

PRESTON LODGE HIGH SCHOOL
MINUTES OF PARENT COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON
THURSDAY, 15 MAY 2008
AT
PRESTON LODGE HIGH SCHOOL

Present: Mr J Berg, Parent Representative and Chair
Mrs L Marshall, Parent Representative
Mrs M Stuart, Parent Representative
Mrs L Morgan, Parent Representative
Mrs L Robertson, Parent Representative
Mrs H Coogan, Parent Representative
Cllr W Innes, Councillor
Mr W Galbraith, Head Teacher
Mr C Stewart
Mrs J Dunlop, Clerk

1. APOLOGIES AND WELCOME

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Jim Tait, Kirstin Carson, Lorraine Mitchell, Marion Gilroy, Carolyn Turner, Shelagh Thomson and Cllr Libberton.

2. MATTERS ARISING

- a) Bouncy Castle – Parent Council is covered by the PTA Insurance for hiring bouncing castles.
- b) Kirsten Carson had sent slips to be completed by the Parent Council so information could be put on the website. It was agreed that these should be returned to Kirsten Carson.
- c) Parent Council Budget – East Lothian Council had notified the Parent Council that there was £334 remaining from the budget and that this would be transferred to the school budget. The Parent Council were to decide what this money was to be spent on.
- d) Gardening Project – a cross-curricular garden project is taking place and it was hoped that members from the local community would be able to volunteer. It was agreed that Walter Anderson may be someone who could be approached.
- e) Holiday Dates – the Council had sought the views of the Parent Council on aligning holidays with Edinburgh Council. It was agreed that individual members of the Council should consider and then respond to the Council directly.
- f) Health Promoting School – Mr Galbraith noted that the school is applying for Stage 2 accreditation, the first school in East Lothian to do so.

3. BUDGET

Mr Galbraith stated that the likely reported carry forward is expected to be in the region of £22,000. It was hoped it would be larger. However, a number of essential tasks, carried out by FES, for which the schools pays, has come in more expensive than expected. This means that the actual carry forward figure, following deduction of FES costs and IT accruals, to the next financial year will be £7.43. However, there was some relief that the school was not going into the new financial year with a large deficit. The new budget projections are dependent upon staffing expenditure.

Mr Galbraith noted that staffing is very tight for 2008/2009 and absence cover may be difficult and the staff development budget has been affected. However, all courses that have traditionally been run in school will be able to go ahead.

The school has been allocated NQTs in Chemistry, English, Modern Language and Religious Education. Free NQTs have been allocated for computing and drama. Mr Galbraith noted that 10% of the NQTs do not turn up as their circumstances may have changed over the summer. This will cause the school problems, especially if it is the drama NQT.

Mr Stewart explained that he is working on the new timetables and a computer programme is used to do this. All subjects are offered subject to budget, staffing and pupil update. Options by pupils are done on a scale for 1-6 by what they want to do and then the computer generates the best option.

For Advance Highers in the past pupils have been timetabled 3 periods a week but this has usually been expanded to 5 periods. This year again three periods have been allocated but the ability to expand into 5 periods may be more difficult due to the pressure on staffing. The Parent Council were concerned that there had been rumours that advance highers would be cut from next year. Mr Stewart confirmed that, although nothing is confirmed yet, as they are still putting together the timetable, that all the advance highers which were offered last year would be offered next term, with the exception of French as there were not enough pupils wanting to do the course. It is hoped that all other Advance Higher classes which were offered last year will again be taught next term. It was noted that the S5/6 options issues often change in August when pupils return to school following the exam results. Mr Galbraith noted that when he is in a position to make a definitive statement he will do so. It was confirmed that if only three periods is all that can be offered to students, study would be available for the balance of time.

Mr Galbraith noted that next year the S1 will be very large, 234 pupils compared to 180 this year. With the reduction in class sizes for S1 in English and Maths this means that the school has to staff an extra 53 periods, this has implications for the upper end of the school. Cllr Innes noted that the school was in this situation due to tightness of staff and that extra money from the Council had been put in at the bottom end of the school and that this was a political decision.

The new S3 have made their options and all pupils, with the exception of one, are getting 5 out of their 6 choices which gives a 99.4% satisfaction rating. The new 5th year have a satisfaction rate of 83%, this can be due to having to decrease their options from 8 to 5. Guidance staff will be contacting pupils and parents next week if pupils can't get their desired subjects.

4. DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Mr Galbraith distributed a copy of the draft Development Plan (copy on file) This not finished yet and Mr Galbraith will seek input from the Parent Council on this. He suggested that conclusions are sought from each of the working groups and these will be inputted into the Development Plan.

5. PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Mr Stewart agreed to email a copy of the findings from the Parent Questionnaire to the Parent Council. He issued 742 text alerting parents to the questionnaire and there have been 73 responses. He noted that there is an option to subscribe to an email which gives a list of all the updates on the website and urged parents to do this.

6. WORKING GROUP UPDATES

- a) Communication – It was agreed that the Parent Council would be represented at the Open Door Day on Thursday 22 May and also the new S1 parents day. At the Parents Day it was agreed that PL2000 club would be publicised and a prize draw would be held if parents signed up on the night.

Parent helpers were required for the 5K on Friday, 23 May and it was agreed that the money would be split between local charities and the school.

- b) Twining Group – Mr Galbraith reported that an Association has been formed and the Barga teachers will be visiting the Cluster 27-31 May to form a view on what to do when the Barga pupils visit.
- c) Bank Account – Linda Morgan noted that the bank account has been set up and there is currently a balance of £800.
- d) It was agreed that the Working Groups would be looked at in more detail at the next meeting and each would be asked to provide a summary of their work over the year and also consideration would be given to representatives on the groups.

Date of Next Meeting : 12 June 2008