

Minutes of Meeting of

Douglas Academy Parent Council Annual General Meeting on 8 September 2021

Previous Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Matters Arising

The Chairman advised that there were two vacancies for parent representatives and he would take nominations at the end of the meeting. He added that ideally the nominees would be parents of children in the lower half of the school so as to provide representation across all year groups.

The Chairman noted that AM had drafted a new constitution and discussion followed about several questions that had been raised. The Chairman requested AM to prepare a final draft during the year with a view to it being adopted at next year's AGM.

The Chairman then advised that there would be a Parent Council Forum meeting on 21 September and asked for volunteers to attend. It was noted that RL had attended previous meetings and she confirmed that it was a useful event. She confirmed she would attend on 21st and the Chairman agreed to forward the details.

Head Teacher's Report

The Chairman then invited the Headteacher to deliver his report for the 2020/21 session which is reproduced in full below:

Head Teachers Report- Parent Council/PTA AGM 8th September 2021

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, it is with great pleasure that I deliver the Head Teacher's report for session 2020 – 21, albeit a much-shortened version compared to previous years. Last year I mentioned that session 19-20 was the most challenging any of us had ever faced. At that point, I was looking forward to a more settled year and I was hopeful we would not face the same challenges to the previous year. However, the school session proved to be more disruptive than anticipated and the transition from in-school learning to remote learning and vice-versa, was more challenging than anything we had faced previously. As ever, our priority was to make sure we delivered the highest standard of education possible to our young people during these very difficult times, and I am pleased with how our school community responded and worked together throughout the period of school closure. I have already mentioned that this is a shortened version compared to previous years, but it is also a different version. Many of the highlights and achievements we would normally associate with our school cannot be mentioned, as COVID restrictions prevented many of our school activities from taking place. However, I will try to mention some notable achievements that did take place, for individual pupils and also our school.

As ever, I will start with SQA National Qualifications. The exam diet was cancelled again this year, but the method for awarding grades was different from the previous year's Alternative Certification Model. This did put considerable pressure on staff and young people, however, I was delighted with how our school community responded and the qualifications our young people achieved is testament to the hard work and resilience they displayed during a very difficult summer term.

Our staff participated in a very rigorous process to finalise pupil grades and we are extremely proud of what our Senior Phase pupils achieved this year: at National 5 level 79.8% achieved five or more passes; 90.8% achieved three or more passes; and 95% achieved at least one National 5 pass. Our Higher results continue to be very strong: we are delighted that 51% of young people achieved five or more passes, our second best performance ever; 79% achieved three or more passes; and 89% achieved at least one Higher pass. Finally, 46% of young people achieved at least one Advanced Higher and a further 12% achieved three Advanced Highers. The number of young people leaving Douglas Academy with at least five Level 6 qualifications (Higher) continues to be very strong with 64% of young people achieving that this session.

It is also important to note that we received some National recognition this year for our approaches to Learning & Teaching in school and during the period of school closure. Furthermore, during the period of school closure, feedback from the entire school community was extremely positive as we moved many of our processes to an online environment.

- We moved to remote methods of self-evaluation during lockdown. We realised the importance of continuing to seek the views of the entire school community as we made the transition from in-school learning to remote learning and vice versa. There were a significant number of changes implemented during this time to learning & teaching; the school day; additional support provision; school counselling etc. Parents/carers and young people were consulted throughout and our feedback from the school community on how we lead and managed each process was commended. Regular communication that was honest and transparent was a key focus during the period of school closure.*
- Our staff professional development programme was interrupted due to our school closure, however, we took the opportunity to move this to a remote format and delivered relevant professional learning activities during our in-service days. This was focused on improving staff Digital Literacy skills in preparation for delivering lessons online.*
- We ensured all young people were trained in Microsoft Teams prior to our school closure, which enabled us to make a smooth transition to online learning. We created a YouTube Channel that contained Microsoft Teams Online Support Tutorials that young people and their families could use if they were unsure how to navigate the various functions on Teams. This resulted in high levels of engagement amongst young people and very positive feedback from families on the synchronous and asynchronous learning & teaching methods utilised by staff during lockdown. We also held regular remote Parent & Carer information evenings during the period of school closure to ensure our entire school community were kept fully informed of the latest updates from Scottish Government, SQA and East Dunbartonshire Council. Our communication strategy was praised by Parents & Carers in the feedback they provided.*
- Our school closure last session required all staff to engage in online lessons with young people. Although our staff interacted with young people and delivered learning experiences in a variety of ways, staff feedback highlighted live online lessons was an area for development. Staff were motivated and enthusiastic about delivering lessons live, so we provided support to colleagues by sharing good practice across the school, both formally and informally. Our Digital Literacy Group members were identified as lead specialists and provided support to staff within their 'digital team'. Further information gathered from staff and pupils highlighted issues with young people's engagement online. Attendance at lessons was excellent, however, participation and actively contributing to the lesson varied across*

