

No 728 Minutes 728 of the Education Committee meeting held at the Education Learning Centre on Wednesday, 16th March 2016 at 09.00hrs.

Present:	Hon. Nigel Dollery	Deputy Chairperson
	Hon. Brian Isaac	Member
	Hon. Wilson Duncan	Member
	Hon. Corinda Essex	Member
	Mrs Shirley Wahler	Director
	Mrs Kerry Yon	Assistant Director Lifelong Learning
	Mrs Cherilee Thomas-Johnson	Secretary
Apologies:	Hon. Christine Scipio-O'Dean	Chairperson
	Mrs Wendy Benjamin	Assistant Director Schools
	Miss Vyona Young	Head of Inclusion
Invited:	Chair of PAS PTA	Item No. 28.6
	A concerned parent	Item No. 28.6

OPEN AGENDA

28.1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed all present.

Apologies were received from the Chairperson, Christine Scipio-O'Dean, Wendy Benjamin and Miss Vyona Young.

28.2 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES 727

TEACHER INTRODUCTION

The Director Mrs Shirley Wahler informed the Committee that an incident had occurred which further provoked existing concerns. This would be discussed further under the Staffing Update item of the Closed Agenda

REPORT FROM RETURNING GRADUATE TEACHERS

The meeting of the Scholarships Awards Committee will be held. Options for providing support to current scholarship candidates for when they go abroad are yet to be shared with them for decision-making. The Director informed Committee members that this was in hand.

28.3 UPDATE ON REVIEW OF PAS CURRICULUM

Committee members were circulated the paper prior to the meeting. All members were happy to agree that any qualification approved as a GCSE equivalent in any part of the United Kingdom considered as a GCSE equivalent on St. Helena.

28.4 UPDATE ON MARITIME TRAINING

Committee members were circulated the document prior to the meeting.

Mrs Kerry Yon, Assistant Director of Lifelong Learning informed the Committee that training is not enforced through local legislation and can be provided to fishermen and interested parties to become qualified skippers operating in our harbour.

The Fishermen's Association has extended an invite to Mrs Kerry Yon, Assistant Director of Lifelong Learning; this meeting will be held later in the week and Mrs Yon is expecting to be questioned in regards to the introduction of Legislation.

It is understood that there are public concerns in regards to Prince Andrew School not offering Maritime related qualifications and therefore it is felt that youngsters are not being encouraged in that field. It was noted that the Directorate was looking at curriculum options in relation to this area.

Councillor Dollery also added that in addition to opportunities for training being made available that the Fishermen needed to take on some of the responsibility their selves to promote the industry.

28.5 PRESENTATION ON PASS SURVEY RESULTS

Committee members were circulated the report prior to the meeting and were content with the information received.

28.6 PARENT PRESENTATION ON STUDENT ALLOWANCE

Chair of PAS PTA & a concerned parent were welcomed to the Education Committee Meeting. They were informed that to avoid information being taken out of context the Committee were not going to comment on the presentation. Instead the Committee would discuss the item between them and would then send them a written response.

Chair of PAS PTA, a parent of one of the affected students spoke about how she progressed through the Education System with a paid allowance; she understood that the allowance was removed in 2011 following a decision made in 2010 to remove untargeted subsidies.

Chair of PAS PTA mentioned that she has contacted several parties and felt let down by the systems as it would appear from her perspective that no one had taken their opinions into consideration with regards to Student Allowance, hence the reason she chose to present.

Chair of PAS PTA said that although there were parents like herself, who would be willing to support their children, there are many who are unable to provide financial support. She felt that there were many students who left school because the Student Allowance was removed.

Chair of PAS PTA said that the seven students who will be going off as Scholarship Students this year continued their Academic based studies because they clung onto the hope that the Allowance would have been given to them.

Chair of PAS PTA and A concerned parent felt that Academic based students were discriminated against as they did not receive pay in comparison to those who are paid, and in a work placement through the Apprenticeship Scheme. Students who were Academic and based in school would need to be means tested before an Allowance could be considered.

Chair of PAS PTA suggested that if SHG was serious about investing in the future of the island then the Directorate should invest in Prince Andrew Schools students as they are committed. Chair of PAS PTA said that currently a lot of posts are TC and with opportunities to develop further the students today could in the future be qualified to take over these roles.

A concerned parent stated that the Community would benefit from this as an investment; he felt that this would be an incentive for youngsters to stay in school and if better qualified, the youth of our island would be able to take on more senior posts, which would be an encouragement to stay on island

It was noted that there is increased difficulty with participation of parents as members of the PTA and a decreased attendance at Parents Evening.

Chair of PAS PTA and A concerned parent asked the Committee if they could take a further look into the Allowance and seriously think about the seventeen students whom would be legible this year - A concerned parent suggested that SHG as a whole take on this responsibility and therefore use funds available to invest in our children, our future rather than white Elephants such as the Bailey bridge and roads equipment.

The concerned parent addressed the Councillors present; Councillors were told that they were elected to act in the best interests of the Community however it would appear that they now have a different Agenda and were abusing peoples trust.

The Councillors present disagreed with the statement made and the Chairperson intervened.

It was agreed that a written response would be provided within a month.

Both the Chair of PAS PTA and the concerned parent were thanked for attending the meeting before leaving.

27.10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on:

20 April 2016, commencing at 09.00 hrs at the Education Learning Centre.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting closed at 11.50 hrs.

Confirmed:
Honourable Nigel Dollery

Date: __ April 2016