

Balerno High School Parent Council

Welcome to the third annual report of Balerno School Parent Council.

Please note the use of the word parent throughout this report refers to all parents, carers and guardians.

The Parent Council (PC) has had another busy year with the following issues

Consultative Committee with parents (CCWP)

The CCWP is formed by PC representatives from across the city, the Convenor and Director of Education, PTA representatives, Local Councillors, Council employees and teaching representatives.

Meetings are held every six weeks to discuss and debate current educational policies and issues, this year the Children and Families budget cuts and centralised school equipment procurement policies have been the main agenda issue.

The issue of school closures was a fairly contentious issue, not affecting Balerno High School, as politics is never far away from education decision making.

Tricia Aitchison (PC) and Rory Mackenzie (Teaching Representative) attended all the meetings which made sure Balerno High School was very well represented, making sure our specific needs are discussed.

Sharing experiences amongst the interested parties can only bring benefits where best practices and resources can be fully utilised.

Many parents expressed a view over the year that the CCWP was lacking proper consultation with parent groups and the City Council have began working groups among all parties to create a more open and integrated dialogue.

Edinburgh Parent Council Network (EPCN)

Every Chair of all Edinburgh School Parent Councils are invited to join this group with a dedicated web site to exchange views and information between PC's. There are currently some 170 members of the EPCN.

The main drive pre budgets was the proposed £5M budget cuts from the schools budgets which would have some £90,000 being cut from the schools budget.

The EPCN campaign targeted all relevant Councillors, MP's, MSP and Local Authority administrators.

The EPCN was widely supported by parents throughout the city and I would like to thank all our parents who added their considerable support in contacting the parties above.

The PC members, spear headed by Liz Carrie, were particularly active in drumming up support for this campaign

Balerno High School/PC is recognised throughout the City as a vociferous campaigner for improving education which was reflected in Mr Mackenzie and myself having our case aired on national tv and radio.

The campaign was considered a huge success with the eventual cuts being reduced by circa 50 %.

However this campaign will need to continue as the impending budget cuts are likely to severely challenge the education system as we know it.

Curriculum for Excellence

The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) will be the most dramatic change to our childrens education in a generation.

The concept of the CfE is generally accepted as an inspirational education goal however the real challenge is for schools to be fully prepared, parents and pupils to fully understand what is involved. Teacher organisations have expressed concernms that not enough time or resource has been allocated for thios significant change in the education al system, however the Government appear adamant that the CfE will commence this coming term.

Liz Carrie and I have attended several Government sponsored events this year to convey the principles and requirements of CfE and I have been feeding this back to the PC and parents via the email.

We will continue this process in conjunction with the school to ensure parents are kept abreast of the CfE progress.

I have a attached a useful link to a flyer providing further info on CfE

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/internet/Attachments/Internet/Learning/Programmes_and_initiatives/CfE/Further-info/Reports_2/CFE-Explained.pdf

Communication With Parents

Members of the Parent Council have attended every parents night throughout the school year collecting email addresses from parents. Having a complete email address list would allow savings to be made on paper and printing which in turn can be used by the school. Liz Carrie holds the Email addresses are only used to communicate with parents and for use with the PC and PSA only.

Minutes of the Parent Council meetings are available on the school website and on the notice board at reception.

A dedicated web site for the Parent Council has been instigated by Liz Carrie and Sue McLeod which should up and running this year.

All Weather Pitch

Despite all the efforts by the PC, Councillors Paisley and Henderson the funding which was coming within our grasp to fund the all weather pitch has now been re-allocated and the latest estimate is that the potential for funding is now at least 4 years away before it will even be on the Council funding agenda.

Combined discussions are ongoing with Currie Rugby Club to ensure the Council maintain the parks on Malleny Park to the agreed standard.

Piper

Piper (Parents in Partnership Eco Representatives) is an environmental group set up to promote sustainability within the community.

The PC have an on-going dialogue with Piper, led by Claire Atkins and Marion Milne, as to the proper integration of the Piper aspirations into the school activities. The school are actively pursuing landscaping work around the school which is reaping benefits from enhancing the school environment and the pupils understanding of the ecology involved.

Community Issues.

Marion Milne represents Balerno Community Council(BCC), promoting relationships with the local community which is a core part of the Parental Involvement Act. We have jointly convinced the Council to improve the road safety measures outside the school with additional road safety signs, re-surfacing and yellow line road markings which will help with the parking outside the school. Clare Atkins attends the Balerno Village Trust (BVT) meetings to ensure any opportunities for the school and BVT are captured.

Meetings

There are six Parent Council meeting per school year. Meetings are attended by the members of the Parent Council and invited relevant persons and are open to all parents. Meetings are usually held at 7.30pm in Room F10. Meeting dates for the current session are 13th Sept 8pm, 8th November, 17th January, 7 March, 9th May, 6th June. The AGM will be at 7pm on the 13th Sept, followed by the PC meeting at 8pm. The invited members are: Rory McKenzie, head teacher, and adviser to the PC, the head boy and girl, all three Local Councillors, representatives from PSA, BCC, Dean Park PC, Ratho Primary PC, Kirknewton PC.

Parent Members of the Parent Council are

Francis Barkey (chair)	francis@barkey.me.uk
Tricia Aitchison(vice chair)	theaitchison@aol.com
Liz Carrie (treasurer)	liz.carrie@blueyonder.co.uk
John Craig (school transport)	john.craig@aks-scotland.co.uk
Marion Milne (BCC liaison)	marion724@talktalk.net
Clare Atkins(Environmental)	catkins62@hotmail.co.uk
Maggie Wood	Maggie.Wood@gmail.com
Lynn Peutherer	
Kenny Cairns	