

Dingwall Academy Parent Council 20th of January 2014

Apologies – Carol Seaton; Heather Thornton; Mike Evans; Sandra Rae: Alan Radin: Ruth Oulton

Present – Helen Cameron; Samantha Blythe; Guy Kell; Graham Mackenzie; Nigel Greenwood; Dawn Morgan; Karen Cormack; Judith Arnaud; Lindsay Ramsay; Laura Ross; Anita Munro; Linda Watson

Minutes of meeting 25th November – approved by Helen Cameron. Seconded by Sam Blyth.

Curriculum - Responsibility of whether to go forward with New Highers was delegated down to departments. New Highers will go forward except for, English, Science and Social Subjects.

Fujitsu

- Highland Council has decided to prolong contract with Fujitsu for a further two years despite widespread complaint. It is said to be a temporary measure while they put it out to tendering. Linda Watson to write to Highland Council deputy chief executive for more details on tendering process.
- Several Apple products - iPad's and iPad mini's - have been purchased (mainly by pupil support department) through Fujitsu. However these portable devices are still unable to access the internet. Dingwall Primary are currently trialling a system 'Clearpass' that should allow internet access. Sam to get in touch with Derek to find out more about this. She will report findings at the next meeting.

School Admin Software – Update

- The e1 system will not be available from the start of next session as the company who has supported the system is pulling out of the UK. The e1 system will be replaced by SEEMiS. The SEEMiS focus group are very aware of the huge undertaking that this transfer will be. Training will be provided to help staff make the transition.
- Currently there is no simple way to transfer all information from the present system to the new one. As it is a new system to all teachers, it shall be a difficult process.

- The monitoring data stored on pupils – detentions and late slips etc. is transferable to the new system.

Reports – demonstration from Karen

- An outline of the monitoring system – SPP (built on E1): New system focuses on tracking, progress and learning. A number from 1-4 represents how hard a pupil is working. A letter from A-D represents how well they are doing.
- The system is not targeted to any learning style in particular; every pupil is entitled to a teacher who knows them and their learning style well. To enforce this, ‘Tutor Time’ has been introduced into S1, S2 and S3.
- In terms of marking and assessing there will be more focus on *why* a result was achieved.
- Report cards – parents will be more informed throughout entire year. This will give both teachers and pupils more opportunity to reflect on learning. It will also mean parents are alerted earlier to any problems which are occurring.
- Every child from S1-S3 has a colour coded table which represents how hard they are working; green, amber and red. Their teacher in each subject decides on their colour. If their table is mostly green, they receive praise cards. If there is a concerning amount of red and amber, a letter goes home to inform parents.
- Further training is still required to ensure that consistency is found between staff when marking.
- There is also a monitoring system in place for s4-s6, but it is based on the grade they have been predicted to achieve and the level that they are currently achieving.
- Concern that there may not be enough support from teachers in helping students achieve a better predicted grade was raised. Karen Cormack states that staff are aware predicted grades are more important when students reach a higher grade.
- There is concern that a student who is close to a National 5 level cannot take a stab at the paper without risking having nothing to fall back on. There is a system for pupils achieving a National 4 if they receive a ‘no award’ at National 5 – however they must have passed all the units and the Added Value Unit at N4.

Christmas Socials

- The socials were a great success. They were run with the help of over 50 staff members and all pupils behaved tremendously well. Karen Cormack thanks all parents for their support.

Skill force Funding

- There is a new senior phase option form.
- The option form needs to include more subjects that recognise wider achievement. The school are planning to work with 'Skillsforce' a charity that provides courses in school. Said to be around £10,000 for a course. School has sent out letters seeking sponsorship and support from local businesses such as MacLean's, Fairburn Estate, Global Highland., Glen Ord, and Celtic Seafood.
- Any more suggestions for sponsorship would be gratefully received.

Sub groups – update – partnering evening

- There is funding available to have drivers trained, this must be applied for through parent council. Councillor McKinnon holds the required information.
- The available training shall be advertised through the school's newsletter, anyone who is interested must get in contact. People who put themselves forward however must have a certain amount of free time so they are most likely to be available when needed.
- It was noted that Nigel has a certificate and is willing to be a current driver.

Rock Challenge Update

- The Rock Challenge is a pupil driven committee group run through school funds. Ruth has volunteered to complete the application form for funding/ Sam to liaise with her to have this completed as a matter of urgency. This will be done via parent council as the Rock Challenge group do not currently have a constitution. Laura to provide accounts for Sam.

- The rock challenge Highland Finals are at the end of February. The Scottish finals are at the end of June.
- Sam will have a meeting with the Rock Challenge to discuss putting together a constitution.

Diggers Fundraising Requests

- Linda Watson has received an email from Heather who would like the Parent Council to get involved with a fundraising Bake Sale.
- KC says more information is required as many pupils run their own bake sales.
- Food for thought awarded the Diggers £5000, so they are financially healthy. It is thought they perhaps want bake sale fundraiser to demonstrate parental support. KC to report back at next meeting.

Craig Road Closure

- Helen Cameron has written to Tech Services regarding the proposal to close Craig road; as yet no acknowledgement. Debate around the table brought to light that the Community Council are against this proposal. Graham suggested road closure would increase traffic movements past the school by 3000 on a daily basis, predominately at rush hour, which could affect the school buses in the mornings. To be discussed further as more information comes to light.
- General feeling in the town is very negative.

Treasures Update

- £1439 – cheque account
- £1177 – deposit account

AOCB

- Final interviews for new Deputy Rector is 28th of February. Two Parent Council Representatives required. Helen Cameron, Sam Blyth and Linda Watson to decide amongst themselves.
- Co-writer has been installed (also on some portable devices) – this is predicted text software to aid struggling pupils.

Date for future meetings – 17th March 7pm.