

PEEBLES HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL/PTA



Parent Council Meeting
Wednesday, 10th May 2017 at 7.00pm
In Room M37

MINUTES

Present:

Campbell Wilson, Glenda Barton, Kirsten Worsley, Margaret Hogg, Vivienne Leckie, Mrs Reville, Vanessa Rice, Lisa Houston, Eric Nightingale and Gareth Easton.

Apologies:

Kate Whalley, Eleanor Fairbairn, Michael Pryor, Laura Robertson, Gail Jackson and Lorraine Sykes

Welcome by Margaret Hogg.

Minutes of Last Meeting:

Minutes accepted.

Modern Languages Report by Mrs Reville

Some transactional elements have been removed from the new curriculum. However, the school still do them and are trialing "language for life" and "language for work" (these are stand alone units from the SQA with a certificate once completed). There is a cost to this. They are putting out a survey monkey survey to students to see how they are finding it and if they are enjoying it.

They are doing conversational speaking in all language classes but it is sometimes difficult to get teenagers to talk.

They have purchased a new S1 French course which has online support. It is more modern and they are hoping that they will receive funding for more books for S2 from the PHS200 Club or PTA. They have done language exchange trips in the past and are keen to try and get more of these trips arranged. They are also looking at holiday camps where they are given more immersion into speaking the language. They did in the past have some support with a French au-pair coming in to help the senior students with their talking in preparation for the exams.

The difference in level in languages when students start PHS from the different primary schools is challenging. This has been talked about by Primary School Head Teachers at Tweeddale Head Teacher meetings.

Mrs Reville is happy to hear of any suggestions from the Parent Council. Support from parents would be helpful.

A parent questioned why students are able to use a dictionary in exams. Does this stop them learning and retaining the language? Mrs Reville said this is allowed by the SQA so this is how they are taught. They tend to only use the dictionary for checking the spelling of a word and do not have enough time to use it to do the whole exam.

There is scope for them to pick up languages again in S5 and S6. This has been popular this year. The content of the CfE level four languages, which is what pupils are expected to achieve at the end of S3, is more in line with N4/5.

Mrs Reville would like to buy more resource books for French – they cost £14.99 x 120 students (£1,798.00) plus £200 subscription fee.

Matters Arising

Flexible Pathways Subgroup

Margaret - S5 and S6's have had their survey. They have had an initial look at the results but before they can share the results the next stage is to discuss with staff.

Campbell reported that our S4's who leave are not leaving with as many qualifications as S4's from other comparative schools. Campbell is teaching a lower set S4 class this year and has monitored their progress in other subjects. The English department are more often getting these students to N5 English level. He has 5 S4's leaving at the end of S4 but all coming in to sit English. However, they are all leaving to positive destinations (courses at College or apprenticeships). Campbell wants to look at short courses for S4 leavers to provide greater levels of certification before they leave school.

Margaret – The problem we used to have in 2nd year with students switching off once they decide to drop a subject is now a problem in 3rd year. This is not a problem with all students, but a few.

The negative destinations tend to be at the higher part of school with students who go on to do a gap year and then do not go on to higher education.

School Dinners On-line Ordering and Parent Pay

Campbell reported that Lorraine Sykes has been great working with educating office staff via her role as office staff at Kingsland Primary School. They have co-ordinated with the primary schools to getting P7's to pay for ties etc via ParentPay. With Lorraine explaining how to link with P7 ParentPay, this has had a positive result for poverty proofing as the students who are entitled to a free tie etc have been identified without anyone knowing who they are.

New Website

Glenda reported that Lisa and Simon have been working putting content onto the new website. They have also trialled putting the weekly bulletin on the website. As new items go onto the website they would like a tweet and/or e-mail to alert parents. There are just some content changes left to be done before the new website is ready. The launch date is 12th June.

Pupil Equity Subgroup

Campbell reported that last week Eric, Michael and Campbell met to discuss the £54,000 coming to the school to help improve the attainment level of students on free school dinners. There are some limitations on how they can spend it. There are about 90 students at PHS who get free school dinners, but there are more students than that who experience poverty on a daily basis. Although there is a general link between poverty and lower attainment, there are always 4/5 students every year who

come from poorer backgrounds who excel at school and go on to do amazing things. Eric thought Campbell's ideas on how to use the money were good.

There is also a correlation with participation and attendance. Campbell has been working with staff on this as well. Campbell talked with staff and they thought some money should be kept back. Some staff think that one-to-one tutoring is the most effective way to help underperforming students – more staff views to be gathered.

Campbell wants to put a focus group of 20 students together to see what they think. He will then decide how the money will be spent.

Homework Policy

Campbell has not spoken to staff yet. Carried forward.

Update on SIP Priorities

This was all covered in the bulletin that just went out.

Poverty Proofing

Michael Pryor will attend the next poverty proofing meeting.

Rector's Update

Campbell will be e-mailing parents about the school improvement plan with a survey. Campbell wants to submit his school improvement plan to SBC by end June. Perhaps we should invite the new head of SBC to come and talk to PC as her campaign focussed on a new school for Peebles. Tommy Davidson to contact her.

Interviewing for a new PT Maths today and there are two more to interview on Tuesday. On Friday, Campbell will be interviewing for a new PT for Technical.

Campbell has appointed Charlotte Reid as a new Drama teacher. She has now gone on maternity leave.

They are still waiting to hear about probationers – Campbell requested them in Drama, Computing, Maths, English. They do not need any extra help in Biology or Geography.

If Campbell does not get any probationers in Drama he will be advertising a temporary post, same for Maths and English. They should hear by end of week.

Events – Health week next week. Only on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday this year. Two thirds of S3's have taken up the work experience option. This year is the biggest S1 year group (240 students) and the highest percentage of S1 students going on the Residential since they went commercial.

SBC are removing the funding for the Mental Health Support workers. They have presented a new strategy of support which does have Mental Health Supporters in it.

Parent Groups Updates

PHS200 club – approximately 200 members and about £7,000. Tommy Davidson to get In touch with Laura Robertson about supporting Laura and look at how to advertise and promote the scheme to more parents.

PTA – PHS Advanced Higher Art exhibition supported by PTA last week.

PHS200 – the priority is the website. Also working on the Dining Hall sound absorption project. Alison Graham has produced a quote for new curtains. Awaiting to see if we get the money from Tesco. They also were requested to help find beds for the French exchange students.

Learning Support – Looking now at providing support rather than fundraising at the moment.

Tesco Bags of Help

Going into the Peeblesshire News. It has been put out to parents in all the social media. Tesco do not automatically give out the green tokens to vote. This could be put on the website to remind parents to ask for a token.

It was suggested that perhaps Textile and Design students could create wall hangings for the Dinner Hall.

Any Other Business

Book report – is there anyone who can do a book report for the website? Mirren McLeod to e-mail PC parents for a volunteer.

Mrs Reid's husband tragically died two weekends ago. Margaret Hogg sent flowers on behalf of the Parent Council.

Donna Moretta sent a note to say there will be an internet safety meeting on 15th June. Can PC help with this event? Previous meetings have not been well attended.

Campbell - Looking at doing a "no phone" sponsored week to raise awareness and raise money. They will then talk to students in class.

Next meeting is a special meeting on 31st May on Learning Pathways at 7pm.

AGM is on 13 June.

Meeting finished at 9pm