



Email balernohighspc@gmail.com

Minutes of Meeting of Balerno High School Parent Council Monday 26th November 2018, 6.30pm at Balerno High School

Attendees

Parents (PC members)

Andrea Brewster (AB) (Chair), Alastair MacLennan (AM) (Vice Chair), Jessica Bryce (JB), Paula Miller (PM), Christine Paterson (CP), Mandy Irvine (MI), Fiona McDougall (FM), Trish Lumsden (TL), Alison Robertson (AL)

Co-opted community member

Marion Milne (MM)

School staff

Neil McCallum (NM) (Head Teacher), Michelle May (Teacher Rep), Colin Hay (Head of Science)

Senior pupils

Hari Kallatt (Head Boy), Kirsty Williams (School Captain)

Parents/Others attending

Cllr Ricky Henderson, Steve Hankin, Stuart Gillies

Apologies

Peter Reekie (PR) (Treasurer), Blanca Nieto, Yvonne McEwan, Caroline Anderson (PC members), Lisa Coffey (Depute Head Teacher), Cllrs Graeme Bruce, Sue Webber & Neil Gardiner

1. Introduction and Welcome

a) Attendance & apologies

2. Minutes and Matters arising

a) Minute taker for meeting - TL

b) Approval of minutes from 29.10.18

3. Senior pupil team report

Pupil year head idea has begun. All year group assemblies are complete. They have one person from the senior pupil team allocated to each year group. These people are gathering information/thought/opinions from focus groups (five pupils from each year) about the school reporting/tracking system. This is aimed at improving communication between pupils and senior management in the school and suggesting improvements for the future. They hope to replicate this format to carry out further surveys to gather pupil feedback about other areas and systems in the school such as break and lunch time arrangements, and tutor time.

They have been planning a Christmas dinner followed by a ceilidh for S6. Senior team and House team are working together to organise this for the whole year.

They fundraised for Children in Need, their whole school bake sale raised £117.89

They sold poppies for Remembrance day and read poems at the school assembly. They laid wreaths in the City Centre and were also present at Tynecastle's "A War of Two Halves".

4. *Presentation on the Science Faculty by Colin Hay, Head of Science*

The presentation is available alongside these minutes – see 'Science Faculty parent Council presentation'.

Colin started at BHS in October 2017. The science department was facing staff shortages and was not working well as a team. He has introduced numerous changes to improve the department. This year's results show that BHS is now hitting the national average in biology at Higher level. Chemistry results have greatly improved and are above the national average and 8% higher than the city average for Higher. Results show that in physics BHS is not performing well. They have recruited a new chemistry teacher who starts in January and are currently trying to recruit a physics teacher which is difficult as there is a national shortage of science teachers.

Mr Hay has introduced numerous changes to the science faculty to continue to drive up the quality of the teaching and the results.

Introduced a Faculty improvement plan

Team building through more departmental meeting opportunities.

Staff are now keen to talk at faculty meetings.

Working together to understand national qualifications changes.

Designated lead teachers in s1/s2 topics.

Further leadership opportunities.

S1/2 changes

Improved curriculum design with all three science subjects now equally weighted.

Robust assessments in all science subjects.

Pupils encouraged to reflect progress and set their own targets.

S3 changes

Critical thinking course

Enhanced subject specific course

Opportunity to experience each science before course choice

Senior phase

Physics SQA qualification manager visit

Early warning system for attainment concerns

All staff signed up to SQA alerts

Survey monkey feedback from students

Biology - consultation with city schools on approaches and sharing resources

Chemistry - staff training, sharing resources with city schools

Physics - consultation with SQA on project/assignment work, staff training, consultation with city schools

Opportunities

STEAM club, Chemistry café, Zoology club, Study support clubs, Steam career hub, DNA profiling workshop, CERN trip 2019-2020, Zoo trips, Science stars (celebrating pupil success),

Support

Supported home study page per school year

Homework in senior phase based around exam level questions

Lunchtime clubs on specific days with open door policy for the rest of the week

The science faculty welcomes contact from pupils/carers if there are any issues

5. Headteacher report

Staffing Update

Staff Departing

S Morrison (Physics) North Berwick

New Staff

D Thomson

Events and News update

Temporary Units

The temporary units (HUTS) will now be decommissioned. We are currently working with colleagues at CEC to put solutions in place for these two teaching areas. The proposed redevelopment of rooms G05 and GF4 (LRC), formerly community spaces, is now progressing.

