

PEEBLES HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL/PTA



Parent Council Meeting
Wednesday, 31st May 2017 at 7.00pm
In the new Sports Facility

MINUTES

Present:

Margaret Hogg, Mirren McLeod, Glenda Barton, Vanessa Rice, Agnes Rennick, Andrea Feller, James Sherwood-Smith, Lorraine Sykes, Vivienne Leckie, Kirstin Worsley, Kirsten Robertson (Teacher PHS), Paul Fagan (SMT PHS) Veronica Boyd (Teacher PHS) Kevin McCall (SLO SBC) William Adams (Pupil) and Adam Rennick (Pupil)

Apologies: Tommy Davidson and Lisa Houston

Welcome by Margaret Hogg.

Learning Pathways and Developing the Young Workforce

Paul Fagan explained how over the last year the school has been working on how to develop the young workforce. Paul introduced Kevin McCall from SBC, Colin Clelland (employer offering a Modern Apprenticeship), Adam and William (S3 students) and Veronica Boyd from the Business Studies Department.

Leavers' Destinations - Scotland have 56,000 students each year going to a negative destination – by 2021 the Government want to reduce this by 40% and bring us up into the top five nations of achieving positive destinations.

In terms of benchmarking against comparator schools and the SBC average, PHS are doing better with 96% going to positive destinations.

PHS have about 50% going on to higher education and 20% going on to further education. The areas PHS are particularly concerned about are the 4% in the “unemployed seeking” and “unemployed not seeking” categories. This percentage also includes those students who are taking a year out. PHS want to get the 96% to 100% of students going to positive destinations by 2021.

What is important to employers? – interpersonal skills, problem solving skills and then qualifications. Teachers are focusing on the skills that employers find important.

The school had a very successful careers fair. There were very positive evaluations. It was more comprehensive than in previous years.

Opportunities – PHS have reinstated the work experience programme. This started with 3 partners on the gateway database at the beginning of the year, and now we have 170 students participating in work experience in S3 this year.

Adam and William shared their experience of working in the Lloyds Banking Group. They did a very good presentation on what they learnt during their week's work experience.

Agnes Rennick thanked the school for giving her son the opportunity to go on a work experience placement.

Entrepreneurial Foundation (TEF) – this saw new ideas being put forward by students who then took their idea and developed it. One project was with Stobo - they came up with the idea of "Stobo at Home" which Stobo are in the process of marketing and it is now in production.

Resilient Communities – One day event for S3 pupils. Emergency services came into the school and looked at different emergency situations.

Apprenticeship day – wasn't as successful. Skills Development Scotland were paying for the transport but they struggled to get enough students to engage with the idea of apprenticeships. Next September the Apprenticeship roadshow will be at PHS.

Women in the construction industry – we had 19 females (most in the Borders) go down and learn about construction opportunities for women.

Work experience for staff - Kirsten Robertson went to Borders College to get more of an idea of the breadth of opportunities that there are there. They are very supportive of students. Borders College doesn't have a good standing amongst all students at PHS and they are hoping to change this culture. If a student doesn't quite fit the criteria for a course, they will find a course that is suitable for them. They are also open to late applications (after the March deadline). Even if it is half way through the year and a student is struggling with their secondary education, they can fit them in for even one day a week.

It is possible to continue to University after attending College. For example Borders College have a partnership with Heriot-Watt where students can continue their studies after achieving an HND.

Kirsten would like to take all the third years down to Borders College to show them what it is like. Kevin McCall said Borders College is one of the top colleges in Scotland.

Business Studies within PHS - The school has been developing partnerships with businesses. Veronica Boyd talked about how the Business Studies department has been raising skills awareness and developing how business skills can be used in everyday life. They are hoping to spread this across the wider school. They have three different courses which are focussed on skills development (Admin and IT, Business Management and Computer Science). They also have partnership links, recently with Lloyds Bank. They are also for the first time teaching Computer Science at Higher level.

Teachers were asked if employability skills and qualities are made explicit in their subject/classroom and the majority said yes. Students answered a similar survey and about 1/5th did not think it was.

Moving forward – looking at areas that need addressing from the students in their learning passports. The 14 employability skills are linked into it.

Priorities for 2017/18 include Writing Skills for CV's.

Apprenticeships - Colin Clelland spoke of the Modern Apprenticeship that his business (Evolution) is offering which incorporates a wage as well as time off for exams. Apprenticeships are audited by an external agency.

SBC have added clauses into contracts now to ensure added value is included for young people in the Borders, by way of providing apprenticeships.

We were shown a short video on Vocational Pathways. Kevin McCall explained how SBC are incorporating flexible pathways into the Borders educational facilities. ICT skills are now linked with literacy, as they are essential in today's society.

There are currently opportunities for high school students to attend Borders College on a Tuesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons.

SBC are wanting parental involvement in Flexible Learning because there are many different ways to becoming a success. There needs to be a cultural change in the perception of flexible pathways.

Skills Development Scotland now track pupil cohorts for four years to see whether their destination after leaving school is positive or negative.

The Scottish Government have created a Modern Apprenticeship which requires a student to have at least an SQV level 1. Not all Modern Apprenticeships require the student to be academic.

In the Borders there are 600 Modern Apprenticeships.

What next? - Paul Fagan finished the presentation by discussing what is next for PHS.

- they need to increase vocational options in senior grades (an option for senior students to incorporate work experience over a year)
- provide interview practice and CV training (by capturing this on their learning passport)
- certificates in SQA work placement award and employability award (this will be more refined next year)
- continue to develop careers education standard (making sure young people leave PHS thinking "they can")
- increased engagement with vocational pathways.

The meeting finished at 9:15pm