

Douglas Academy Parent Council

AGM Minutes

5 September 2023

1. **Welcome and apologies**

ST welcomed all attendees and noted that the meeting was quorate. He noted that representatives from parents of S1-3 was relatively light, with stronger representation from S4-6. Accordingly, he stressed the importance of S1-3 parents/carers to become members of the Council.

He also reported that all the local councillors had been invited to the meeting but none was present.

2. **Minutes of the last meeting**

BS reported that he hadn't received the last minutes. ST undertook to arrange to send them to him so that he could add the Headteacher's Report and upload them on the school website.

3. **Parent Council Retirees / nominations**

ST advised there were three vacancies on the Council following retirements at the end of the 2022/23 year. He noted there was a maximum of 10 members allowed under the constitution and requested that any parties interested in filling any of the vacancies contact him after the meeting .

4. **Office Bearers**

ST advised that under the constitution he ought to stand down as Chair but that he was happy to stay on if there were no objections. ML indicated he was happy to take over as Chair provided ST stayed on a Vice-Chair. After some discussion, it was agreed that ML would become Vice-Chair and ST would stay on as Chair for one further year to enable a smooth handover at the end of the 2023/24 year.

5. **Dates and Timings of meetings**

ST noted that in previous years the Parent Council meetings had clashed with or preceded the dates of the East Dunbartonshire Education Committee and Parent Forum meetings and recommended that this year the Parent Council meetings should follow them so that attendees could report back to the Parent Council. This was agreed, and ST undertook to advise the meeting in due course of the dates of these meetings so that Parent Council meeting dates could be confirmed.

6. **Councillors' attendance**

ST advised that all local councillors were entitled under the Constitution to attend the Parent Council meetings and that he had emailed all of them about the date of the AGM but had received no replies. He undertook to remind them, but noted that their attendance in general was poor.

7. PC Forum

CM confirmed she would attend the Parent Forum, but raised concerns about its operation. She advised that there was too much of a “tell-do” structure to the meetings, with little or no opportunity for discussion. She therefore questioned that value or purpose of the Forum. BS agreed he would raise the matter with Greg Bremner (Interim Director of Education) as they were due to meet later in the week.

8. PTA Update

There was little to report about the PTA, although it was noted that, like the Parent Council, there was a need for more volunteers to get involved. BS confirmed that this was a problem common across most schools in the area, especially post Covid, and most were struggling to find or retain volunteers.

A discussion followed about how the PTA might work with the Enterprise team of S6 in order jointly to raise funds for the school. It was noted that there was good engagement from the wider parent body on other PTA activities, but fundraising was a challenge. Various options were suggested for how to raise funds, including Amazon Smile and operating a monthly prize draw. BS confirmed that the latter operated at Bearsden Academy and it would be worth exploring the pros and cons of introducing something similar at Douglas Academy.

9. Head Teacher Update

BS provided an update on the achievements and successes of pupils within the School over the course of the 2022/23 year. In particular he noted that the school had had its best ever SQA results, with 58% of S5 pupils achieving 5 Highers, the widely acknowledged ‘Gold Standard’, 86% achieving at least one Higher and 100% going on to positive destinations. He also advised that the school was almost at capacity, with the roll now at 1,060 pupils. Head Teacher’s Report for the AGM is below:

Head Teachers Report- Parent Council/PTA AGM 5th September 2023

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, it is with great pleasure that I deliver the Head Teacher’s report for session 2022 – 23. Last year was another very successful period for our school. Our SQA results in S5 were the best ever for Douglas Academy with 58% of our young people achieving 5 or more qualifications at L6; our Positive Destinations were the highest they have ever been with 100% of our young people successfully going to Higher/Further Education, Employment or Training; and we had one of the strongest Education Scotland Inspection Reports for a Secondary School in Scotland when we were graded as **Very Good for 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment** and **Excellent for 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement**. We were the only school last year to be awarded an Excellent in Quality Indicator 3.2.

As ever, I will start with SQA National Qualifications. Once again, our young people performed exceptionally well across all measures.

S4

5+ @ L3 (%)	5+ @ L4 (%)	5+ @ L5 (%)
88	88	75

- L4 and L5 are the equivalent of National 5 and National 5 respectively

S5

1+ @ L6 (%)	3+ @ L6 (%)	5+ @ L6 (%)
85	77	58

- L6 is the equivalent of Higher

S6 (Leavers)

3+ @ L6 (%)	1+ @ L7 (%)
75	39

- L7 is the equivalent of Advanced Higher

Everyone at Douglas Academy is incredibly proud of our young people's performance in their SQA examinations.

