

Minutes of Marr College Parent Council Forum Meeting



Wednesday 6th September 2017

Present – Duncan Beckwith - Chair, Alan Blackwood - Vice Chair, Angela Malcolm - Treasurer, Elaine McGregor-Sloman - Head Teacher, Rae Anderson - DHT, Hilary Ramage - Secretary and Katherine Woodhouse - Minute Secretary

Council Members – Ady Allan, Julie Cotter, Karen Dunlop, Kate Dunn, Katie Atkinson, Kaye Matthews, Lindsay Campbell & Lisa Anderson

Forum Members – Brian Anderson, Jackie Harvey, Joy Paul, Nichola Penman, Rhona Duncan & Shona Elder

Apologies – Carol Pritchard, Clair Milne, Craig Mackay, Mark Fitzpatrick, Timothy Wight

	Action	Completion Date
1. <u>Welcome and Apologies</u> Duncan welcomed those in attendance and apologies were noted from those unable to attend. Elaine asked if there was a maximum group size for Forum meetings – Alan confirmed that according to the constitution there could be as many as wished to attend. The new parents introduced themselves to the meeting.		
2. <u>Introduction of new Captains</u> Gigha Anderson introduced herself on behalf of the captains; unfortunately the other captains were unable to attend on this occasion. She expressed how they are very excited to start the new year in the new building and they have several aspirations which they hope to achieve this year. They had a handover meeting with the outgoing captains before they left which proved useful.		
3. <u>Approval of Minutes and Matters Arising</u> The minutes of the meeting of 31 st May 2017 were approved. Proposed by Lindsay Campbell and seconded by Julie Cotter. <u>Matters Arising</u> <i>Item 2</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duncan attended the Troon Community Council’s meeting last month but did not receive an apology on Elaine’s behalf for the news article released regarding letters they allegedly sent to the school. There are two disparate points of view and Duncan was unable to make any progress, although TCC did admit that they only sent one letter but could not provide a copy of it. In order to move forward, Duncan and Elaine agreed that the minutes of the Parent Council and the Head Teacher’s report would be sent to TCC monthly and the captains would be asked if they would like to attend any meetings. The TCC Chair suggested that if there were students at the meetings 2-3 times a year, along with a copy of the Head Teacher’s report, that would be acceptable. • Elaine thanked Duncan for going to the meeting and for pursuing this matter. Duncan had e-mailed Elaine with the outcome which gave a flavour of how he was treated; she has subsequently sent this on to the Director. • Kate suggested that someone from the Parent Council should perhaps accompany young people to future meetings so that they can be removed if things become difficult. The next meeting is in October so Elaine thought that the start of the year would be a good time for students to go along. <i>Item 3</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tour of the new building will happen next time due to the exam results discussion. • Hilary has set up a Twitter account for the Parent Council. 	EMS	Oct '17
	EMS/ALL	Jan '18
	EMS	Oct '17

