

minutes of meeting held on: 05 December 2011

LEITH ACADEMY SCHOOL COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2011

Present: Diane Anderson (Co-chair), Christine Wallis (Co-chair), Doreen MacKinnon, Angela Mercer, Olivia Irvine, Marjorie Thomas (Councillor), Bridget Linton, Maire Johnston, Jackie Beer, Susan Dougal, Shona Moir

Apologies: Ann Monaghan, Alan Monaghan, Sheila Ralston, Mellissa Berry, Gary Peacock, Rob Munn, Gordon Munro, Katie Evans

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

These were accepted as accurate.

2. Welcome and Introduction

CW opened meeting and introduced herself and invited everyone to do the same.

3. Matters Arising

Membership - CW raised the role of Councillors in Parent Councils. MT – suggested she offer support where ever required in a general advisory capacity and can also act as a contact between the school and the public / local community if problems arise.

CCWP – DA attended the meeting on 15 November on Resources and found it was very informative, covering issues such as the IT Refresh which is still at the discussion stage but will take place later next year. Wide ranging discussion took place regarding The City of Edinburgh Council's objective re all school pupils having access to an electronic device 24/7. It was agreed that this objective may not be realistic in view of the financial implication and burden that this may incur for a lot of parents. DA suggested that more information regarding how this will become a reality was required and the Parent Council will keep parents up-to-date as the implementation plans progress. DM – this is still at the discussion stage as is the whole BT Refresh re the needs of Leith Academy. The refresh will take place in session 2012/13 but parents will be consulted and kept informed of LA's decisions before they take place.

Bank Account (Treasurer) – DA consulted with the previous Chair of LA PC with regards to the financial situation relating to the committee. She picked up the cheque book and made contact with DB who had been nominated as treasurer. No transactions had taken place since 2010, bank statements were filed up to August 2010. DA contacted JB (previous Treasurer for session 2009/2010) to seek clarification of the situation regarding previous bank details. In checking the bank details it transpired that the bank account signatories details and forms had not been completed and therefore the account statements were being sent from the RBS to the previous treasurer; JB. DA arranged to meet JB and DB to sort out the bank mandate details. There are outstanding bills that require payment that DA/CW need to prioritise. The Parent Council insurance/membership has not been paid this year which is a major concern and needs to be sorted immediately – JB to look into this on behalf of the council and report back at the next meeting.

Taking all into consideration; DA proposed JB to step back into the Treasurer's position, CW seconded and JB accepted the role.

Other Parent Councils – CW & DA have made contact with the Chairs of Trinity, Royal High and Tynecastle High Schools it is hoped to set up dates for parents to go along to the other parent council meetings to see how their meetings run and share learning and best practice in the parent council role.

Noticeboard – CW asked for volunteers to up-date the notice board on a regular basis with information regarding meeting dates, directions to the meeting area, voucher collection point for parents to drop vouchers off and to collect items such as Rag Bag (bags for the appeal HE are currently running to raise funds for the school in Malawi). DA asked SD and MJ if they would be kind enough to keep an eye on the notice board and review it regularly when they are in the school SD and MJ agreed to up date and tidy as required.

Agenda

4. Headteacher's Update

Monitoring & Tracking Reports – Parents should have received their child's report last week. DA – commented that it would have been preferable for parents to receive the report before Parents' Evening, this would have given parents the opportunity to digest the report and have more meaningful discussion with the teachers. OI – wasn't sure of the point of the M&T report for her 1st Year child as the report didn't contain much meaningful information. SM – suggested that there were inconsistencies across departments DA suggested that it would be useful for new parents to have an explanation on how the M&T report works to help parents get the best from the report.

Attainment – there are on going meetings with Principal Teachers regarding raising attainment - there are specific targets relating to this on their departmental improvement plans. There has been interesting dialogue regarding the way forward with many new ideas to raise attainment. The S3 Maths/English Parents Evening meeting in November aimed to involve parents in raising attainment in English and Maths. The meeting assisted parents in better understanding what was required of pupils, this information evening and time given by teachers in preparing the materials and workshops was very much appreciated by parents. The S3 Maths/English Information Evening has taken place and has been commended by parents for being very informative. MJ – suggested it was a bit late as it took place a week or so before the prelims. DM – thought this was a good point and she may raise this for future meetings.

Course Choice – preparation for the S1>S2/S2>S3 course choice is underway. Pupils will soon bring home a form to discuss their course choices with parents and there will be plenty of opportunity to discuss these choices in the year. The format for this is:

- 12 March - S1>S2 - Parents' Information Evening (7.00 pm)
- 21 March - S1 - Parents' Consultation (4.30 – 6.30 pm)
- 26 March - S2>S3 - Parents' Information Evening (7.00 pm)
- 19 April - S2 - Parents' Consultation (4.30 – 6.30 pm)

Final decisions regarding choices will be made after the Parental Consultation Evening.

Wider Achievement – The school has received 2 Highly Commended Awards for:

- Fit for Girls
- Enterprise/Diversity

These are lovely glass shields that will go on display. These awards represent and recognise the hard work that our pupils and staff are involved in outwith normal school hours. Well done to the hard work of the staff and pupils involved!