Successes / News

Scottish swimming awards

Lucas Thomson named as junior athlete of the year.

Football Success

Congratulations to Keir Russell (S6) on his inclusion in the Lothian's school team. He will compete in the national county competition.

Karate Success

Jacob Smart (S4) was competing with the Scottish Karate Federation at the European Wado Cup in Santarem, Portugal last weekend.

S3 YPI Charity Fair

Was a great success on Monday, thank you to Jacqueline Thompson for organising and for everyone that help to make it a huge success.

Rotary Event

Aimee McRae (S6) Louise Flockhart (S3) Speed Climbing, Alex Braggins (S6) Music and Ava Spittle (S5) Leadership were all recognised for their achievements at an event on Wednesday evening.

WW1 Centenary

All pupils in S1 were taken to the exhibition in Balerno Parish Church and this involved presentation from members of the community that had a link to a relative that was involved in WW1. The S4 pupils studying history had a presentation from Malcolm Fergusson, giving them a comprehensive history on Balerno at the time of WW1.

Remembrance Services

We were represented at the Hearts FC ceremony at Haymarket on Sunday morning, as well as at a special event to commemorate the centenary at the Stadium with pupils from Tynecastle HS, West Calder HS and George Watsons College involved. We also had representation at the Balerno Parish church service on Sunday.

Modern Languages Cluster event

Many thanks to Clare Hastie for organising a cluster Spanish evening last night. It was great to have pupils from across the cluster with their parents attending for tapas and a film.

Hot Chocolate Friday

This is targeted at our pupils who behave impeccably but are often not recognised for doing so. We want to reward pupils for going over and above so there is no limit to their excellent behaviour.

Upcoming Events

December

7th S4 Prelims finish
17th Christmas Concert
21st End of term (12.00noon)

January

8th In-Service
9th Pupils return
14th S5/6 Prelims begin
21st Parent Council meeting
24th S3 Consultation evening
24th S3 / 4 / 5 coursing information evening

6. *Financial update*

No transactions or changes since the last meeting.

7. *Statutory Consultation on the catchment changes between Balerno and Currie schools*

This runs to 3rd December

a) Parental feedback to the Parent Council

One email received from a parent who wished their street to formally be in catchment for BHS.

b) Feedback on the two recent Community Meetings

The main issue raised is for people who live in the area and are currently in Currie catchment who have younger children. They would like a sibling guarantee but the Council are unable to commit to this until they have reviewed the number of children registering for primary and secondary school in Balerno and Currie. This review will not be complete until January 2019.

c) Parent Council response to Edinburgh Council

Parent Council will reply that we are in favour of the proposal. AB to send this.

8. *Pupil access to WiFi in school*

a) Update from Edinburgh Council pilot at James Gillespie's

Update below was provided by Neil McCallum after the PC meeting:

'I have spoken to James Gillespie's Head Teacher and there was a delay on the starting of the pilot for the Wi-Fi, but it is now up and running and pupils are accessing it on a rolling programme. He said that so far it was going well.

Lorna Sweeney was not at the Head teacher meeting yesterday, but I have emailed her for an update'

More information will follow when available.

9. *Progress reports from Neil McCallum*

a) School Vision & Values

All year groups looking at this to get ideas for a school vision statement.

10 values are listed which we will try to reduce to 6. A survey monkey will go out to parents, likely before Christmas. Neil McCallum wants the school vision/values to be all over the school so everyone is very clear what BHS is aiming for.

b) School Improvement Plan

A Parent Friendly Version of the School Improvement plan is now available on the school website under 'General Information'. The key result areas are:

1 - Improvement in attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy

2 - Close the attainment and achievement gap in our school

3 - Improvement in children and young people's health and well-being.

4 - Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive destinations for all our pupils

10. **AOCB**

A parent raised a question about school communication and the school website. As there was insufficient time to discuss fully, this will be added as an agenda item for the Jan 2019 meeting.

11. ***Date / time of next meeting***

21st January 2019, 6.30pm at Ratho Primary School