

West Lothian Council Education Services

*Minutes of meeting of **ARMADALE ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL** held on Tuesday 15 April 2008 at 7 p.m. in the conference room.*

1 PRESENT Mrs L McInulty (Chairperson)
 Mrs K Smart, Mrs M Cochrane
 Mrs L Thomson Mr N Barrie
 Mr G Johnstone Mrs E Birrell, Mr R Orr
 Miss L McPhillips (Acting DHT) guest
 Cllr S Borrowman

APOLOGIES : Mrs J McKay, Mrs E Ledgerwood
 Councillors Dixon, Hutton and McGinty

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Mrs Birrell and seconded by Mrs McInulty

3 MATTERS ARISING

- a. Copies of Parent Council Constitution had been distributed to S3 and S4 parents on Parents' Evenings and was also available on the school web site together with the January 2008 Parent Council minutes
- b. The temporary hut, to relieve the lack of accommodation in the PE Department, was not yet in place. This is being taken up with the authority by Mr Fleming, the school's Business Manager.
- c. Parent Members of the Council had paid a site visit to the new school and had been impressed by the progress made. Members of the school's Extended Management Team would be undertaking a site visit this term.
- d. The recent HMIe Report and Action Plan was available on the school web site.
- e. The timetable for the SQA exams was on the school and pupil web sites.

4 STAFFING & ACCOMMODATION

Staff Information:

- ◆ Mrs K Roy has been appointed as Pastoral Support Assistant.
- ◆ Mrs Dickson of Home Economics has been appointed to a Support for Learning post in Inveralmond CHS. A supply teacher is in place but is not qualified in Home Economics. A probationer has been requested for August but may not be available. If no probationer is allocated then the post will be advertised in May / June. Failing a successful appointment, Mr Johnstone indicated that curricular changes might be necessary in Home Economics.

- ◆ Mrs Gordon has returned following maternity leave for 3 days a week in English.
- ◆ Probationer interviews will be taking place in the near future. The school has 3 vacancies in Chemistry, I.C.T. and Music.

Accommodation Update

Mr Johnstone noted the following progress since the Parent Council visit.

- ◆ Window frames and windows had been installed in most of the main building.
- ◆ All floors were in place.
- ◆ Cladding was to be installed shortly on the Assembly Hall.
- ◆ Class partitions were present in about 80% of the main building.
- ◆ The roof on the PE Block was almost finished.
- ◆ Preparation for electrical work had taken place.
- ◆ The construction of a perimeter road around the school was due to begin shortly.

Mrs McInulty raised the question as to whether it might be possible for Dawn Construction to buy a minibus for the school or contribute towards the cost.

5 INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Mrs Birrell discussed the school's plans in this area with the Parent Council.

- a. New links with schools in Hungary, Kenya and Finland are planned.
- b. The British Council will provide funding for the link with Tumutumu Girls' High School in Kenya. Such a link is not charity based but has to relate to the sharing of educational experiences in a global perspective. Mrs Birrell suggested the theme of Women's Rights might be used based on a PLAN initiative called "Because I'm a Girl".
- c. The school is hoping to set a Blog to allow pupils to communicate with the school in Finland.
- d. A "Dress Down day" will be held to raise money for a new roof for the nursery in Kigali, Ruanda.
- e. The school is still supporting, amongst other initiatives, the Ethembene AIDS orphanage in South Africa and maintaining its sponsorship of three children in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Uganda.

Mrs McInulty suggested that our associated primaries might be involved in this area and it was agreed to raise this at a Cluster HT Meeting. Mrs Birrell noted that in relation to the British Council funding we were paired with Linlithgow Bridge Primary and that Windyknowe PS already had a link with a Kenyan school.

6 CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Mr Johnstone distributed a paper that had been put forward for the Authority's "Celebrating Success" initiative. This focused on "Working in Partnership" and detailed the school's links with our communities which had been praised as outstanding by HMIe. Specific initiatives were noted at local, national and international level together with the hurdles experienced, an evaluation of the initiatives and the benefits to the school and its pupils. He noted that the council would be kept informed as to any progress with this award.

7 CUSTOMER CARE

Miss McPhillips (Acting DHT) noted that it was hoped to have Charter Mark assessment take place in June. She distributed a paper on the feedback from questionnaires relating to our Customer Standards. These had been given out at Parents' Evenings. There had been minor drops in satisfaction levels in some areas of the survey. Yet there had been increases in other areas and the overall levels of satisfaction were still high. It was noted that drilling down into the areas of concern was necessary to see if the drop was real or perhaps caused by variation in the sample size. In discussion several suggestions were made by members of the Parent Council concerning communication with parents. These included:

- ◆ Placing the questionnaire on the school website and advising parents of this through the next newsletter.
- ◆ Placing a version of the newsletter on the website or on DVD and including an audio version for those with reading difficulties.
- ◆ Setting up Podcasts and Blogs for pupils
- ◆ Communicating with parents via email

It was agreed that all of these suggestions would be investigated by Miss McPhillips.

8 SCHOOL DRESS CODE

Mrs Birrell discussed with the Parent Council the school's intention to further tighten up dress code / uniform. This would focus on the wearing of black trousers rather than black jeans or combats. The rules regarding girls' tops would also be tightened up. She noted that when SQA exam leave started it was the school's intention to promote further the use of school bags to carry the equipment required for school. These plans were agreed in principle. Mrs Birrell thanked the Parent Council for their continued support. Feedback from the community had been very positive.

SCHOOL 40th ANNIVERSARY

Mrs Birrell noted progress in this area.

- ◆ A organising group had been set up to plan and publicise the anniversary.
- ◆ Enterprise Groups were to produce Anniversary Bookmarks for all pupils.
- ◆ Former staff, including Sandy Niven (ex HT) and pupils would be contacted and an "Open Night" was planned for current parents and former Staff and pupils.
- ◆ A Time capsule was being organised to mark both the anniversary and the move to the new school.
- ◆ Any other ideas would be welcomed.

9 A O C B

a. Mrs Smart reported back on a joint Parent Council meeting she had attended in February. She noted some items from the agenda. These included:

- ◆ Multi Faith Schools with appropriate Chaplaincy teams. A policy on this was to be drawn up.
- ◆ Charter Mark Changes
- ◆ Production of a DVD on Parent Councils.
- ◆ The development of Cluster Parent Council meetings.
- ◆ The need for Public Liability Insurance for many school organised events.
- ◆ Training on the appointment of Headteachers and Deputies. It was agreed that this was necessary for new Council Members.

b. Mrs Birrell reported further to the Council on procedures relating to the Parent Fund. She noted that it had proved difficult to persuade parents to take part in the monitoring and auditing of this fund. Pupils were canvassed through House Reps meetings on their views regarding possible spends and this had resulted in the new TVs and associated Freeview package for the Dining Room. Ties and PE kit had also been purchased. It was suggested by Mr Johnstone that the Parent Council should monitor and audit the spend on behalf of parents. Mrs McKay is already responsible for the financial procedures relating to the fund.

Mrs McInulty thanked members of the Council for their contributions to a constructive meeting.

DATE OF NEXT PARENT COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 3 June at 7 pm in Conference Room.

All parents interested in joining the Council should contact Mrs McInulty at Armadale Academy.