Perfect Attendance Month – although attendance didn't improve greatly it didn't decline. There are approximately 400 certificates/letters to be awarded to pupils for perfect attendance in November. **LA is currently top of all neighbourhood schools for attendance and is 12th out of 23 schools in the authority.**

Basketball Court – it has been proposed that a Basketball Court be built at the back of the Creative Arts Faculty. CT suggested that there is a consultative process with neighbours before planning is requested - all neighbours will be contacted regarding this as will the Departments that will be affected. DM will give the LA PC a progress report . DM invited parents to look at the proposed site.

Late Procedures – the Punctuality Improvement Group have introduced a new system that will involve pupils who are late bringing home a slip for parents to sign. It is hoped that this new system will cut down on lateness and raise attainment as parents will be made aware that their child has been late and will prevent this from happening again. MJ/SD/SM all pointed out that they had problems with the text messaging system wrongly alerting parents when a pupil is missing from class. AM – if a child is late to first period and hasn't signed in at the office a text message may be sent to parents automatically stating that a child is missing from school. Some parents pointed out that this can happen later in the day too and when they call the school to ask if someone can check if their child is present they are told by office staff that they are still unsure if their child is present. DM requested parents to inform her of such instances.

Parents' Evenings: - P7 Parents' Information Evening took place on 21 November and was highly attended. There were approx 200 people in attendance. It was a very successful evening and thanks go to all the departments who contributed.

- S4/5 Parents' Evenings were held on 23rd and 29th November.

Christmas Concert – this will take place on 15 December 2011. The Parent Council are invited to attend. Tickets are available from the office.

5. Pupil Council – School Canteen

KE sent apologies but gave DM the sub group report regarding the Cafeteria issues. The Pupil Council have drawn up an action plan to address the issues highlighted in a recent user survey. Visits have been organised to look at catering in other schools and the sub group is to meet with Laura Nisbet (school catering, Children and Families). MT suggested the council may be changing from Edinburgh Catering Services to Mitie. After wide ranging discussion it was decided that the Parent Council will support the Pupil Council in reviewing the service provided by the catering supplier. Pupil Council representatives are requested to mark dates into their action plan with an aim to report back to the LA PC at the next meeting. The outcome of the actions will be reviewed and assistance where necessary will be offered in putting forward recommendations to ensure that the service provided in the LA school canteen meets the quality standards required by the authority and is aligned to the Scottish Government health strategy. DM will ask S Ralston to forward the link to AM regarding the cafeteria legislation and this will be forwarded to both DA/CW for review and to gain a better understanding.

6. Next Year's Work Plan/Objectives

DA/CW introduced a work plan for the rest of session 2011-12:

- To increase parental involvement
- To support funding applications
- To increase the number of parent emails contacts in order to keep parents

informed

- Pupil/Parent Council links and support
- Fund raising - ideas

To increase parental involvement – CW pointed out that there appears to be more parents regularly attending LA PC meetings and with this more energy and drive is evident. This is welcomed. The PC recognise that all parents can't attend meetings and can catch up on items through reading the minutes from meetings they have been unable to attend by receiving minutes via email or from PC Noticeboard.

To support funding applications – Active Schools DA – read the information Mellissa Berry distributed at the previous meeting and suggested that the Council finances must be up-to-date before the Parent Council can apply for funding from either funds MB mentioned. DA hopes MB/SR will assist in targeting the categories that we should apply for but feels as a group we need to decide this before the application stage. JB (Treasurer) is to link with MB regarding the financial information that will be required. In MB's absence it was decided to raise this item at the next meeting on 19 January 2012.

To increase the number of email contacts – DA suggested 'SMART' objectives to help in increase email contacts. It is hoped that there will be a 50% increase by April 2012. Prefects have been asked to collect parental contact details at Parents' Evenings. DA designed a form for parents to fill in. For every active email address collected by the Prefect team – they will receive 10p to be donated to the Prom. DA confirmed other schools use this system to gather contact details and it works well. CW suggested at least one member of the parent Council attend these evenings to talk to parents about the work of the Parent Council. It was agreed that face to face contact is sometimes best.

Fund Raising – Regarding fund raising for Leith Academy the overall consensus is that goals/targets should be agreed with the Headteacher as parents would prefer to raise funds for specific causes. DA asked DM if she had an idea of what the Parent Council could raise funds for. DM suggested a basketball court/sensory area. AM suggested a colour version of Leith Links as most schools have glossy magazines it would be good if LA could produce on the odd occasion a 4 page colour spread. This would involve an editing committee which could be made up of parents, staff and pupils. LA PC would welcome fundraising ideas and support. If anyone is interested in planning or organising a fundraising event or would like to offer assistance - get in touch with one of the members.

7. Finance – JB distributed paperwork regarding the bank signatories. Funds in the account at 5th December Stand at £1,700. The last cheque was written in June 2010. There are outstanding bills to be paid. CW/ DA to sort out bank mandates ASAP and forward to JB for processing at RBS. There was discussion and suggestions about how these funds could be usefully spent and to be followed up at the next meeting.

8. Meetings/Events/Issues

The next CCWP meeting will be held on 14 December 2011 – CW or OI will attend.

Agenda items are:

- Attainment
- Literacy
- CfE
- Engagement of Young People
- School Session Dates

AOCB

- **Plasma Screen** – DA suggested the dates of the Parent Council meetings could go on the Plasma screen. AM to organise.
- **Parental Engagement Development Group** – DM distributed this and linked it with the topics that the Parent Council have already undertaken or discussed. DM to email the link to AM and AM to email the link to parents. Parents to read for information and update

DA/CW closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

Date of next meeting – Thursday 19 January 2011 (please note this will be held in the (Staffroom at 7pm).