

South East Locality

Meeting Details			
Date of Meeting:	23 April 2019	Location:	St Thomas of Aquin's 2-20 Chalmers Street Edinburgh EH3 9ES

Meeting Attendees Present	
Name:	Position Held:
Maria Plant (Chair)	Senior Education Manager CEC
Alex Ramage	Parent Representative. Also representing Prestonfield PS + Liberton HS PCs
John Brownlee	Gracemount High School PC Chair
Dee Armstrong	St Thomas of Aquin's HS PC
Chiara MacDonald	James Gillespie's PS PC Co Chair
Barbara Lyon	Taobh na Pairce PS PC
Natasha Lee-Walsh	Taobh na Pairce PS PC

Apologies Received	
Derek McNeil	Liberton High School PC
Ailsa McIntosh	James Gillespie's HS PC

1.Introductions

Maria Plant (Chair) welcomed all to the meeting and introductions were made.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

John Brownlee raised the issues discussed previously regarding National 5's D grades. Delegates agreed this issue is, in part an issue with the education of employers however it was agreed that this should be discussed with Susan Gibb of SQA.

The issue of new school builds was discussed, Maria advised delegates that the minutes from the last CCwP held on 28 February should be available in the near future and these will contain more information.

Chiara MacDonald raised the issue of rising rolls in not only James Gillespie's Primary School but also South Morningside and Bruntsfield Primary Schools noting that it is not clear how the new school to be built in Canaan Lane will positively impact on James Gillespie's rising roll. Chiara noted that they have gone from 2 -3 stream in 6 years.

Chiara noted that there had been a verbal commitment from both Crawford McGhee and Councillor Ian Perry to reduce the roll within James Gillespie's however it is unclear how this will be achieved.

Maria suggested that the Head Teacher Colin Mclean invites either Crawford or Cllr Perry to the next Parent Council meeting.

Dee Armstrong requested clarification on the situation regarding musical instrument tuition. Maria advised that this issue is now "off the table"

Maria advised delegates that these meetings could be attended via conference call providing the room has a telephone point and conference call capabilities.

In future this will be requested for all meetings and if available the telephone number will be circulated.

3. Sharing

Maria asked delegates to share any practices or initiatives undertaken by their Parent Councils either successfully or unsuccessfully as, not only would this give ideas to other schools but would initiate conversations about what appears to work well.

Dee Armstrong discussed the on-line survey undertaken by St Thomas's which asked parents to give three words which summed up how they felt about the school.

These were then printed and attached to a "Word Cloud" which was a quick visual way to see what people thought.

Any issues arising from the survey were used to inform the PC agenda going forward.

Chiara advised delegates that a similar initiative had been undertaken by James Gillespie's PS but had been disappointing in terms of the percentage of responses received.

Delegates agreed with Barbara's point that attendance at Parent Council meetings can depend on the agenda items and current issues. Barbara also felt that perhaps the language used was too formal and could perhaps distance people.

Delegates further discussed various ways of trying to reach parents who are more difficult to meet, Barbara noted that on the Friday following a PC meeting a "Re-run" is held allowing parents and children to attend highlights and information from the meeting.

Chiara noted that James Gillespie's have a Google group to which 180 people have signed up to this year.

Alex reminded delegates of the Parent Council Google Group:
edin-pc-network@googlegroups.

Delegates discussed the recruitment process for teachers within Edinburgh. Maria advised that a change in the process which now enable Business Managers in Schools to process and submit all paper work relating to an application which will reduce the process by some days.

Delegates raised the issue of terms dates in 2020 and 2021. New term dates have been suggested and Cllr Perry is aware. He has now suggested a consultation with Head Teachers.

Chiara discussed the 3 yearly Curriculum Review which recently took place in James Gillespie's noting that there is scope -in consultation with the school community to change.

These reviews feed the schools Improvement Plan.

Maria noted that these initiatives are driven by the Scottish Government with the aim of the best possible impact for children.

Chiara noted that James Gillespie's prepare a handbook for each year giving an idea of the topics for the year for each class.

