

# Minutes of Marr College Parent Council Meeting



## Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017

**Present** – Alan Blackwood – Vice Chair, Angela Malcolm - Treasurer, Elaine McGregor-Sloman - Head Teacher, Neil McLean - ADHT, Hilary Ramage - Secretary and Katherine Woodhouse - Minute Secretary

**Council Members** – Ady Allan, Claire Milne, Julie Cotter, Katy Purdie, Lindsay Campbell, Lisa Rossi, Mark Fitzpatrick, Timothy Wight and Cllr Peter Convery

**Apologies** – Carol Pritchard, Catriona MacGarvie, Duncan Beckwith, Karen Dunlop, Kate Dunn, Kaye Matthews and Stuart Harris

	<b>Action</b>
<p>1. <b><u>Welcome and Apologies</u></b> In Duncan's absence, Alan welcomed those in attendance and apologies were noted from those unable to attend.</p>	
<p>2. <b><u>Approval of Minutes and Matters Arising</u></b> The minutes of the meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017 were approved. Proposed by Hilary Ramage and seconded by Angela Malcolm.</p>	
<p>3. <b><u>School Captains</u></b> Lorrie and Jack provided an overview of their recent activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback was very positive from last week's community open day which was attended by many former pupils who enjoyed seeing how the building had been transformed. There were lots of comments and photos of the school posted on Facebook. The S6 students were praised for their efforts as tour guides.</li> <li>• The next fundraising event is Comic Relief on 24<sup>th</sup> March and the captains hope to run events over 2 days. Their fundraising target is £7k which would exceed last year's by £1k and they are currently on track to reach this, having raised £4,200 so far. They are hoping to hold an end of year fashion show in June for which they will need a lot of support.</li> <li>• The captains are collecting in money from 6<sup>th</sup> years for prom deposits, yearbook, leaver's hoodies, etc. There are only 6 more weeks of school for 6<sup>th</sup> years before exams commence.</li> </ul>	
<p>4. <b><u>Continuation of Reporting Session – Neil McLean</u></b> Prior to this discussion, parents were asked to complete a short on-line survey from South Ayrshire Council which will also be sent out to other parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following on from last month's discussion Neil outlined the main message that came across which was, in terms of reporting, that parents just want the facts about their child's progress. This discussion was initiated following the publication of a new paper by Education Scotland which provided National Guidelines about how schools should report to parents. This comes from the National Improvement framework. Some of the content included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Children and young people need high quality feedback about their progress;</li> <li>○ Parents and families must have access to information that allows them to form a clear understanding of how their child is progressing and the information they need to help them play a key role in their child's education.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Neil handed out a table highlighting the key messages in relation to reporting and the features of highly effective practice which he asked parents to read and give feedback. Katy raised the issue of consistency in reporting/tracking where some teachers only provide marks in relation to whether the child has completed the syllabus. This seems to be consistent within departments but not across all subjects. Neil agreed that this was a fair point and is something they are trying to overcome by using a broader range of levels which will be more defined.</li> <li>• Elaine advised that the senior school works on levels 1-6 rather than percentages, e.g. bands 1-2 represent an A grade. This applies to all National exams from National 5</li> </ul>	

onwards. In S1-3 (Broad General Education) they refer to CfE levels, and whether the pupil is developing, consolidating or secure at that level (i.e. 3<sup>rd</sup> level – every student should be secure at this by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> year).

- Katy felt that the numerical system was still important as well as the narrative as it provides parents with an idea of attainment and working level. Neil explained that the target grade is an aspirational target and that goes into the system for the first line of tracking. However a target can be adjusted up or down according to evidence and performance, therefore when the process begins it might be tracking at a different level. Hilary suggested having a 3<sup>rd</sup> level within the tracking detailing the progress to date.
- Elaine advised that entitlement is currently one written report and one teacher meet. At Marr there are 5 tracking reports and in S1-3 there is a learning review day in addition to parents' night, which is over and above the entitlement. Staff do not believe 5 minutes is long enough to discuss progress with parents and although it is important that parents receive the right information, verbal reporting has to be very quick and concise. On the other hand, with the learning review a parent has 20 minutes to discuss their child and, as long as the information is accurate, it doesn't necessarily matter who relays that information, although it is only the senior management team and guidance staff who carry out these interviews. She asked whether it is better to have a report first followed by 20 minutes with one person rather than 5 minutes with individual teachers, although stressed that she would never do away with teacher meets.
- Angela expressed that she found the individual teacher meetings more valuable than the written reports but was unsure what was to be gained from the learning review days. Katy felt that meeting with individual teachers was important especially when children are choosing their options as it helps them make an informed decision. If parents needed further discussions with any one teacher they could make an appointment to come into school at another time. Alan felt that teacher meetings should include more discussion on what can be done to improve matters rather than sometimes just receiving positive comments. It was valuable having the written report in advance to discuss with teachers at parents' night.
- With regard to written reports, Neil explained there is a 3 tier process to go through when preparing a report. It goes through 4 levels of checking and yet, despite this, some still slip through the net with errors. This is something he is keen to eradicate.
- Angela advised that it is natural for parents to measure their child's results by those of other children. It would be useful therefore to know the average mark. Elaine asked what it really matters where another child sits in relation to yours. Hilary felt people just want to know that their child is doing their best. Ady added that if she knew her child had got the lowest mark in the class then she would need to do something about it. Elaine agreed with these comments but advised that the dialogue in the report would deal with any such issues. In addition showing average scores could prove demoralising.
- Neil handed out a list of examples of reporting activities for individual learners and groups of learners, some of which are already in place at Marr. He asked parents to provide feedback on this. Hilary advised she would send this out to the parent forum. Neil will also be opening up this discussion to staff and students.
- Lisa felt that the opinions expressed here were limited to a group of engaged parents and thought it would be useful to seek the views of other parents, perhaps at the S1 learning review day. A few simple questions to parents at the back of the report would be helpful. Elaine asked for feedback about the type of questions that should be asked.
- Cllr Convery pointed out that he works with people who live in areas of multiple deprivation and in difficult circumstances; some of whom cannot read or write. There are a lot of parents in Troon from these areas. Elaine is currently looking at hosting more family learning events which will involve trying to get more vulnerable parents into the school. It was for this reason that the careers evening was changed to include S2 upwards. There were over 700 people attended including those parents who do not usually come into the school. Katy suggested that the Parent Council could have a presence in the meeting room whenever there are opportunities where a lot of parents are in the building and offer free tea & coffee in order to encourage parents to come along. Neil suggested trying this on 28<sup>th</sup> March.
- In terms of next steps, Neil requested feedback on the forms distributed.