Education Scotland Inspection

As I mentioned at the beginning of my report, our school was inspected in November of last year and the Summary of Inspection Findings and Inspection Report were published in February 2023. Education Scotland graded two quality indicators, which were 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment and 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement. Our inspection gradings were amongst the best ever achieved by a Secondary school in Scotland. A Very Good for 2.3 and an Excellent for 3.2. We are only the third school ever to be graded as Excellent for 3.2 and the only school to have achieved this since inspections resumed after the pandemic. Some highlights from Education Scotland's finding are below:

- *Young people who are very well motivated to achieve, highly articulate and demonstrate high levels of responsibility. Positive relationships across the school support a very purposeful learning environment and a climate of high expectations and aspirations.*
- *Consistently outstanding levels of attainment from S1 to S3 and in National Qualifications. Young people are achieving much better across almost all national measures than learners with similar needs and backgrounds across Scotland.*
- *Young people who are highly successful, confident and exercise responsibility and contribute exceptionally well to the life of the school and wider community. They have achieved an impressive range of skills and attributes through a wide range of activities.*
- *The ethos and culture at Douglas Academy, as an inclusive learning community, clearly reflect the school's vision of Working Together, Respecting Others and Pursuing Excellence...Across the school, the culture of respect is evident and young people are very respectful to one another and to staff. Relationships across the school are very positive and set the tone for calm, supportive and purposeful learning experiences.*
- *Young people are attaining exceptionally well in all curriculum areas and sustaining these high standards over time despite the challenges of the pandemic. In the BGE, the school collates data for all subjects showing the percentages of young people achieving third and fourth CfE levels*
- *The school has consistently sustained an exceptionally high standard of attainment in National Qualifications over the past five years.*
- *Almost all young people across the school are developing a broad range of skills and attributes as a result of participation in the school's extensive programme of wider achievement. Almost all young people are also gaining a wide range of recognised and accredited awards. The levels of achievement across the school are outstanding.*

- *Staff have successfully accelerated the progress of those most affected by poverty. The gap in complementary tariff scores between quintiles 1 and 5 has significantly reduced between 2018-19 to 2021-22. Those young people in quintile 1 have shown a significant improvement in attainment. Senior leaders report that increased pathways in the senior phase, more informed coursing based on robust data, and the targeted use of staff to support literacy and numeracy account for this school's highly effective approaches to raising attainment for those in quintile 1.*
- *The arrangements for monitoring and tracking attainment throughout the school is outstanding. Senior leaders have developed a comprehensive whole school system that allows underachievement to be identified promptly. Staff at all levels are pro-active in analysing this data and using this to help inform coursing.*
- *The head teacher's empowering leadership in creating a climate of high aspirations and expectations. As a result, young people's attainment and achievements are sector leading.*

Our entire school community contributed to this outstanding report and we are all very proud of what we have achieved.

Music

As ever, we had many musical highlights. Our young people were selected to participate in the

- National Youth Orchestra of Scotland;
- National Youth Choir of Scotland;
- National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain;
- National Youth Choir of Great Britain

Duke of Edinburgh

This continues to be extremely popular in school and is oversubscribed every year

- 84 of our new S3 pupils will have the opportunity to participate in the Bronze Award. More information will be shared about this opportunity in January 2024
- 25 of our new S5's have been signed up for the Silver Award and expeditions are taking place just now and over the coming weeks.

Volunteering

- Volunteering and giving back is seen as vitally important at Douglas Academy and we try to ensure young people receive the recognition they deserve for willingly giving up their time to support others.
- 130 Saltire Awards were issued to young people across the school from various Year Groups for volunteering in school
- Some of the volunteering included making a contribution to our
 - Sports Council;
 - contributing to our Princes Trust Award
 - Volunteering as part of our Skills for Learning, Life and Work Group and much more.

