

Knox Academy

Parent School Partnership



Minutes

Date: Wednesday 4 March 2009 (6.15pm)

Present: Tim Holden (Chair)
K Robertson (Parent Member)
C Hall (Parent Member)
K White (Parent Member)
F MacKenzie (Parent Member)
I Smith (Parent Member)
M Wyllie (Parent Member)
A Greathead (Associate Parent Member)
S Ingham (Teacher Member)
N Davidson (School Staff Member)
L Brown (Pupil Member)
G McDermott (Pupil Member)
A McCulloch (Clerk)

Apologies: J Craig (Head Teacher)
K Anderson (Teacher Member)
L McInnes (Teacher Member)

1. Presentation by Janice MacLeod, school nurse – update on drop-in centre

J MacLeod presented to the group on a proposal to open a health drop-in service within the school. The service would provide general health advice alongside sexual health and relationships advice and services. This would include providing condoms to young people aged 13 years and above. She stated that drop-in centres we already established in other East Lothian communities and Knox Academy pupils, J Craig and Don Ledingham (Acting Executive Director of Education and Children's Services at East Lothian Council) were supportive of the initiative. She had looked at the possibility of other

venues in Haddington, but the school was the preferred option. She wished to approach the PSP to discuss the proposal prior to sending out a consultation letter to the wider parental body.

The PSP held a discussion on the placing of the centre in the school. C Hall raised his concerns to the placing of the drop-in centre within the school and his belief that this would send a signal to the pupils that the school condoned sexual activity. He questioned the need for such a service and stated that if such a service was required, it would be far more appropriate to hold this outwith the school.

J MacLeod responded that the service would be working to delay sexual activity rather than encourage it and evidence from other centres supported this. The centre would provide information and support of vulnerable young people and would work within strict guidelines.

C Hall responded that he questioned the evidence and feels that other potential venues should be explored further. A Greathead asked whether it would be possible to provide the drop-in centre without the provision of condoms. J MacLeod responded that the pupils had expressed a preference for a 'one-stop shop'. She stated that she appreciated the concerns raised, but would still like to consult the wider parent body.

Following the discussion it was agreed that J MacLeod would explore the possibility of holding the drop-in at an alternative location and in the meantime draft a consultation letter asking whether parents were:

- a) In favour of the service, and
- b) Whether the centre should be placed in the school.

The consultation letter is to be passed to T Holden to distribute around the PSP for comments.

J MacLeod thanked the PSP for the opportunity to discuss the service. T Holden thanked J MacLeod on behalf of the PSP.

M Wyllie left the meeting.

2. Presentation by Brian Dillin of the Curriculum Development Group

B Dillon presented to the PSP on the work carried out by the Curriculum Development Group, and the school as a whole, on the development of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).

He indicated that the school aimed to trail changes to the curriculum with the next S1 intake. This is prior to the introduction of the Next Generation of National Qualifications, which the S1 intake in session 2010-11 will be looking to take in S4 (2013/14).

The PSP discussed the presentation and proposals for changes. B Dillin and S Ingham reported that the school were really positive about CfE and meeting the challenges posed.

The PSP thanked B Dillin for his presentation.

F MacKenzie left the meeting.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 4 February were agreed.

4. Matters Arising

Haddington Cluster Parent Council Meeting – The minutes of the meeting have arrived. T Holden will distribute to the PSP.

Backchat – the PSP received the SPTC Newsletter.

You Pay, Now Have Your Say –T Holden reported no response from David Spilsbury (ELC) has been received. This is now moot following the announcement of the ELC budget for 2009/10.

T Holden and J Craig to meet when possible.

5. Chairperson's Report and Action Plan

HAGS / ELAPC

Following the announcement of the ELC budget for 2009/10, the PSP offered thanks to F MacKenzie, K Robertson and I Smith for all their work on campaigning against the original budget proposals.

K Robertson expressed his surprise at ELC's shift following the You Pay, Now Have Your Say consultation. He went on to say that while the headline figures for the Education budget have come out well, the whole budget needs to be looked at to get the complete picture, nevertheless this was a demonstration that parents can influence political decisions.

I Smith cautioned that the reality may not be as rosy as that presented and the budget figures would need to be looked at.

T Holden agreed to wait until the ELAPCM meeting on 24 March before looking at putting out a positive press release.

Communications

C Hall, T Holden and K White met to discuss communication strategy. A priority is to develop the Pamela list. The list will be circulated to PSP members to see if they are aware of any social contacts who can be added. The PSP also agreed to send a letter to feeder schools and feeder parent councils to ascertain if parents of P7 pupils coming into Knox Academy would like to join the list. K White will email a draft letter to I Smith.

K White looked at North Berwick High School's website and reported that they have a running bulletin of school news. She opined that she feels the PSP should encourage the school to send out this sort of information. C Hall stated D Gilmour at ELC has volunteered to set up a blog element on the PSP website.

6. Head Teachers Report

Matters arising

Website: The school supports the PSP's ideas but is looking to get curriculum pages on the Knox Academy website. The school is asking for lots of information from departments and would like to upload this information and then identify any gaps that need filling. There will be a lot of information appearing on the school website in the coming months

Booklets: There are a variety of reason booklets cannot be made available online but there should be sufficient materials in departments for every booklet to be supplied to pupils. S Ingham will investigate the concerns raised by I Smith.

Faculty Heads: C Sutherland (HT North Berwick High School) will present to the PSP on Stacks. A timetable will be developed to meet with faculty heads in the next academic session.

N Davidson chairing webgroup in school. The major drive this year is to promote activities parents can do at home.

The school is to produce a glossary of school terms. This will be available on the school's website and to the PSP.

Staffing

L Jones and S Muirhead are resigning following maternity leave.

Biology: T Watson has resigned. The school is trying to source full-time specialist biology cover, though there is part-time cover at the moment. The school will be looking to recruit a replacement teacher but this will be a lengthy process.

Home Economics: The subject had specialist cover but this is no longer in place due to staffing issues on the supply list. The school is trying to bring in specialist cover.

Certificate classes are getting some specialist teaching.

PE: R Greenaway has been appointed Acting Principal Teacher, Guidance but is still teaching some PE. Specialist full-time cover has also been arranged.
Mathematics: A post of full-time Teacher of Mathematics has been advertised.

Budget

No confirmed budget for the next academic session at this time. Efficiency savings of £186,000 will need to be met by the six secondary schools in the authority. This is on top of the efficiency savings in this current budget. The school will come out of this financial year with the full carry forward figure.

7. Teacher Members Report

KASG are still looking for another staff member but are delighted that staff are coming forward. Donations have dropped this year.

The school developed a cross-curricular event around Burns Night, on the back of competitions across East Lothian schools. Knox Academy were overall winners, with a number of pupils winning in specific categories.

8. Support Staff Member's Report

Following the first Single Status feedback all Clerical Assistants that appealed the job evaluation process have had their appeals taken forward.

9. Pupils' Matters

Sixth year pupils will be dressing up and collecting money for Red Nose Day on 13 March.

The Student Council went to ELC Education and Children's Services to contribute to the INEA inspection.

Students will be taking part in a debating competition run by the Scottish Government.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 6 May 2009, 6.15pm

Signed:

Chair: _____ Date: _____

Clerk: _____ Date: _____