

# **Meldrum Academy – Parent Council**

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011, 7:15pm

<b><u>Parent Members:</u></b>	Dave Marshall, Heather Mullan, Elaine Rodgers, Lorna Reid, Roderic Bruce
<b><u>Co-opted Members:</u></b>	Ray Walker
<b><u>Head Teacher:</u></b>	Andy Travis
<b><u>Co-Opted Teacher Reps:</u></b>	Liz Prosser, Sue Edwards
<b><u>Apologies:</u></b>	Pam Marr, Hazel Cummine, Gary Wade, Jim Davidson, David Mutch, Paul Johnstone, John Malster

## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Dave Marshall welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## **2. Approve minutes of previous meeting (28<sup>th</sup> September)**

The minutes were approved with no corrections made.

## **3. Status on Actions from previous meetings**

Elaine Rodgers audited the Parent Council finances, which was well overdue. The update on the creation of the former pupils' site was deferred to the next meeting in the absence of Jon Guthrie. Dave Marshall thanked Hazel Cummine for setting up the Easy Fundraising - a letter was sent home to all pupils explaining to parents how they could raise money for the school while shopping online. Lorna Reid had put forward suggestions for plans for the ten year anniversary of the school. The group of senior pupils involved in 'Common Purpose Your Turn' will be involved in organising the event. A message will be put in the next newsletter about the proposed changes to the constitution, so that all members of the parent forum can see it. **(ACTION AT)**. It was decided that a note would also be put in the next newsletter about the Friends of Meldrum Academy Group and Heather Mullan generously said she would organise it.

## **4. Fund-raising update**

Dave Marshall was successful in getting eight local businesses to sponsor the calendar, at £90 each. This would mean there would be an income of £720 and the cost of printing the calendars was only £305 plus VAT.

Elaine Rodgers received an email from Phil and Aly's agent saying we have been provisionally booked for the evening of Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2012, if the venue is available. Andy Travis is going to speak to Robertsons to try and secure the Assembly Hall for the evening **(ACTION AT)**. Ray Walker said it would be a good idea to involve Shelia Robertson as she could then get some young musicians involved in the concert. There was a general suggestion that companies could pay to have their banner up at the event for advertising. Dave Marshall said he would make the concert a standing item on the agenda so that an update could be had at every meeting.

## **5. Presentation of school exam results**

Alan Horberry (DHT) had prepared a summary report on attainment in the May/June 2011 SQA exam diet. This was presented by Sandy Smith (DHT)

The school undertakes a thorough review of exam data. At an Aberdeenshire Council seminar the trends and patterns at Authority level are reviewed. The school considers whole school data and then meetings are held with each faculty head to consider exam results on a level and subject basis.

These identify good practice and can result in alterations to whole school and faculty plans to bring about year on year improvements.

The school can show that there has been clear improvement in the following measures over a number of years since 2008.

The number of fifth year pupils gaining 3 or more Higher passes and 5 or more passes at Higher has increased each year. This is a greater increase than that shown by Aberdeenshire and Scotland. Performance by boys and girls has been strong with boys performing at a higher level than in Aberdeenshire and Scotland, while girls have regained a strong position after a decrease in 2010.

Performance by S4 pupils in national exams has improved in 2010 and 2011 with the number of pupils who obtained 5 or more Credit or Intermediate 2 passes increasing each year. There was a notable increase in both boys' and girls' performance in this measure in 2011.

Other measures of note include the performance of boys in sixth year who outperformed the girls in that year group. The number of sixth year boys who obtained one or more Advanced Higher grades was the highest since the school has opened.

Subjects at a level (e.g. Maths/Higher level) can be compared with the same subject/level in other schools across Scotland and it is encouraging to see that every faculty across the Academy has top performing areas.

## **6. Feedback on CfE evening Building our Curriculum and National Qualifications**

A meeting was held for parents/carers of pupils in S1 & S2 on Tuesday 8 November. Our current S1 and S2 pupils will be the first to have learning designed entirely around the Curriculum for Excellence. They will sit the new national qualifications in May 2014. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss with parents and carers the structure of courses that will be available in S3 and S4 as these pupils work towards the national qualifications. There was also information about the new national qualifications.