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jackie went to the Troon Primary Parent Council meeting however the people involved there are already attending Marr meetings. Lindsay suggested visiting the primary Parent Council meetings earlier next year. Elaine advised that Katy's Parent Council newsletter was not received until August so it went out with her welcome letter after the holiday. <p><i>Item 4</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The date for the handover of the PE building will be Friday 6th October, not Thursday 5th. <p><i>Item 5</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The calendar of events is finalised and will go on the website. It cannot be issued until the Working Time Agreement has been signed off with regard to parents' evenings, etc. Jackie suggested putting out the calendar at the end of June even if it is only tentative. Hilary advised it would be useful to know the events that require parental support in terms of advance planning. Elaine agreed although everyone would need to be aware that this would be subject to change. Alan asked about advance notice for school trips so that parents can make an informed decision about which trips their children are able to go on. Elaine advised that this information was on the website on the Head Teacher's report. Hilary asked if details of trips could be added onto the parents' calendar – Rae confirmed that this is already being included in the current calendar. She explained the process for trips – staff are encouraged to ensure that trips are educational and once they have come up with an idea it is then up to the Director to approve it. 	<p>EMS</p> <p>RA</p>	
<p>4. Building Works – Rae Anderson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 4, the move into the new school, was completed on time. Rae has been working with David Strang to get through some of the snagging issues and Kier have been very positive. There are still issues with parking due to the fact there are a lot of contractors on site and parking has increased again in the community, however from next week this will reduce; there will be fewer contractors as they will only be finishing off internal kit in the PE block. Hard landscaping is being finished now. There will be a large canopy going up outside for social space. The majority of young people are staying in at the moment in the new 'pit' area. This is a social area into which all mobile serveries will be moved. There is now a greater choice of areas where people can go and sit in comfort and be dry. Derek Yuille has been a tremendous support to Rae and Elaine in making sure Kier stick to what they have promised. Phase 5 is taking over the PE block and this will be signed off on Friday 6th October. Over that weekend packers will be in to get everything ready before the October holiday. Very little existing equipment is being retained – everything that Craig McPike has asked for is being provided through the budget. Elaine mentioned the recent vandalism at the pavilion where holes have been burned in the astro pitch, shelters broken, nets broken, etc. This issue has to be dealt with by the Council. PE staff are having to go to the pitches each morning to pick up all the rubbish including the removal of dog faeces. This is an outdoor classroom and no dogs should be allowed on it. It is the responsibility of the maintenance department at the Council to look after this facility as it is let out to various clubs. These problems do not occur when the school children are using it in a supervised manner. David Strang will again take this up. Hilary advised that there is a group of people from the different clubs who use the pitch getting together to discuss this. Elaine advised that the police are also involved. She encouraged the Parent Council to contact SAC's maintenance department. With regard to the issue of litter, Elaine said they are doing all they can to improve this situation. She receives a weekly e-mail from a member of the community about the rubbish. The official opening of the new building is 29th November at 7.00 pm. John Swinney will be in attendance with around 120 people invited outside of Elaine's remit. Elaine is allowed to invite parents and asked for suggestions about how parents can be selected or whether it should be at random. The next meeting with the council to discuss this is on 10th October where it is hoped to find out more about the format 	<p>ALL</p> <p>ALL</p>	

and whether it can be opened up to the community.

EMS

Oct '17

5. **Head Teacher's Report and 2017 Exam Results – Elaine McGregor-Sloman**

Exam Results

Exam results were released on 8th August and an analysis by the senior management team is still ongoing. Each department makes a presentation about their results and how accurate their predictions were. Elaine is very proud of the results which mark a 3 year positive trend. She provided statistics by year group as below:

S4 Nationals	%
5 @ 5	52
5 @ 4	94
5 @ 3	97
S5 Higher	%
1 @ 6	56
3 @ 6	40
5 @ 6	22
S6 Advanced Higher	%
1 @ 7	19

- S4 – all results have gone up. At National 5 83% achieved A-C grades with 64% achieving A/B.
- S5 results are more or less the same and the difference from 2016 is only 7 children. At National 6 (Higher) 76% achieved A-C grades with 54% achieving A/B.
- S6 improved on last year. In Advanced Higher 79% achieved A-C grades with 60% achieving A/B.
- Elaine has not included D passes; had she done so the figures would be higher. Insight, the Scottish Government's online tool for educational professionals, is used to present attainment data and compares the performance of schools to a virtual comparator. Insight is a programme for staff in schools and is not usually shared. For Marr the question is whether the children are getting what they were predicted to get and how/why this is happening.
- Rae advised that teachers now have to account for their results and will be asked why they have not achieved any predicted results.
- Hilary would like to see a more detailed breakdown to compare against other schools in Scotland.
- This information may be confusing for new parents and Rae suggested that if any parents wanted a separate session then this could be arranged.
- Elaine felt that this kind of detail should come out at the skills evening which is scheduled for 7th February so that other parents can have an understanding.

EMS

ALL

EMS

Feb '18

School Improvement Plan

A 2 year plan was completed last year and was approved by the Quality Improvement Officer. With regard to SIP deadlines, Elaine would like to set a date in September for the Parent Council and business partners to be consulted.