the school. In order to identify key online learning & teaching strategies that encouraged young people's participation in a remote learning environment, we arranged an 'Online Lesson Study'. The statement of focus for this inquiry was 'enhancing pupil engagement and accountability during online lessons'. It was evident that the shift to an isolated virtual environment posed different challenges, however, the staff involved highlighted that discussions around the planning of lessons was thorough and the process encouraged them to work collaboratively to share ideas, challenge their thinking and take risks.

- *During our period of school closure we continued to provide both universal and targeted support, albeit remotely, to all young people. This has continued during the transition back to school and will be a recovery priority this session. Some examples of this were:*
 - o *Vulnerable young people were identified at the start of school closure. Weekly check-in with PTG was in place with learners and families via email/phone call ·*
 - o *PTG also used PSE to have check-ins with learners*
 - o *All staff monitored session-by-session engagement using insights/downloading registers in Teams.*
 - o *Pupil attendance and engagement tracked through weekly spreadsheet and issues highlighted and contact by PT Guidance/Year Group Head made each week*
 - o *Regular communication with families and pupils through assemblies and parents information sessions to establish expectations and share information regarding approaches to remote learning.*
 - o *Stakeholder surveys carried out to determine effectiveness of approaches to remote learning.*
 - o *Remote support for identified pupils from Support for Learning staff in class teams, making use of breakout rooms/hidden channels*
- *Our approaches to self-evaluating learning & teaching in-school and online have been featured nationally. Our participation in, and experience of Lesson Study, was featured in the August publication of GTCS 'Teaching Scotland' and Education Scotland highlighted our online Learning & Teaching approaches in their overview of good practice document 'National Overview of Practice in Remote Learning- Supporting pupil engagement, participation and motivation'. We are all very proud that our hard work and creative thinking has been recognised by these National education bodies.*

As many of you are aware, our young people are normally involved in numerous extra-curricular activities throughout the year, with many of their achievements resulting in national awards and recognition. We would have liked to offer more opportunities for achievement out with the classroom last session, but this was not possible with many activities and events being cancelled due to the COVID-19 situation. However, some activities made the seamless transition to online platforms and our young people continued to excel under the most challenging of circumstances.

Music

- *Over the academic year, despite many restrictions on performers, Music School students sat a total of 61 Associated Board Examinations (both online and in person), the majority gaining*

distinctions. This included a young person in S5 gaining a distinction in his Piano Diploma exam with a mark of 45/50 - quite an achievement for someone at his stage.

- *Three pupils were invited to be part of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra's Youth Advisory Council. The council contributes advice and ideas to the main Board and on the organisation's strategy; to advise SCO Board, staff and musicians on content for young people in particular; to organise an event/series of events and to act as ambassadors for the SCO.*
- *A Level Music results- 4 A*, 3 A and 1 B*
- *A number of our students have been performing with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain including at recent concerts in London as part of the BBC Proms, in the Albert Hall.*
- *Glasgow Music Festival- this was held virtually in March this year with many of our students excelling in various performing classes and included the three top awards of the festival:*
- *An S5 pupil won the Ailie Cullen Memorial Prize for best overall performance in the whole Festival*
- *An S3 pupil won the Hugh S Robertson Trophy for best performance of any performer under 14yrs old.*
- *An S6 pupil won the Agnes Duncan Trophy for most meritorious performances in all singing classes in senior school age group.*

Debating

Despite the pandemic, Douglas Academy continued to enter a number of online debating competitions. The following competitions were entered:

Donald Dewar Memorial Debating Competition

University of St Andrew's Debating Competition

University of Edinburgh Debating Competition

University of Cambridge Debating Competition

University of Oxford Debating Competition

Debating Matters GB-India Competition

Edinburgh Juniors Debating Competition

Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal's Public Speaking Competition

Mock Court Debating Competition

Glasgow Bar Debating Competition

International Competition for Young Debaters

Notable successes:

