Parent Council

TUESDAY 10/01/2023

Forrester High School

Present;   Lorraine Kneebone (Chair), Jackie Barn (Deputy Chair), Stephen Rafferty, Sandra Donaldson (Secretary), Emma Spence (Treasurer), Samm Hamilton, Letitia Wilson, Hilary Brown, Julie Scott, David Givan, Susan Stevens, James Hardacre, Sarah Segovia, April Forsyth, Donna Lumsden, Chelsea Wilson, Cllr Euan Hyslop,

1.Welcome Meeting commenced at 7pm. Welcome to new attendees.

2. Apologies/ action points.   James Hardacre, Kate MacPhie, Mark Peart, Gillian Murray

- JB, LK and KMacP to discuss coffee meeting for parents – To be discussed later

- JB and JH asked everyone to have a look at PC page on new website and feed back. Maybe some kind of comms could go out from the office.
- SR/EH update on MSHW/Teams. Teams doesn't have the functionality to allow parental view-only access. There are 3 schools currently using it, waiting to hear if they are getting any mileage out of it. Other Councils couldn't give any other information. Suggest talking to the children to find out if they have anything
- SD to email out dates for parental evenings. Jackie was the only one to attend the last one – S3 coming up and Jackie, Laetitia and Sandra to represent PC. Looking into getting Soup/coffees
- Well done to Jackie for securing funding for the basketball strips – waiting on invoice. There have been issues with payments.
- EH – no response from Amanda Hatton – will follow up

- Email was to be pulled together about staffing to send to council – DG/LK working on this – see below. New maths teacher appointed today

- YPI – PC attended and night was a huge success. Congratulations to Men Shed for winning and the children are still involved with the charity. The students presentations were all amazing

3.   Treasurer Report and Funding Award

Balance was £2,557.60 plus £250 from the Rotary Club and £200 from the Trust, so balance was £3,007.60:

£825 basketball strips

£200 YPI

£300 Basketballs

Leaves £1,468

There is a cheque that hasn't been cashed yet.

Waiting on information from Mr Sneddon regarding the football strips. SR was wondering if they could get sponsors or do some fundraising, perhaps with prizes sponsored by PC. Activities week – trying to keep costs low this year. Easter study food – Council had previously funded staffing but not being externally funded this year.

Consider having a sub-meeting about a funding plan for the year – *AP – JB/ES/SR

4. Headteacher's Report:

Staffing

- English
  - Michelle Donegan
- Business Education
  - Acting Curriculum Leader leaving to take up a post nearer to home
  - Substantive Curriculum Leader back from maternity early – phased return
  - Kris McKeever (teacher) started with us this week
- New Computing teacher, Alan Lam, started in the last two weeks
- New Pupil Support Assistant, Nadia Deysenko, for our Enhanced Support Base
- New SFL, Rory Lawton, now started.
- Vacant post in CDT has been advertised 3 times. Unfortunately, switchig classes so that all classes receive time in CDT is complicated and would require a whole timetable change. Some classes are also not getting Business Education at the moment. Will continue to re-advertising posts.
- Art – new teacher, Louise Bell, appointed
- English
  - This continues to be extremely challenging with the absence of our CL and a vacancy which is being re-advertised
- Maths – successful candidate, Bridget Price. However, another one of the teachers is moving schools
- We are not really seeing a bank of staff going back to teaching or coming out of retirement
- Currently we are short of two members of staff in the school office – unsuccessful filling these after interviews.
- 2 Pupil Support Assistants short but hopeful these will be recruited through central recruitment

We had applications for posts in the school office but unfortunately the applicant's expectations about the roles they are applying for don't always match their skill set.
Q Is part of the problem with recruiting the way the vacancies are advertised?
Unlike in industry, candidates are not encouraged to contact recruiters about roles before applying? The job descriptions are quite generic through the central recruitment process and candidates won't know what school they are applying to.
Q. Could there be a bank of candidates? The application process doesn't build relationships with candidates. DG & LK composing.

Lags in recruitment mean that candidates are being lost. Supply teachers may be more likely to apply for permanent posts. SR confirmed there is a good supply of teachers at the moment but not in the subjects the school has vacancies for.