EMS

Sep '17

Budget

- The school had a carry forward from last year; however another 10% has been cut in the CfE budget which, for some departments, equates to approximately £300. The school will be able to do what it wants to do this year but next year Elaine does not think there will be any carry forward, therefore will be having discussions with all department heads.
- Lisa asked what a comfortable carry forward for a school would be. Elaine advised that they have had around £10k in the past. Schools are dissuaded from having any carry forward and it could always be transferred into the central pot unless there is a specific plan for that money. Lisa suggested forging strong ties with the Marr Trust, however Elaine advised that they are currently selling off their artefacts and have cut back over the last 2 years. They still pay for award ceremonies and medals. There

<p>is a lot of fundraising internally and huge amounts of grant funding, all of which is spent in the school, with half of what the captains raise going to charity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Pupil Equity Fund is a one year only deal but Elaine believes the Scottish Government will extend it for another 4 years, however these monies are ring fenced. Marr received £42k which must go towards children identified in S2 and S3. Elaine is building a team of people around these children and they are working on their National 3 certificates to make sure they achieve a minimum qualification. <p><u>Staffing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are currently 2 vacancies in Computing and one in HE. Interviews for Computing will be held on 14th September. A Technical 0.6 appointment was made today which is temporary for one year. There has been a severe shortage of teachers. Hilary raised a concern from the parent body about class sizes, where the student in question had been in a class of 33; Elaine and Rae confirmed that the maximum size of a practical class is 30. Rae explained that there is some movement of children at the beginning of term due to exam results and changing options and reported that there are no class sizes above 30. There may be bi-level and tri-level classes where National 5 and Higher are taught together in the same class. Hilary felt it must be an issue for the teachers having National 4/5/Higher in one class. Elaine confirmed there is cross coverage in the senior phase, otherwise certain subjects would not be viable. Children are offered a huge choice of subjects and the timetable is then made up manually to accommodate their choices, which often results in a mix of National 5 and Higher in the same class. Rae advised that there had always been a mix of stages in classes but not of ages. <p><u>Communication</u></p> <p>Elaine wants to focus on how far the school has moved on since 2012 and to celebrate all the positive things that are going on. Shona suggested having a greater presence in the press. Elaine explained that there used to be pupils who were interested in journalism who would create a column in the Going Out magazine, but the contact for this was lost and it no longer happens. The website should be a good way of celebrating success however this was not updated for a long time due to absence. Lindsay suggested that perhaps someone in the Parent Council could have responsibility for updating the 'celebrating success' area. Elaine thought this was a good idea and asked who would be interested in taking it on. Hilary asked if this could be followed up with Sally Law in terms of tying in communication between the school and Parent Council for Twitter, etc. Elaine suggested a meeting with Catherine Owens to discuss this.</p> <p><u>Issues raised by Parent Body</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jackie was concerned that there had not been enough time to discuss the points that had been raised by parents to the Parent Council via e-mail and Twitter. Hilary will therefore put these in an e-mail to Elaine so that she can provide feedback for the next meeting. Discussion took place about the structure of future meetings. Elaine was keen to have feedback on the Parent Council's expectations of her at meetings and whether producing a written Head Teacher's report was still required as this is discussed at meetings and minuted. All agreed that the Head Teacher's report is valuable and can be accessed by the wider community; however the Parent Council should only focus on discussing specific points arising from it at meetings in order to save time to discuss other topics. Kaye felt the meeting had been quite negative and the focus should be more on the positive aspects of the school. Elaine agreed and stated she had noticed a significant change in the last few meetings; therefore it is important for the Parent Council to consider the structure and expectations for future meetings. 	<p>ALL EMS/HR</p> <p>HR/EMS</p> <p>EMS/DB</p> <p>DB</p>	<p>Oct '17</p> <p>Oct '17</p>
<p>6. AOCB Jackie made the following suggestions which she thought the Parent Council may wish to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is currently a mentoring programme in place at Glasgow high schools called 		

<p>MCR Pathways (http://mcrpathways.org/) that matches volunteer mentors with young people either in, with experience of or at risk of being in the care system. It has had some encouraging results in keeping young people in education and looking at further education, employment or university. It also has a positive impact on some of the areas discussed at Parent Council meetings such as anti-social behaviour, poor behaviour in classrooms and littering. This started with a pilot and it would be a very positive programme to start at Marr.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jackie recommended a book called The Art of Being a Brilliant Teenager (http://www.artofbrilliance.co.uk/shop/35/the-art-of-being-a-brilliant-teenager). This is part of a wider programme that Andy Cope (author of Spy Dogs) has developed. Jackie has been to a couple of their workshops which are very positive and practical. She suggested running a fundraiser to get a copy of the book for every S1 or S2 pupil with a view to doing this every year. It may also be possible to arrange a workshop with the Parent Council, student and staff representatives. <p>The above points can be discussed at the next meeting.</p>	ALL	Oct '17
<p>7. Next Meeting The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 4th October at 7.30 pm.</p>		