



Charleston Academy Parent Council

Minutes of meeting held at Charleston Academy on Tuesday 20th March 2018 at 7.00pm

Present:

David Crooks
Gordon Stewart
Grant Franklin
David Gillies
David Garvie
Andrew MacLean
Fiona Alexander
Rona MacPherson
Fiona Malcolm
Lyndie Cameron
Helen Hunter
Lynsey Graham
Elspeth MacKenzie
Kate morris
Julie Riddle

Apologies:

Emma Knox
Rona MacKaskill
Ciara Flugel
Kathy Fraser
Graham Ross

1. Welcome and Apologies

Kate Morris opened the meeting and welcomed all attending.

2. Approval of Minutes of last meeting

Minutes were proposed and seconded for approval by Grant Franklin and Fiona Malcolm.

3. Matters Arising

Highland council has provisionally approved £7.5 million for a refurbishment of the school. The council is applying to the Scottish government for funding.

There is a rising school role.

4. Rector's Report – including staffing update

It is confirmed that Chris O'Neill is no longer the Rector. Adverts for a headteacher had gone out with a closing date in April and aim to have someone in post by August.

It is hoped that recruitment will be easier with the stability brought by a new permanent headteacher.

Regarding staffing, the main problem remains in English. The English department should have 4.6 whole time equivalents, and interviews are scheduled which should hopefully bring the department back to full complement by August.

For general recruitment, Highland Council is currently recruiting in Canada with some success.

Concerns have been raised regarding teaching in S1 to S3 in English in particular. This is unfortunate that the aim is to address this with the new appointments. Unfortunately it means that reports cannot be generated for classes that have lacked an English teacher. It has been suggested that there may be an additional parents evening for English and the school is looking at this potential.

Mr Stewart wished to thank Dr Campbell, Mr Smith and Mrs Marshall for their hard work in keeping the English department running during this difficult time. It was suggested that there may be scope to bridge the gap for classes that have lacked a teacher by sending work home during the study leave period.

There are adverts out to fill gaps in technical, history, biology and chemistry. There are also concerns regarding the guidance teachers as there is only one permanent 0.6 WTE and three temporary posts.

The school is providing classes in the April holiday for pupils with exams.

The plan to provide letters to parents by email should commence shortly.

The website is being updated by Jonathan Richards. At present, the Facebook page and the Twitter feed are non-functional but there is a plan to redevelop the Twitter feed.

Mr Stewart reported on the Rewards Breakfast and a STEM competition. Pupils on the Travel and Tourism course also very successfully took over Culloden battlefield for the weekend and this involved 10 members of staff. The feedback was very positive.

There are currently eight Bridge to Employment pupils gaining experience with companies including Cap Gemini and LifeScan.

The will be a careers day for primary schools on 10th May, which will involve parents talking about their own employment.

Regarding dress code, Mr Stewart feels that a uniform based around a shirt and tie would be most appropriate and in fact would entail less financial outlay than the current sweatshirts and hoodys.

Plans are still being discussed to introduce seven subjects in S4. In a survey of staff, 100% of respondents supported this and there appears to be strong parental support also. Council officers are open to this and recognise that there may be some advantages, particularly as this will allow for a range of abilities to be catered for. This will be supported by the expanded timetable for S3 that is being brought in next year, and by completion of National 5 coursework in S3. It is hoped that these changes would be brought in for the current S2 pupils.

The Report on Charleston by Peter Macavoy has been completed but the council have no plans to share the report with the school. A freedom of information request has not been accepted or acted upon. It is not clear whether it would be useful to make this report public now or simply to move on as the situation with leadership in Charleston has changed.

5. School Improvement Plan

Work on the School Improvement Plan is under way. The Senior Leadership Team are looking at ways to implement the plan. The parental survey was distributed and discussed. Responses regarding S2 appear to be an outlier and this is a concern.

6. PISA Assessment

Charleston is one of seven schools in Highland that has been selected for a PISA assessment.

7. Staff Appreciation Lunch

The staff appreciation lunch on the 4th of June was discussed and will require parent volunteers.

8. Finance

No report available as the accounts are currently with the accountant.

Funding requests:
No funding requests received.

9. Any Other Business

Google classroom was discussed and it was emphasised that this is a great resource that is underutilised at present in the school. However some senior peoples are resisting its use and wanting a traditional structure to homework setting. One downside of Google classroom is that it does not teach the skills required for sitting exams which remain pen and paper.

Travel for rural pupils attending extracurricular activities: It was agreed that for equity, that on a trial basis the parent council would fund any child's travel for academic extra curricular activities up until the end of the exam period. This funding should be capped at £50 and reviewed at the next meeting.

10. Correspondence

None received

11. Date of Next Meeting

Parent council meeting dates required to be set for the next year.

Date of next meeting: 16th May.