**More detailed information on subjects, courses and levels will be available at our S2 Options Evening held in the assembly hall on Wednesday 8 February 2012 at 7pm. There is also an S2 Parents' consultation evening on Thursday 1 March.**

### **What will children learn from S1/S2 and S3/S4?**

All learners are offered a broad, deep, general education building on previous learning. They experience a wide range of learning across eight curriculum areas – expressive arts, languages and literacy, health and wellbeing, mathematics and numeracy, religious and moral education, sciences, social studies, and technologies. This provides a good foundation for moving on to study for qualifications, at the right level for the pupil, in the later stages of secondary. There is a strong focus on young people being active learners. Areas such as literacy, numeracy and health and well being feature in all aspects of the curriculum. Faculties cooperate across traditional subjects on interdisciplinary courses and a greater value is placed on the young person's learning outside the classroom.

The curriculum in S1 & S2 is a common course (taken by all) and is planned around Level 3 of the curriculum; however, we have pupils who are working at Level 2 and others working at Level 4. The common course is based around the eight curriculum areas listed above.

In S3 there are opportunities for increasing specialism in pupil learning as they will be able to choose subject options within the curriculum areas. These courses will lay the basis for further learning in the senior phase and pupils will choose to take most of these subjects forward for qualification. The broad, deep, general education continues as pupils continue to be exposed to learning across all subject areas. In S4 the courses taken in S3 will continue to be studied as pupils work towards National Qualifications at level 3-5.

In addition, in S4, there will be an offer of a college option that will involve one day per week spent on a course organised in partnership with a local further education college. This will be in place of some of the subjects taken in school.

This was an important meeting for the school community as it allowed us to discuss both the learning opportunities and the qualifications that will be available at Meldrum Academy in the future. Over 140 people attended the meeting which had a presentation and then an opportunity for parents/carers to discuss the issues that had arisen. There was a question and answer session to conclude the evening. The questions that were not answered on the night were collected and frequently asked questions will be answered on the school website or through links to other sites. There were over 80 questions raised but these can be grouped under two main headings; subject choice (we will answer many of these through the S2 options process that involves a PSE programme for S2 pupils, options booklet, parents' evening and the S2 Options Evening) and national qualifications (the SQA website has useful information for parents and carers).

These curricular proposals that were developed by a committee of staff have been discussed and endorsed by teachers, pupils (through the pupil council –MAAG) and parents – both at the Parent Council and through this wider consultation evening. They represent an evolution from our current curricular structure as we work towards the Curriculum for Excellence.

## **7. Issues from Parent Members**

There were no issues raised by any of the parent's present at the meeting.

## **8. Head Teacher update on matters of interest to the Council**

Andy Travis thanked the group of staff and pupils who had organised the biannual Careers Convention. This very successful evening was well supported by local organisations and businesses as well as the services, multinational companies and professional bodies. The Scottish colleges and universities were also well represented. Pupils and parents had turned out in force with an estimated 700 people in the building. The suppliers at the convention spoke highly of the well-informed questions that they had been asked. All those who were involved in the event were congratulated.

This has been a very busy term for Parents/Carers Consultation Evenings with S3, S4 and S5/6 events and an S1 evening coming up soon. Attendance has been very high with between 70 and 80% attendance. Questionnaires have been issued at these evenings and the results of these will be brought along to the next Parent Council meeting.

Liz Prosser said that all the S4 pupils had taken part in the BP Enterprise Trading Game. They had shown a commendable competitive attitude and played the game with such gusto that they had got some of the highest profits ever obtained.

Andy Travis said that the school will continue to be incredibly busy until the end of the term with three nights of Grease, the school show, a senior citizens concert and two evenings of ceilidh dancing. The members of the Parent Council were asked to mark Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> of January on the calendar as they will be receiving invitations to the Meldrum Academy Burns Supper.

## **9. Any other business and close**

Heather Mullan said she would pick up the extra two mannequins from Inverurie (**ACTION HM**). Ray Walker informed everyone that Georgie Ligertwood had won the first round of the Rotary Young Chef of the Year and would be progressing to the next round in either Aberdeen or Dundee. Ray Walker also mentioned that 301 shoeboxes had been put together by the school for the Shoebox Appeal. This was a huge increase on previous years. The date of the next meeting was confirmed as the 1<sup>st</sup> of February. Dave Marshall thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.