Barbara noted that Taobh na Pairce PS issue termly 'what we are learning this term' documents to each class which outlines the topics to be covered which is very useful.

4. Feedback on Information Paper.

Billy Samuel, assisted by Melissa Wilson and Alex Ramage have prepared a paper giving an explanation/over view for Parent Council Chairs or members explaining the various aspects of involvement in Parent Councils including FAQs, terms of reference, a summary of Parental Engagement in Edinburgh and additional information pertaining to Engagement Groups.

Delegates agreed this was most helpful, John Brownlee noted that he had used this at the last Parent Council Meeting.

Maria advised that if delegates wished any further information added to please contact her.

5. Digital Learning

Alex raised the issue of CEC ceasing to use the EDMODO platform which pupils used to send in homework. Parent could also access thus enabling them to monitor homework.

Alex noted that this facility was stopped as CEC felt there was an issue with security. The server is situated in America however it is covered by the "Privacy Shield"

Pupils are now using Office 365 however parents cannot access this platform therefore cannot monitor.

Alex felt that CEC should find an alternative to EDMODO.

Maria advised that the Council are working on finding a replacement.

Delegates discussed the ongoing Wi-Fi trial at James Gillespie's noting that all school owned iPads will connect to the internet however personal devices will not.

James Gillespie's do not supply devices and mobile phones do not work. Delegates agreed this is not a satisfactory situation.

Alex on behalf of Ailsa McIntosh that having requested and received committee agreement this trial was scheduled to start in James Gillespie's High School in August 2018 but did not start until mid-November 2018 then, for an unknown reason stopped for a short time. The trial is ongoing, however, there has been no indication given as to how long the trial will continue nor is it known what result will constitute "Success"

The point was raised that pupils with unlimited data packages will have an unfair advantage.

It was noted that other schools have approached James Gillespie's High School Parent Council asking about rolling out this trial. It was also noted that Balerno, Boroughmuir, Firrhill, WHEC, Liberton and St Thomas's all support the trial.

Alex noted concern that it seems teachers are teaching as though all children have a device when this is not the case.

6. AOCB

John discussed the interview process for teaching staff noting that other authorities the interviewee teaches a class for a period/morning.

Maria noted that CEC had, in the past visited the teacher in their own school however the Teachers' Union did not support this.

It was noted that other authorities within the S.E. Collaborative allow this including Midlothian and questioned why the union were allowing this.

Maria will check this.

Maria advised that the interview format is 5 questions and a presentation question.

Delegates agreed that this judges a candidate only on their interview skills.

John noted that a “pupil panel” Liberton High do a guided tour with short listed candidates.

Chiara advised that whilst this could be defensible in isolation, and the interview process may not be as good as we would wish unstructured interviews are more likely to be biased.

Delegates agreed that there is no ideal method but the process must be fair for all candidates.

Dee Armstrong asked other representatives to share how their schools organised awards ceremonies. Some parents felt these had been too academic leaning in the past.

John noted that Liberton celebrate success for both academic and non-academic subjects including DofE Awards volunteering etc.

Delegates discussed a 6th year ceremony which would recognise the positive destination (if known) e.g. Jane Smith will be studying Psychology in Oxford/John Smith will be commencing an apprenticeship as a Mechanical Engineer thus making the awards more inclusive.

Delegates discussed fund raising within Parent Councils. Opinion was divided as to whether they should be separate entities.

All delegates agreed that fund raising reasons must be made clear and there must be accountability of spend and decision making thus ensuring the required transparency.

Maria advised that Connect run a seminar on fund raising and reminded delegates that all schools are members of Connect.

Maria advised delegates the next CCwP will be held on 16 May at 6pm in the Dunedin Room. 3 Representatives from this locality can attend. Alex and John will attend and, if anyone else can attend could they please contact Maria.

There being no other business Maria thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.

Next Meeting		
Date	Venue	Time
3 September 2019	St Thomas of Aquin's High School	6.30pm – 8.30pm