

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting Tuesday 19th September 2017

7pm Bucksburn Academy

Present: Shelley MacKenzie (chair), Adele Ashton, Lynn Murray, Steph Jackman, Jenny Evans, Russell Ritchie, Graham Marshall, Sheree Pottinger, Denise Poole, Susan Pirie, Wendy Brechin, Dave Pottinger; Alex Duncan; Fraser McLachlan; Latif Akaiyi; Derek Thomson, Graham Blance

Apologies: None received.

Unfortunately, due to the fact we have no current Secretary, no Agenda was produced but Shelley welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly new members and acting Head Teacher, Mr Graeme Blance, and gave a brief outline of the Parent Council and its role as the parental voice of all Students attending Bucksburn Academy.

1. Transition of Head Teacher

Russell Ritchie opened the discussion and expressed his disappointment that the Head Teacher had left position before being able to attend our Parent Council meeting. Graham Blance introduced himself as the Acting Head Teacher and informed the meeting of the process for appointing a new Head Teacher. The advert is currently live with the closing date being this weekend (24th September). There is then a letting process which is likely to involve the Head of Services (Gayle Gorman), a local councillor, a Quality Improvement Officer (likely to be Helen Shanks) and at least one representative from the PC. Shelley confirmed that we had been asked to submit a name for this process. The letting process will look at all applications and some will be invited for interview. It must be stressed that all Panel Members must be available for both the letting process and the interviews. Currently the letting process has been scheduled for Wednesday 4th October with the interviews due to be held on the 30th November. The successful applicant would then be offered the post on that day and, depending on their current employment status, it could be up to 12 weeks before they are in post.

Russell expressed his concerns at the possible length of time the school could be without a Head Teacher, however Graham assured everyone that the school was running well and as it had been when Kas was the Head Teacher on Friday.

Alex Duncan (Depute Head Teacher) stated that in his 7 years at Bucksburn Academy, he felt that we currently had the strongest staff in place. At this precise time, there were no staffing issues, other than the D&T teacher position. Teamwork plans had been left and were being acted on and the school was running as it always did.

Dave stated that he would like to be involved in the interview process, however he is unlikely to be available for the letting process. To be involved with the process, participants must have completed an HR course run by Aberdeen City Council. Currently, Dave Pottinger, Denise Poole, and Adele have completed this. Denise stated she had contacted Donna Cuthill and there is in fact

a course taking place tomorrow morning, however no-one is available to attend at such short notice. Shelley will contact Donna to see if she can put on a specific course one evening to allow as many people as possible to attend. Russell stated he would be very interested to be involved also.

Currently Denise and Adele are the ones available on the requested dates.

There was a general consensus that as Bucksburn is quite a unique school having an in-house ASN wing, it was important to have a parent or someone involved from the ASN wing. Shelley agreed to contact ACC to request an additional parent interviewer take part in the process and Derek Thomson agreed to see if he could find an ASN parent/guardian who may be able to take part (*subsequent to the meeting a course was held on 27th September, which some were able to attend*).

Head Teacher Report

As Graham had only been in the Acting post for 2 days, Depute Head Alex Duncan, gave a Powerpoint presentation on the exam results which had been obtained for Bucksburn in 2017. The slides were discussed in detail and it was agreed by all that 2017 had been another strong year for results. The ASN wing were particularly proud of their achievements with more now attaining group qualifications and 2 pupils obtaining National 4 qualifications.

Russell raised the issue of staffing, particularly regarding the Design & Technology teacher, and his concerns that pupils weren't getting much practical work on state of the art equipment which had been put in when the school was built. Alex Duncan stated that as far as he knew, the previous 3 job adverts had had no applicants. The Wider Achievement course which had been put in its place for S1-S3 pupils did appear to be working well and the pupils still managed to get a small amount of time with the 1 existing D&T Teacher when she wasn't working with the senior school pupils on their qualifications. Fraser did state he was unsure whether it was having a knock-on effect on pupils taking up the qualification in S3/4 and that the school would continue to monitor this situation.

Discussions took place regarding the current modern apprenticeships which seem to be proving very popular. Shelley stated that there were a couple of big career events coming up regarding apprenticeships – Daily Record one in October and another in November “Developing the Young Workforce”. Shelley agreed it may be worth putting the links to them on the webpage.

Alex Duncan then gave a presentation on the changes to the reporting system for the Broad, General Education (BGE), years S1-S3.

The format will now be Above target, On Target or Below Target as opposed to the previous system. The aspirational target is to get to Level 3 by S2 and Level 4 by S3.

With this new system it will mean that first year pupils first report will not show “next step in learning” as pupils will have just moved from Primary School and some of the information will not be available, however all the following reports will.

Alex stated there is a massive revolution and evolution in reporting within School, and that is an evolving process. Russell asked about reports being issued before Parents nights – this will be checked.

Parent evenings themselves are being reviewed and discussed currently.

Shelley asked if key dates could be given for the Parents nights to see if the PC could have a presence at them.

The subject of praise postcards was discussed and questions were raised as to whether it was worth it. Alex replied and stated he felt yes they definitely were worth it but the problem is always with consistency. Of the new batch of 7 teachers who joined this term, they stated they were all very amazed at the behavior of students, particularly in class and it was felt the praise postcards had a lot to do with this. The house points system definitely makes the young people more motivated.

ASN Wing Report

Derek stated that they had just had a very successful Parents Evening and the sailing trip to the West Coast had proved very worthwhile, and that they had already identified a mixed group this time of 5 boys and 5 girls who will go in 2018.

S1 visits had been great and were well supported. New S1 parent attendees felt that there was a good “vibe” within the school and this was coming across through the children.

Treasurer Report

Currently have £295 in the bank account and awaiting payment of this years funds from Aberdeen City Council. Last year paid out for the Awards Evening refreshments and some Careers Fayre expenses.

Careers Fayre

Dave stated he was happy to co-ordinate this again and asked those interested in taking part in a sub-committee to let him know so that they can get started on planning next years one.

A.O.B.

Currently there is a vacancy for a Secretary which just involves compiling an agenda and putting together minutes and distributing to all.

As there were no volunteers on this occasion, it was felt that perhaps this could be done on a rolling basis, so Susan Pirie stated she would be happy to do the next minutes.

Provisional dates for next meetings are as follows:

Wednesday 15th November 2017

Thursday 18th January 2018

Tuesday 24th April 2018

Wednesday 20th June 2018