and whether additional staff are to be provided to deal with lunches”

We are currently recruiting for additional staff to prepare, cook and serve the lunches. Our Cooks are working with their individual Head Teachers to find the best way to stagger the lunch so that everyone will be able to be served and have time to eat their lunch. This was also a factor in removing some of the choice from the menu. “Less choice = Less deliberating over what to have = more time to eat the meal”

c. “Low numbers of children choosing ‘healthy’ options – some of the new options on the menu have low uptake eg Fish Pie and I wonder if some activity could be undertaken to give children a taster of some of these dishes as part of the HWB aspect of CfE”.

I can understand children not being willing to try a dish they haven’t had before as if they don’t like it they will go hungry. Perhaps if they’ve had an opportunity to try some of these as a taster then they might be more willing to choose them for lunch.

We would be delighted to undertake some work involving taster sessions and individual schools should speak to their cook supervisor in the first instance. As explained above the menu is analysed to ensure that it is balanced over the course of each week.

Darrin confirmed that a grant from the Scottish Government had been received to cover the cost of this initiative. Darrin wanted to express his thanks Joyce Marlow and her team who have worked very hard to get this in place on time.

The Parental Engagement Survey was also discussed. Val advised this would be taken forward early in the new term. Val would like parental input and Elaine Towler offered her support.

5 Area Partnerships

No update had been received from Kaela Scott prior to the meeting. Darrin gave a brief update on the Musselburgh Area Partnership. The main focus for the Musselburgh AP is **Attainment**. Anyone is welcome to attend the Area Partnership Meetings, dates, times and venues are available on the East Lothian Council Website.

The Area Partnership Minutes are available on the Council Website or by clicking on this [link](#)

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Update from Darrin Nightingale

Attainment – Secondary

Meetings had recently taken place with the Secondary Head Teachers to discuss the top 3 priorities in raising attainment; these are:

1. **How do you monitor and track?**
2. **What data do you use?**
3. **What does the data tell you and what do you do with it?**

Also in attendance at these meetings were a Depute Head Teacher, Quality Improvement Officer, Principal Officer (Information and Research), Deputy Chief Executive and a 'Buddy' Head Teacher. Common and Unique statistics were also discussed at these meetings.

Attainment – Primary

Cluster based meetings had taken place these were run by the Quality Improvement Officer. Literacy and Numeracy were discussed along with key points in transitions.

SMEB (Senior Management Education Board)

This group currently meet every other month, The Education Improvement Strategy is due to be signed off at the next meeting due to take place this month. Darrin will discuss this at a future ELAPCM Meeting.

Budget

Darrin provided an update on the current budget. Education is responsible for around 50% of the overall Council Budget. The budget is a 3 year rolling budget, the end of year 1 will come to an end on 31st March 2015. The level of savings required is challenging, Secondary Schools need to make a saving of £600,000 and Primaries need to save £200,000 over the three years. The percentage of the savings required for Year 1 have been identified, Year 2 and 3 will be challenging without redesign .

To achieve the primary savings, It has been necessary to reduce the number of Teachers in the Nursery setting and replace these with Nursery Nurses, where there is more than one teacher in the establishment from August 2015. Authorities are required by the Scottish Government to keep teacher numbers the same wherever possible. East Lothian also have an agreement dating back to the regional council days that no teacher can be made redundant. The teachers from the Nursery will be moved into positions within schools. Richard Parker is currently in discussions with Head Teachers to identify openings.

The savings required to be made by the Secondary Schools are more challenging. Meetings are still ongoing.

Darrin highlighted some of the suggestions that are being considered across the country by other local authorities to make the required substantial financial saving.

He stressed that these were other authorities suggestions and not suggestions made by East Lothian Council :

- Reducing exam choices in schools
- Reducing number of teaching hours in Primary Schools
- Rural School Closures
- Class Sizes in Primary/Secondary
- School Transport Levels
- Other Services (Ancillaries/Drama/Music)
- Change Contracts – (work/life balance)

	<p>A full discussion followed and Darrin agreed to send a copy of the full list of suggestions with the Minute [attached] for information, and to provide Parent Councils with the opportunity to provide feedback.</p> <p>Shamin informed the group that there is a consultation on the website called 'You Pay, Now Have Your Say'. The closing date for responses is Monday 15th December, however there is an email address for comments to be sent to. Shamin was going to look into the possibility of the consultation being extended. Shamin will have more information for the meeting in January.</p> <p>Budgets to be kept as a standing item on the Agenda.</p> <p>The Annual Budgets are set in Mid February with the papers being finalised in January.</p> <p>The Consultation Hub can be found by clicking on this link</p> <p>Information on the Budget Papers can be found here</p> <p>A slightly fuller list is attached of savings being considered by authorities across Scotland. Parent councils feedback on which they feel should be progressed (ie prioritise). Returns by end of January would be appreciated.</p>	LM
7	<p>Update from Val McIntyre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any training requests, please email parentcouncil@eastlothian.gov.uk • Continued significant uptake of online payments • Two areas requiring attention early next term; Parental Involvement Strategy and Survey to Parents. • Best wishes to you all for a peaceful festive break 	
8	<p>National Parent Forum of Scotland</p> <p>Apologies were received from Carol. and no update had been provided.</p>	
9	<p>Any other Business</p> <p>Secondary – National Qualifications Information Evening. Pam Floyd, NBHS, confirmed their Head Teacher had discussed and agreed with the Parent Council School what they would like provided. No other Secondary Reps in attendance. Val will follow this up.</p> <p>Parental Engagement – Elphinstone Parent Council Elphinstone are currently struggling to get new members, if anyone has any thoughts or ideas could you please email them to parentcouncil@eastlothian.gov.uk where they will be collated and passed onto Elphinstone Parent Council.</p> <p>E-safety Rep – information has been emailed out. Responses are due to be back by 8th January.</p> <p>Colin thanked all Parent Council Members in attendance and closed the meeting.</p>	

10	Future Meeting Dates and Venue <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 26th January 2015 – Brunton Hall• 25th March 2015 – Brunton Hall• 20th May 2015 – Brunton Hall	

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