SR thanked PC for helping with YPI and promoted looking at the Christmas newsletter, which has a summary of a wide range of achievements and opportunities.
SR also gave an outline of the January in-service which had a focus on Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

A number if priorities have been identified including: feedback, questioning, (no hands-up, all students having to think about the answer, avoiding shallow thinking), differentiation (challenging all students).

Q Kids shouldn't have to ask for more work. Teachers need to use recognise this and following up.

Health and wellbeing – due to Covid there have been issues around socialisation/ anxiety.

Assemblies – discussing things that make a difference to young people's Health and Wellbeing, like activities week, mixed years event and wider achievement opportunities. Unfortunately, the seniors are not included in Activities week due to exams. However, they will have other opportunities such as Duke of Edinburgh (DofE)

Industrial action – fortunately, only one prelim has been affected on 25 January and has been moved to 1 February.
Informal coffee evening - planning for this to include helping pupils get a bus pass, and access to services/support. This will be promoted through the HT update.
1 February – S3 parent evening
6 February – S3 coursing
There was an issue with the dates on the website, but this was corrected yesterday.
Careers fair coming up for S3-S6. SR will put on the website calendar, tweet and will try a front page banner.

5. Wellbeing and Equality and Enhanced Support Base Updates

No update

6. PC workstream Priorities Discussion.

The PC website is live. There are still a few bits and pieces to be done. Can everyone have a look and provide feedback such as typos, missing attachments or jargon. Someone will need to make sure this will be getting updated. JB to check with JH to see if he is happy to do that. *AP.
SR asked for PC to check the calendar as there may be some content missing. The SFL and ESB links don't work.

S2-S3 course choice coming up and senior course choice is on 24 January. The students get an assembly so this is mostly for parents but pupils also welcome. For the S3 parents night, PC are looking to provide soup/coffees. As there are no maps this year, could there be S6s to point parents in the right direction? There will be some usual helpers there. SD/JB and LW to attend to represent and promote PC.

CV writing has been busy but JS said this had previously been aimed at those leaving school. She is happy to help those looking for part-time jobs also. Consider workshops/drop-in/surgery/during PSE?

7. Any Other Business

- LK said that we need to start thinking about officials for next year. She may be stepping down from the PC so consider who would want to take on this role
- Achieve home learning tool – SR said this is a game changer. This is a study tool rather than a learning tool and facilitates home learning. There are tutorials, links to past papers, quizzes and a self-evaluation tool. RAG status – Teachers have access and can help set work. Use of this tool is encouraged from S3 and this will help with course choices.
- SR apologised for the recent IT issues in school – these have been intermittent and are affecting all schools. It can depend on where you are in the school, network protocols are sometimes not compatible with software. CGI are the partners for network & hardware. CDT is a good example – they have cutting edge IT. Apple classroom enables them to use ipads as visualisers to project teacher examples and student work. However, they can't use this if the network is down and can't print alternative work. It's hard to promote the software if the hardware/network aren't working.
- Issue raised by teachers and also unions – what can PC do? Send a further paper raising concerns? *EH to chase up answers affecting impact of IT on teachers' ability to teach.
- Staffing - JB raised concerns that SR was covering classes, taking him away from HT duties
- DG happy to draft an email – maybe need more specifics and might be difficult when there is an issue across all schools – pockets/voids within all schools. SR & DG to link up and DG will draft a letter.
- Parents raised the issue of vaping in the toilets, making them smell and students are congregating here. SR shared that this is a challenging issue at the moment in many schools. While we do not want to restrict students' access to toilets, we need to keep them clean and safe for all users. There is someone on toilet duty every day. If vaping on school grounds, we make parents aware. More education being planned around this matter.
- SQA exam modifications – there are still some small modification in place – check SQA website as this may help reduce study topics. SQA appeals – hardly anyone has had their appeal upheld. The stats are on the SQA website.
- There is going to be an online event for parents around apprenticeships

9. Teacher Recognition

Names put forward.

Action points
- Consider having a separate funding plan meeting for the yearJB to check with JH to see if he is happy to update PC page on Website
- Check for issues/typos/links not working etc on main website an PC page
- DG to get more detail about issues for teaching (staffing/IT etc) for email to Council
- Look into soup/coffee for S3 parent night
- Chase up response from Amanda Hatton

Proposed dates of PC meetings:
20 September 2022
8 November 2022
10 January 2023
7 March 2023
25 April 2023
13 June 2023 (AGM)