

Deans Community High School
Parent Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday 11th May 2021

Attendees

Angela Ritchie (Chair), Pauline Allison (HT), Stephen Small (DHT), Sandra Fanon, Stacey McCallum, Caroline Bennett, Heather Marriot, Patricia Miller

Apologies

Janice Ritchie, Patricia Miller, Mark Cockburn, Susan Begley, Alison Hatcher

Agenda:

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Review of the Minutes from previous Meeting
4. Stephen Small (DHT)
5. Recovery
6. Head Teacher's update
7. AOCB

1. AR welcomed all to the meeting.
2. Apologies as stated above

3. Review of Previous Minutes - Update

MC had asked a question related to Modern Languages subject in a previous meeting. The outcome is that S3 pupils have been timetabled to allow for groupings of Modern Language pupils if this is felt to be beneficial to students.

Previous minutes were accepted.

4. Stephen Small (DHT) – Transition

Enhanced transition is already underway and Jackie from Your Space (in house counselling service) is working with identified pupils.

This year's transition will be similar to last May/June with a house competition which will be launched on Monday 17th May to 18 different primary schools (this year primary schools out with the cluster can also join in). Following the house competition there will be various departmental competitions including a French competition and a literacy project launched by the English department.

Hopeful to have all pupils in for a visit although the school is still awaiting further guidance from WL council on the matter. As S6 are still in school due to the alternative assessment arrangements, priority visits have been given to enhanced transition in the first instance.

5. Recovery

The school have received some funding from Scottish Government to aid recovery. We are now gathering data and opinions from parents, staff and students to help decide areas to focus on.

A West Lothian survey was sent out to parents on health and wellbeing along with a pupil version developed by the education psychologist which had additional questions to gauge where our young people are in regards to the health and wellbeing.

From the 163 responses to date, it has so far identified there has been a level of anxiety over a number of various issues including, the prevalence of COVID-19, the alternative assessment programme and catching up on learning.

Within departments staff have identified literacy and numeracy, gaps in subject knowledge, reconfiguring programmes and timelines to plug these gaps as areas to focus on. A lack of practical skills in the practical subjects (PE, music, sciences and languages) has been raised as a concern amongst staff. Staff have indicated they are motivated to do as much as they can to aid recovery.

Work is needed to re-establish the school vision and values. Resilience amongst pupils has increased but work is still needed.

Tackling mental health related issues in students is still a priority; the school still have the in-house counselling service 'Your Space' as well as a number of mental health first aid trained staff. During lockdown changes in pupil circumstances such as bereavements and financial difficulties etc. have seen an increase in the number of targeted students.

The school will receive £48.50 per pupil, which equates to approx. £48,000 to the school. The school also has two full time salaries for additional staffing, Jodie Cunningham(history) has been granted a post with the remaining salary possible being used to target literacy/numeracy.

The school will receive approximately £136,000 from the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). Among the initial priorities for this are 3 additional support teachers for the HOH's, first aid training for senior students and literacy programmes. The school will now identify its main focus and consider how it can go about targeting this focus using the money available.

Parent council suggestions: one priority should be something which acknowledges the loss of that social aspect for the pupils and organise something (guidance permitting) that gives them something to look forward to. Identify the pupils struggling and find the gaps and then prepare them for assessments. PA updated the parent council that individual subjects continue to track individual students and any potential gaps in their learning and departments are in discussion as how best to move forward. Another suggestion given was the set-up of a focus group for online learning which would incorporate, parents, student and staff. The focus group would be used to identify what was good from online learning, and the differences between 1st and 2nd lockdowns to identify what had improved and could be maintained moving forward.

6. Update from HT

Staffing: Mrs Jakubiak (BIT) is relocating in the summer and the school have requested a probationer teacher for the post. Mrs Hodgson (History) will be retiring in the summer after a long time at the school. Mrs Mark (English) is also relocating in the summer. Miss Cunningham (History) will remain with us for the coming session. Both Miss McGurl (maths) and Mr Wilson (BIT) have been appointed to permanent posts within Deans.

SQA: a letter has been sent out today (11/05/21) based on the authority/SQA stance and this was discussed. The school will be having conversations following the completion of assessments and teachers discuss the evidence gathered with students and the grade this indicates for each subject. Final Grades will be issued by SQA in August as normal following moderation and quality assurance of the assessments.

Date of next Parent Council Meeting will be on Tuesday 15th June 2021 at 18:00 via Skype for Business.