

PRESTON LODGE HIGH SCHOOL
MINUTES OF PARENT COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON
THURSDAY, 17 JANUARY 2008
AT
PRESTON LODGE HIGH SCHOOL

Present: Mrs M Gilroy, Parent Representative and Chair
Mr J Berg, Parent Representative and Vice Chair
Mrs L Mitchell, Parent Representative
Mrs L Morgan, Parent Representative
Mrs L Marshall, Parent Representative
Mrs C Turner, Parent Representative
Mrs A Black, Parent Representative
Mrs L Robertson, Parent Representative
Mr A Spence, Parent Representative
Ms M Angus, Co-Opted Teacher Representative
Ms K Carson, Co-opted Teacher Representative
Ms H Findlay, Business Manager, Preston Lodge High School
Mr K McKay, Deputy Head
Mr W Galbraith, Head Teacher
Cllr S Currie
Cllr W Innes
Mrs J Dunlop, Clerk

1. APOLOGIES AND WELCOME

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Mrs Coogan, Mrs Stuart, Mr Tait, Mrs Thomson, Mr Gibson, Ms Burns and Cllrs McKenzie and Libberton.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 6 December 2007 were a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING BUT NOT ON THE AGENDA

- a) Homework – Parents noted that they wouldn't expect a lot of homework during school holidays, especially summer and Christmas holidays, however they would expect a reasonable amount during term time. Mr Galbraith will raise with teachers.
- b) Disclosures – Mr Galbraith noted that he has tried to check and it seems to be that if you are in sole access to pupils disclosures are required to be carried out. There was a discussion on who pays for it with Mr Spence's disclosure being paid for by the school; however Ms Findlay noted that the disclosure team at the Council are good at stopping duplications. Cllr Currie noted that East Lothian Council have written to the Government and Disclosure Scotland for clarification on the guidelines.

4. WORKING GROUPS

- a) School Dress Code – Mr Berg distributed a copy of the recommendation of the Group (copy on file). It was agreed that the School Dress Code should be added to what the school currently has and that there should be buy in by pupils, staff and parents. It was agreed that there should be a questionnaire carried out by pupils, staff and parents and Mr Galbraith noted that this should be carefully worded. It was agreed that the Parent Council members would give comments on the note back to Mr Berg one week before the next meeting. It was also agreed that the draft questionnaire would be brought to the February meeting for approval.

- b) Fund Raising – A Burns Supper has been arranged for Thursday, 7 February at 6.30 pm and 6th year, parents and teachers are invited with tickets on sale now at a cost of £10. A three course meal will be provided, raffle, burns quiz, ceilidh band, tribute band and various speeches. The price of the ticket has been set at £10 to allow for some profit for the school, although it is disappointing that East Lothian Council request that two elite catering staff be present and this is an additional cost. Mr Galbraith agreed to look into this. (*Action Mr Galbraith*)

4. TRAINING

It was noted that for future training that previous School Board members will have to go through the training again as the legislation has changed. Linda Morgan agreed to attend the Recruitment and Selection Training.

5. SCHOOL BUDGET

Helen Findlay, School Business Manger presented the school budget for this year (copy on file). It was noted that most of the £3.5M budget is spent on staffing and that it is often late in the financial year when schools financial position is confirmed.

There was discussion on the carried forward aspect of the budget. Mr Galbraith noted that the school carried forward, reported in April 2007, appeared to be £234,000. However, much of the money was funding added to the school budget in February or March 2007. (EG £80k windfall money, £10k Duke of Edinburgh funding and other ring-fenced budgets.) Being so close to the end of the financial year, the school had difficulty in spending the additional funding before 1 April. As part of the current DSM Policy, agreed in June 2005, the school is allowed a 1% carry forward over a three year cycle and the school has worked within this.

6. EFFICIENCY SAVINGS

Mr Galbraith informed the Parent Council that the concordat between the Scottish Government and COSLA required East Lothian Council to make 2% 'efficiency savings' each year for the next three financial years. These savings would be retained by the Council for re-investment in Council priorities provided that Council Tax was frozen over the specified period. East Lothian Council has asked each Council department to identify 3% efficiency savings. Mr Galbraith had to submit his proposals for savings for the school by 10 January. Mr Galbraith confirmed that the budget uplift of 2.57% would not support current salary and on-cost increases for staff already in place and taken together with the 3% efficiency savings requested, these would have major implications for the service provided by the school. Mr Galbraith stated that, as a senior officer of East Lothian Council, his role was to outline how 3% efficiency savings could be made and the potential impact on the service provided for pupils. Cllr Currie noted that the budgets will not be set until 12 February. Preston Lodge High School is requested to make a saving of £152,360. Mr Galbraith's submitted outline proposals and implications for consideration included:

- * Not to replace the NQTs this year as there would not be a budget for this. This would leave gaps.
- * 3 FTE permanent staff declared surplus
- * £25,000 saved from the per capita budget
- * Staff vacancies or retirals not filled – this will save £40,000.
- * The CPD budget for staff cut by £8,000.
- * The Government has recommended a reduction in class sizes in English and Maths to 20 for S1/S2. The school just about managed to achieve these targets this year, without additional funding. However with the reduction in budget, class size reduction is would not be implemented.

- * All class sizes will be maximised to make them more economical.
- * Advanced Higher classes will be at risk due to the small amount of pupils in them.
- * More bi-level teaching in S5/S6.
- * If a subject has an uptake of less than 10- pupils in the senior school then it is unlikely to run.
- * The budget for absence cover will be reduced
- * There may be a reduction in the number of subject options (S3 and S5/6)
- * Subject may be removed from the curriculum.
- * The most vulnerable and the most able pupils are likely to be affected first.
- * Extra Curricular team sports will be affected.
- * Management time – Principal Teachers and SMT - will need to be reconsidered in order to provide a greater teaching commitment.
- * There will be devastating impact on pupil and teacher morale.

Mr Galbraith did note that, last year, there was also the chance the budget would have to be cut and the school went through a similar exercise. However, it did not impact to the extent identified, due to cost savings at the centre and the apparent, large carry-forward retained by schools: no such carry forward is likely this year.

Cllr Currie noted that the Government is allowing councils to keep the efficiency savings and the Council will then reallocate the additional money back into its priorities. He noted that education was a priority and that currently the Education department was bidding for more money. He also noted that efficiency savings were not cuts and if there were cuts in what was previously in school the Council and the Government would not see these as efficiency savings and would not allow them.

Cllr Innes noted that the following the budget meeting on 12 February the school would know what its budget was, including any additional money it would receive following the re-allocation of the efficiency savings.

The Parent Council felt that the implications of the efficiency savings were horrific and not acceptable and that pupils would get a lower standard of education and that all the work that the Council had previously done to raise the standard of education eg PPP would be wasted. It was agreed that the Parent Council would send representation to East Lothian Council regarding the proposed cuts. (*Action Marion Gilroy*)

7. AOCB

- a) Behaviour Management Agreement – Mr McKay distributed a copy of the proposed rules for parental consultation. It is proposed to launch these after the February break. (*Action All for response*)
- b) Future Meetings – the next meeting will take place on 14 February, thereafter they will revert to the first Thursday of the month in order that the Councillors can ensure that they are represented.
- c) East Lothian Council – Val McIntyre had asked if she could do a presentation to the Council and it was agreed to invite her to the March meeting. (*Action Jacqui Dunlop*)