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All

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## 5. **Head Teacher's Report – Elaine McGregor-Sloman**

Elaine advised that now the new building is up and running, it is all systems go with a lot happening in the school. As such she is considering asking interested parents to come along for a day's development.

### Pupil Equity Funding

The Scottish Government have introduced PEF in order to close the attainment gap by focusing on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing for disadvantaged young people. Marr will be allocated a sum of money based on the free school meal entitlement. The target population is 30 students across S1-3 who have been targeted using accurate data. This starts in April 2017-18 and aims to create a positive ethos across S1-3. Despite there being only 30 children targeted it will have an impact across the school. The budget is £42k for year one with the Scottish Government making a commitment for a further 3 years. The school will submit a report in March and produce evidence of the actual impact. This will involve the current P7, S1 and S2. Elaine has been working with Graeme Hobson on this document and will have a draft ready by 7<sup>th</sup> March which she is happy for people to see once the draft has been submitted. More information is available on line and Elaine will report back on this at the next meeting.

### Building

- The other half of the old building will be finished by August and PE facilities will be finished by October/November together with the car parking, petanque and tennis courts. The move this time will be on a much smaller scale than the January decant. At the moment the school is well resourced but there are discussions currently about the café area and it has been agreed there will be an additional café area. The current library is not the finished product and the library will ultimately have private study areas. Currently trying to encourage 6<sup>th</sup> years to use the 4 write up rooms upstairs as they do not have the whole library facility as yet.
- Cllr Convery advised that there is a meeting of the Marr Trust on Tuesday and it is their intention to sell most of the most valuable artefacts from the school. The council has decided that they could not possibly insure some of these items as they are worth a considerable amount therefore they will go out to auctioneers to be valued. Some of the artefacts, e.g. the bronze busts, will be brought back to the school. The money goes back to the Trust and allows them to give postgraduate bursaries, etc which is what they are supposed to be doing. Elaine expressed disappointment about this. However, consideration is being given to other ways of bringing the artefacts into the school, for example, taking photographs of every page of the St James Bible so it can be displayed electronically in the form of 3D imaging.
- Cllr Convery further advised that the lighting system for the sports hub has been agreed. Some of the old buildings will be demolished allowing the installation of a good lighting system in the car park.

### Troon Locality Decides

The school was awarded £750 from the participatory budget for new pots/pans for the production kitchen. Sports leadership and active schools were also awarded money. Thanks go to Amy Thomson and Carol Pritchard for their help with this and Alan confirmed that thank you cards were being sent out to each of them. Hilary advised that Carol Pritchard had offered to help with any other projects where the school needs funding. Elaine will take her up on this as she has been very successful at achieving funding in the past.

### Other News

- Elaine met with Colin Blair of Buzzworks and plans are underway with regard to the production kitchen and serving bar.
- Marr Radio will commence in April 2017
- Twitter account starts in March 2017
- Marr has been selected as the second school to link with the Spaceport in Houston, Texas and will have a link to a school in Houston.
- S2/3 learning reviews – evaluation in progress.
- YPI final was won by Ayrshire Sands who were awarded £3k.
- Supported study schedule will be issued next week. This includes Easter school. Prelim

<p>results holding up however there are areas that require improvement, but looking very positively at school results this year.</p>	
<p>6. <b>AOCB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alan advised that all Parent Council Chairpersons had been invited to a meeting with Kate McDonald, a Head Teacher who is appointed as Quality Improvement Officer, on 7<sup>th</sup> March to discuss anti-bullying guidelines. Alan was not sure whether Duncan would be available for this meeting. Hilary will put out a message to the parent forum. To this end, a 'Respect Me' document is available to review on the website.</li> <li>• Marianne Gunn and Kirsty Walker will again be hosting the school show which takes place on 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> June. Katy agreed to meet with them to discuss how the Parent Council can help. Colin Blair is willing to come and support this by perhaps utilising the production kitchen which also has a servery at the front.</li> <li>• Alan proposed a vote of thanks for Hilary with regard to the work she put into organising the careers evening. All agreed that this had been a great success.</li> </ul>	<p>HR KP</p>
<p>7. <b>Next Meeting</b> The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30 pm.</p>	