



Minutes of Meeting of Balerno High School Parent Council 12 September 2016 at Balerno High School at 6.30pm

PC members

Caroline Anderson (CA), Andrea Brewster (AB), Jessica Bryce (JB), Tony Foster (TF) (Chair), Mike Humphries (MH), Yvonne Jarron, Sanjay Kallat, Peter MacLean, Paula Miller, Marion Milne (MM), Christine Paterson, Peter Reekie (PR)

School staff

Neil McCallum (NM) (Headteacher), Lindsay Fullarton (LF) (Deputy Headteacher), Ruth Douglas (PTC Science)

Senior pupils

Naomi McLeod (NMcl)(Head girl), Calum Greer (CG)(Head boy)

Public

Yolande Montero, Jan Roberts (JR), Gillie Scholtes

Apologies

Cllr Ricky Henderson

Introduction and Welcome

1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees.

Matters arising from last PC meeting

2. 2.1 TF to recirculate 1-1 Digital Learning document.
- 2.2 PR highlighted the ongoing issue of pupils unable to access school wifi while there were no 1-1 devices provided by the school. It impacted on equal access for all as pupils were dependent on the level of data contract they had on their own devices.
NM informed that Edinburgh Council were undergoing a 'wifi refresh' in schools. The Edinburgh Digital Team were present at the last Headteachers meeting. Edinburgh Council are no further forward in allowing pupils wifi access. NM has to balance allocation of budget for staff v's spending on 1-1 devices. Tom Hendry (IT teacher) is providing input to BHS IT set up (beyond his teaching remit).
NM reminded that all pupils have access to Office 365. He will continue to actively pursue a solution to the wifi issue.
- 2.3 Tom Hendry also working on BHS social media presence and is purchasing BHS site name for Twitter.
- 2.4 A new Active Schools Co-ordinator is in post – Lindsay Campbell.

2.5 Balerno bus service (number 20) has been cancelled. TF indicated that funding is available for someone to do a needs analysis re. public transport in Balerno. TF to report back if there is further relevant info.

3. No changes were suggested to the last minutes. Proposed by Mike Humphries, seconded by Sanjay Kallat.

MH suggested publishing draft minutes on website ASAP to keep Parent Forum informed.

PC Induction Presentation

4. Lindsay Fullarton gave a presentation describing the school structure (see copy of PowerPoint slides on school website). Particular topics covered included:

- The school leadership structure
- School faculty structure
- School Improvement Plan

Questions arising from the presentation:

- TF asked when a school calendar would be available.

LF said the calendar was always reviewed in May and dates set for inservice and parents nights. NM added that the aim was to publish the school calendar on the website and it should be available in the next couple of weeks. In future the aim was to publish it on the website during the summer holidays.

- CA asked if feedback could be sought on experience of the current S3 course choice process.
- PR asked about the impact of the school roll on services in the school. How can parents help? SK asked if we can publicise the school in non catchment areas. NM said this was not possible! However, NM encouraged parents to help to raise the school profile in their communities.

P7 open evening is in October. Need to make the most of the opportunity to 'market' the school, including using primary school social media to advertise the evening.

TF thanked Lindsay Fullarton for the presentation and also thanked Lindsay for leading the school as acting head teacher, in particular during the exam period.

Headteachers Report

5. 5.1 Neil McCallum was welcomed to the meeting and congratulated on his appointment as new head teacher.

5.2 NM gave a presentation on his vision for the school, a summary of his first four weeks in the post and took questions (see copy of PowerPoint slides on school website)

Particular topics covered include:

- Recent exam results
- Benchmarking of BHS against virtual comparator schools
- New staff
- School building works
- Curriculum rationale & planned curriculum review for all year groups over next year

- S5 timetabling incorporating additional SQA recognised qualifications e.g. in volunteering, leadership
- Key forthcoming dates

5.3 Questions arising from the presentation:

- MH asked if a review had been undertaken to compare exam results attained by pupils taught in bi-level classes v's single level classes. NM to seek staff to do this (when time permits!)
- JR asked if there had been a change to the school uniform policy. NM affirmed that there was no change. School uniform will be reinforced to pupils in assembly, along with the behaviour management policy. Parents will receive a follow up email re school uniform.
- PR suggested NM shared the curriculum rationale for how different subjects and number of periods were allocated to different year groups. NM to add additional slides to the presentation to explain this.

Science update

6. 6.1 Ruth Douglas, Principal Teacher Curriculum, Science, was welcomed to the meeting to give an update on the staffing challenges in the faculty.

There are numerous absences / vacancies in the department and despite attempts to recruit staff gaps remain.

NM assured that the situation was the same in many other schools.

Ruth described the steps taken to try and ensure consistency of teaching for pupils, in particular those due to sit exams this year. Solutions include:

- Science staff cross teaching other science subjects.
- The Support for Learning teacher teaching younger science classes.
- Where class size means that additional teachers were required to maintain ratios e.g. for practical lessons, they would be co-opted from other subjects.
- A retired colleague returning to teach some younger classes.

Ruth was thanked for ongoing communication with parents which was appreciated.

PSA Report

7. JR (PSA member) reported that the PSA have considerable funds to donate to school (~£3500) and need to discuss further with NM.

Need to explore further how communication can be improved between the PC and PSA.

Senior Pupils Perspective

8. Naomi McLeod and Calum Greer were welcomed & congratulated as the new headgirl & headboy. They summarised their activities so far:

- NM has given them a budget for their S6 area. They were seeking to furnish it and equip it.
- They are meeting monthly with NM to feedback.
- They have set up a senior and junior pupil council which has met twice so far; asking pupils what they like and dislike about the school and seeking suggestions for improvements. Planning to set up Facebook groups for both pupil councils.
- They have met with house captains re. school events and are planning a calendar of events to run throughout the year.

- Team Jak has been selected as the school charity for the year.

Questions arising:

- AB asked how else pupil council info could be communicated to younger pupils who weren't on Facebook (aged <13). NM said there was a plan to use the school board in the foyer. CG added that they would set up an ideas board people could communicate on.
- PR asked how parents could help to support senior pupils. CG and NMcL said any donations of sofas would be appreciated!
- MM asked if the school would consider adding a Onesie Day in support of diabetes awareness to the school calendar of events.

Community Council & Local Updates

9. 9.1 Balerno Village Trust are circulating a Balerno Community consultation in partnership with Balerno Community Council. The deadline for feedback has been extended and they are working with local schools to seek input from pupils.

AOCB & date of next meeting

10. 10.1 JB proposed that an additional PC member accompanied TF to his monthly meetings with the Headteacher (to feed into a handover and succession plan). TF agreed to plan dates and include an additional person.
- 10.2 MH asked that a future agenda would include discussion about other members getting involved in website updates for the PC section.
- 10.3 PR asked for more feedback about maths results following the additional meetings with maths staff over the last year. NM suggested inviting other faculty heads to future meetings on a rolling basis to present and explain their curricular changes.
- 10.4 TF reiterated that the role of the PC is not to manage personal questions re. the school. In these cases parents / carers should approach the school directly. However, should an issue affect a significant number of pupils, it would then become an issue the PC would get involved in.
- 10.5 TF agreed to nominate MM as Balerno Community Council BHS rep when she was standing in the forthcoming Community Council local elections.
- 10.6 TF reminded people that there are additional meetings in the local authority on top of the 5/year PC meetings. TF to recirculate dates and encouraged each member to try and attend one.
- 10.7 Next meeting is Monday 14 November at 6.30pm in Balerno High School