- *Donald Dewar Memorial Debating Competition – Two pupils qualified for the Scottish Final but were unable to compete in it due to other commitments.*

- *University of St Andrew's Debating Competition – Two pupils won this competition.*
- *University of Cambridge Debating Competition – Two of our pupils were one of four Scottish Teams who qualified for the Finals Day.*
- *University of Oxford Debating Competition – Two of our pupils were one of 6 Scottish teams to qualify for Finals Day.*
- *Edinburgh University Juniors – Two pupils qualified for the Silver Final*
- *Glasgow Bar Debating Competition – Two pupils won the Silver Final*
- *Debating Matters GB-India Competition – Six pupils won this competition debating against schools from across the UK and India. One of our pupils won the best speaker award.*

A Junior Debating and Senior Debating club is now meeting in person for the first time since the start of the pandemic.

Young Enterprise

Our Young Enterprise Business 'Bonnie Boards' won the Young Enterprise Regional Finals and qualified for the National Final. In addition, they won three additional awards at the Regional Finals: Most Profitable Company; Most Sustainable Company; and Best presentation from a company. Although they did not win the overall award at the National Final, they did win the Creativity Award that was judged by Accenture.

Charity and Community Work

At Douglas, we have placed great importance on supporting charities in and beyond our local community. Our Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) is run through our Social Subjects department and is a fantastic opportunity for all S2 pupils to provide support to a chosen local charity. Fortunately, this was one of the events we could run this session as it was delivered over Teams. Our young people filmed their presentations in class and these were shown online during our YPI Final. It was a difficult decision for the judges as the quality of the presentations were superb. However, the judges eventually decided that a local charity, Friendship House in Milngavie, deserved to be the lucky recipients of the £3000 this year.

Before I finish, I would like to pay tribute to our outstanding staff at Douglas Academy, both teaching and non-teaching. They were a huge support to our young people and their families last session, whilst facing a number of their own personal and professional challenges. It has been an incredibly difficult 18 months for the entire school community but I cannot thank our staff, young people and parents/carers enough for their continued support.

Finally, our Parent Council has continued to offer strong support to us and I would like to thank Scott Taylor, our Parent Council Chair and all other members of our Parent Council for all their help and support this year. I would also like to thank all members of the PTA for their efforts and support they provided to our school this session. Your help, support and encouragement have been greatly appreciated by all of our staff and pupils.

Staffing Update

The Headteacher then provided an update on staffing changes. One teacher will be off on long-term sick and an existing member of staff has taken over their responsibilities. There is also a new S3 Head of Year Group and a replacement for a teacher who retired last year.

AOB

The Chairman reported on the request from the Parent Councils of Craighdu and Clober Primary Schools for support in their efforts to improve road safety. He advised that an email had been sent to East Dunbartonshire Council on 22 July but no response had yet been received.

MS asked about the arrangements for prelims. The Headteacher explained that for S4 these would probably take place in late November or early December and for S5/6 it would probably be late January. However he noted that this had yet to be confirmed, as the logistics are complex due to the need to use large halls and external invigilators, both of which are uncertain due to the Covid situations and the restrictions that may be in place. He also noted that dates for school reports and parents' evenings were yet to be finalised but were dependent on prelim dates being finalised. He noted that there is a meeting planned with EDC on 6 October to discuss this and other matter so he ought to have more clarity then. He added that due to the ongoing Covid restrictions he is investigating using an online tool to facilitate parents' evenings this year and would provide an update to parents in due course.

RL then asked what progress was being made to address the issues of gender-based harassment / misogyny. The Headteacher confirmed the topic was covered in PSE classes, with particular focus on consent with the S5/6 Year Groups. He expected to send a letter to parents shortly about this. He also noted that plans are being made to extend this beyond PSE classes, possibly with external speakers, in order to give it greater prominence. This could also involve engaging senior pupils to help staff develop the programme. RL thanked and congratulated the Headteacher for his efforts and noted that one of the local councillors was also trying to raise this issue in a wider context than just schools.

The Chairman then formally thanked the Headteacher and his staff for all their efforts over the past years, especially during the lockdown where the online teaching and support had been extremely good. RL asked if there was anything else the Parent Council could do to support the staff but the Headteacher advised that there was nothing specific required but thanked the Council for the offer.

There being no further business, the Chairman invited nominations for new members. SD and AC put their names forward and were accepted. The Chairman noted he would contact them shortly afterwards for their details.

Date of Next Meeting: To be confirmed