

Minutes

Attendees:

Paula Curtis, Ann Dasle, Joseph Feller, Sue Fiessler, Selina Higgins, Siobhan Higgins, Jon Isaque, Laura Maher, Jane Maher-Loughnan, Clair McSweeney, Michael Mulry, Leah Murphy, Colm O'Connor, Kathy O'Dwyer, Maria O'Sullivan, Louise O'Riordan, Jerrieann Sullivan, Katarzyna Pyrz

Apologies:

Francesca Castellano, Cormac Mohally, Joy O'Callaghan

Agenda items realised:

1. Michael Mulry (NPCPP) gave an overview of some basic requirements needed for a new parents association/parents council. A classical structure with chair/secretary/treasurer roles was encouraged.

Michael mentioned a new legislation discussed in 2016 called "*Parents Charter*", which, once enacted, will provide stronger complaints or grievance procedures (e.g. parents could appeal decisions of a school's BOM to an Ombudsman for Education).

2. Colm spoke about the way he sees the Parents Council (PC) and parents' involvement working in the school. Parents are seen as partners in a structure of decision-making on the most important aspects of the school's life e.g. policy making (all relevant), fundraising, and a curriculum (to a certain degree).

CETSS aims at an iterative and equalised process, in which issues are brought-up for a discussion and agreed-on on the Students'- and Parents' Council levels before reaching the Board of Management level. On the other hand, BOM might appeal to the councils and the school's community in addressing arising issues at its level.

A decision-working tree/diagram is needed to establish clear procedures. A working group formed from volunteering parents is needed for this purpose.

Jerrieann explained how she sees the school's Students' Council working: the traditional model of a committee operating for a year and consisting of just a few students to be replaced by a monthly assembly of eight students, whose names will be randomly selected. The students will be rotated regularly and guided throughout the process, so that all of them get the experience.

Sue mentioned a traditional triangle of the ET schools, i.e. Students-Teachers-Parents are all involved in the educational process, and given roles and responsibilities. Traditionally, a PC represents all parents and every parent is automatically a member of the PC.

3. Election of the operational team (parents, who volunteered for roles):
 - Jon Isaque – facilitator of PC meetings, chairing duties
 - Kasia Pyrz and Clair McSweeney – secretarial duties
 - Jane Maher-Loughnan and Paula Curtis – financial duties

Other issues discussed:

1. The school's building – an interim location not confirmed yet, Nemo Rangers grounds in Ballinlough were mentioned as a suitable site. The final building's site not confirmed yet, a field in Douglas Village (next to a Garda Station) may be one of possible locations.
All present parents agreed that lobbying with local politicians and media is required, and that also students could get involved. A working group is needed.
2. Financing PC – a small start-fund is needed. An insurance cover is not needed as the school's insurance covers activities of PC.

3. "Teething issues"

- Parents need a clear procedure about whom to go to with specific or general issues. A working group to be formed to work on this. Colm will start and lead the process.
- Sometimes some homework for the next day appears on Schoology late in the evening. Colm will address this issue.
- Schoology is accessible only online; this requires some extra planning and organisation to save the material, homework etc. Students to be encouraged by parents and teachers to work effectively both online and offline.
- Project Work (and some homework) perceived as challenging by some children and parents for the kind of skills it requires (e.g. time-management, brain-storming, self-directed work, collaboration, research skills). It was discussed that most of the 'ground work' for more extensive homework would need to be done in school either during classes or after classes in peer support/homework groups.

Colm reassured that students are going to be eased up into the new skills and requirements by role-playing and modeling techniques offered by teachers during the incoming "Phenomenon week".

It was suggested by parents that there should be standards of a 'project' or 'collaboration' agreed on between all students and teachers to avoid possible confusion.

Action Points:

1. To involve as many other parents as possible in the planned working sub-groups:
 - **CETSS Parents Council constitution group – Jon has started to work on this, any parents interested are asked to contact him**
 - **Decision-making tree (diagram) group**
 - **Lobbying group**
 - **Parents/School Communication group ('go to' procedures)**

Jon/Colm to communicate with parents via e-mails. All parents to share through their own links.

2. Next meetings:
 - **Venue: Blackrock Observatory Castle (thank you, Clair McSweeney)**
 - **Dates: Every first Tuesday of a month (except for January); incoming dates:**
6th December 2016
10th January 2017

Jon/Colm to communicate with parents via e-mails. All parents to share through their own links.

3. Carry-over items to include on the next agenda:
 - Planning events for a year
 - Financial plan for a year

Jon/Colm to communicate with parents via e-mails. All parents to share through their own links.