These awards are based on the number of hours of volunteering you have documented over the course of the year. We are continually looking to provide further volunteering opportunities for young people. Such as;

- Our amazing DA'rista café;

- links with local care homes;
- And other community groups such as Gavin's Mill to name but a few.
- We would encourage all young people who are volunteering to inform us so we can ensure they receive accreditation

Charity Contributions

It has been well documented that charities and non-profit organisations have suffered financially during the pandemic. Therefore, we worked hard throughout the year trying to raise money for various charity organisations. This included:

- Our S2 pupils participating in the Youth & Philanthropy Initiative which is run by our Social Subjects Department and provides young people with the opportunity to support a local charity of their choosing. I had the pleasure of judging this year's final presentations and the winner was East Dunbartonshire Carers Link who received a donation of £3000. The winning group consisted of young people from 2A.
- 'Plaster it Purple' day which was donated to Glasgow Children's Hospital Appeal- £453
- Mary's Meals and Valley Centre School in Liberia- £3500
- Macmillan Coffee Morning- £396
- East Dunbartonshire Foodbank- 688kg

Debating & Public Speaking

- Two pupils broke to the final of the St Andrews University debating competition
- Two pupils were top of the Team tab in the St Columba's Junior Debating competition.
- Two pupils won the Silver Final at the Craigmount Junior Debating Competition.
- Two pupils qualified for the semi-final of the Glasgow Bar debating competition.
- Two pupils won the Scottish Qualifier of the International Competition for Young Debaters (ICYD) and competed in the Finals' Day in the Cambridge Union in April.
- One pupil was selected for the Scottish World Schools' Debating Team Development Squad.
- Senior European Youth Parliament team won the West of Scotland EYP qualifier and will compete in the Autumn Nationals at John Moore University, Liverpool, in September 2023

Other Notable Achievements

Some other fantastic achievements that are continuing this year.

- **Young STEM Leaders**- last session we had 16 young people who successfully gained a Young STEM Leaders Award. They led STEM days during our primary transition days with P7 pupils. This year we have 55 signed up to the programme and they will be involved in promoting STEM activities and volunteering across a range of subjects. We have also been accepted as one of the 20 pilot schools / colleges to deliver the Young STEM Leader award at Level 7 this year. This award will have 6 SCQF point associated with it and represents 60 hours of learning for those young people undertaking it.
- **MVP**- we are continuing with the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) programme. We have already trained 25 S6 pupils in a peer mentoring programme which is designed to encourage

all young people to challenge abusive and bullying behaviour. After being trained in the programme our pupils will be delivering lessons to our S3 pupils through the PSE programme.

- **Mental Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors**- 29 S5 pupils have been trained in our Mental Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors Programme. This is designed to develop pupils' understanding of what Mental HWB is and how to promote positive Mental HWB. Our S5 pupils are due to deliver lessons on this to S1 pupils during PSE.
- All of these initiatives provide young people with opportunities to develop their leadership skills & qualities whilst also providing a platform for them to engage in discussion about current issues affecting society.
- **School show**- Douglas Academy was transformed into Rydell High for our 2023 School Show 'Grease'. We were blown away by the talent, professionalism and kindness shown by all pupils who were part of the production. Throughout the year, the preparation has demanded a lot of time and commitment from pupils and staff, and it was amazing to see them shine during all three performances. This was our first school show in recent years and was a massive success! We are so grateful to everyone who supported the show and we are already excited for the next one.
- **Culinary Excellence Event**- 24 pupils completing their National 4/National 5 Practical Cookery course worked in partnership with staff from Massimo Restaurant to deliver an outstanding dining experience for 126 parents/carers and staff. The pupils worked tirelessly to prepare and serve a delicious four course meal. The evening was incredibly well received and an excellent way to round off the term. Well done to everyone involved. The young people really excelled, demonstrating their excellent culinary and service skills.

Before I finish, I would like to pay tribute to our outstanding staff at Douglas Academy, both teaching and non-teaching. Their effort and commitment were recognised in our Education Scotland Inspection and they continue to be a huge support to our young people and their families. I also cannot thank our parents and carers enough for their continued support. The inspection team noted how positive our parental questionnaires were and this was reflected in the conversations they had during focus groups.

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.

10. Parent Council Correspondence

ST reported on the latest position on the on-going discussions with EDC about the proposal to raise the playing field fence height. He confirmed that the proposal was now on hold pending further investigations by the Council. Whilst this didn't represent a final success, it was at least encouraging that EDC were listening to the concerns of the Parent Council. He confirmed he would keep the Parent Council updated with any further developments.

11. Future agenda items

BS confirmed that the school currently had a vacancy for a Careers Adviser which Skills

Development Scotland were expected to fill by the end of 2023. He therefore suggested getting them along during 2024 to address the Parent Council.

12. AOB

A question was asked about placing requests and what the impact of these had on the school. BS confirmed that these were all administered centrally with little involvement of the school itself, but noted that the school was very full and therefore it was increasingly unlikely that placing requests would be successful.

There being no other business, the meeting closed.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 28 November at 7.00pm