

## LINLITHGOW ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parent Council Meeting held on **20th November, 2014**

### PRESENT:

**Parent members:** Elspeth Brown, Kate Signorini, Helen Boxall, Kathryn Morrison, Jo Smith, Jennifer MacDonald, Douglas Gray, Mark Fulton, Lindsey Guthrie, Laurie Boles

**Head Teacher and Advisor to Parent Council:** Karen Jarvis

**Teachers:** Peter Scott, Rhona White

**Pupil Council representatives:** Neil Anderson

**In attendance:** Catherine Devlin

**Absent:** Derek Wolfe, Douglas Taylor

### 1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

1. Jo Smith and Laurie Boles were welcomed as new members of Parent Council.

### 2. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

1. Kate Signorini was nominated and seconded as Chair of Parent Council.
2. The position of Vice Chair was not confirmed until it was clarified whether the current Vice Chair wished to remain in post.
3. Jenny O'Donnell has agreed to act as clerk. **ACTION: Kate to contact Anne Sinclair, LA Business Manager to set up the appropriate payment.**

### 3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING & MATTERS ARISING

1. The minutes from the last meeting held on 17 September 2014 are available on the school website under Information for Parents>Parent Council>Meeting Minutes.
2. The minutes were accepted as a correct record.

### 4. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

1. There are two new teachers in the English and Maths departments.
2. There is a long term staff absence in PE for which it is proving challenging to fill with supply staff.
3. Measures have been taken to address a projected overspend this session. The senior management team are confident that the school is in the position to accept the Delivering Better Outcome savings and will endeavour not to impact on permanent teaching staff. Options for savings were discussed.
4. The current S5 year did not participate in an award ceremony this term for their S4 performance. An award ceremony has now been arranged at a special school assembly in early December. Commonwealth Games medallist Adam Cox will present the students with their Merit Certificates.
5. Linlithgow Academy had been well represented at the Stellar Awards.
6. The acrylic poppies created in remembrance of former pupils who had lost their lives in the First World War had received very positive media coverage and were well worth having a look at.
7. Karen Jarvis gave a presentation reviewing the Senior Phase Presentation Model which particularly focused on those students in S4 with a working grade of C and below. A proposal was put to the Council that these students would be presented for National Level 5 exams as a matter of course rather than by parental request as had been the case in the previous academic year. Students with a working grade of A or B would continue to bypass National Level 5 exams. This was considered a minor change to the current two year Higher model but one that would be to the benefit of the students and reduce the pressure on the teaching staff and parents. Parents and pupils with a working grade of A and B will retain the option to request presentation for National Level 5 exams.

8. The Senior Management Team was confident that the current S5 years were being well supported with regular monitoring taking place to ensure pupils were on track to achieve well.
9. Detailed information would be provided to parents of S4, S5 and S6 parents by letter in the week commencing 24 November with a calendar of key events.
10. Study Leave for National Level 5 exams would follow the West Lothian Policy for study leave i.e. the day before and the day of the exam.
11. It was clarified that there was not an expectation within the senior phase model adopted for pupils to take 6 Highers. Council members asked that this might be explained to both pupils and parents as there seemed to be a difference in understanding about this. 6 Highers may be appropriate for some pupils but cause undue pressure for others. There should be flexibility to allow pupils to take a mixture of Highers and National Level 5s as appropriate to them plus study time, life skills, work experience or charity work.
12. One member queried whether there was evidence of the linking of topics between subjects in the broad general phase of Curriculum for Excellence in S1- S3. It was felt that there were large areas of CfE that were subject to review and continuous improvement.

## 5. TEACHERS' REPORT

1. No report.
2. The teacher representatives expressed their willingness to address any queries that parents might have and to provide information about the good practice being adopted to enhance the learning and teaching at the school in accordance with the school improvement plan.

## 6. PUPIL COUNCIL REPORT

- 1.1. Each year is represented on the Pupil Council. Each year has a different project: S1 - Hockey Stick cupboard, S2 - Library and librarians, S3 - Lockers, S4 - Gardening and weeding, S5 - P7 Transition Events, S6 members will disperse themselves amongst the other year groups, visit the Autism Resource, organise Non-Smoking Day and the Big Quiz.
- 1.2. Steps have been taken to raise the profile of the Pupil Council within each classroom and encourage pupils to make suggestions.
- 1.3. The Pupil Council took part in West Lothian Council's Delivering Better Outcomes consultation. The issue of last year's muck up day was raised and suggestions were received about how the S6 Leavers' day might be a more positive experience. Parent members offered their support to the school by sending out a letter to S6 parents nearer the time to advise against unsafe activities. **ACTION: for the agenda in April 2015.**

## 7. LINLITHGOW ACADEMY ASSOCIATION (LAA) UPDATE

1. LAA Christmas Craft Fayre would be held at the school on 27th November at 7-9 pm with a variety of stalls: jewellery, wine, juice, chocolate fountain and musicians (pupils) playing. Event had been advertised on website, in Gazette, on posters up around town and on Facebook. It was suggested that the school might send out an email about the event too.

## 8. PARENT COUNCIL PRIORITIES FOR 2014-2015 ACADEMIC YEAR

2. Priorities for the coming year had been noted at the previous meeting and the AGM. Due to the length of the other items on the agenda, these would be carried over to the next meeting for prioritisation and consideration.

## 9. WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL ACTIVITY

1. A response to the West Lothian Council Delivering Better Outcomes consultation had been submitted on behalf of the Parent Council. Three parent responses had been received and collated.
2. A second consultation had been received recently from West Lothian Council on Admission Arrangements for Specialist Provision. Jennifer MacDonald gave the meeting some background to the consultation. The Chair was happy to collate any comments received

- and respond on behalf of the parent Council.
3. West Lothian Parent Council Forum to be held in Bathgate on Tues 9th Dec. The Chair would attend on behalf of the Parent Council. It was noted that the Delivering Better Outcomes consultation was on the agenda.

## **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1. One member queried what information would be provided to support the S3 pupils in making their subject choices. A letter to S3 parents was being sent out within the next week which would outline a timeline for making course choices.
2. In regard to 5th year subject choices, no choices would be made before Christmas.
3. A careers evening would be held on 22 January 2015.
4. Some university open days are held at end of 5th year. This could be brought to the attention on S5 pupils and parents. There are also relevant links on the school website.
5. One member queried why Supported Study sessions were no longer appearing on the Daily Notices. The Head Teacher explained that the supported study sessions were being targeted at particular students. Other pupils would not be excluded but the school was not in a position to provide sessions for all pupils. More sessions would be provided before prelims and the actual exams.
6. One member queried whether there would still be a school newsletter issued. The Head Teacher had drafted a newsletter but was undecided about the merits of sending it out due to the repetition on the website. It was suggested that parents should be encouraged to visit the website for school news but that there was still a need to provide parents with key dates.
7. It was noted that the school now held email addresses for a significant proportion of parents.

## **11. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS:**

Monday, 12th January 2015  
Tuesday, 24th March 2015  
Thursday, 28th May 2015