

Minutes of Staffordshire University Academy Parents' Forum

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2017 6pm – 7 pm

Venue: Staffordshire University Academy

**Present:**

Mrs Hillier (Principal), Mr Williams (Chair of Governors), Mr Allsopp (Vice Principal), Ms Owen (Vice Principal), Mr S Andrews (Assistant Principal), Mr Williams (Director of Teaching and Learning), Ms V Burns (Director of Teaching and Learning), Mrs Holyhead (staff governor), Mr J Andrews (staff governor)

Parents Present: 29 parents present.

Minutes	Action
<p><b>Meeting Opened 6pm</b></p> <p><b>Welcome</b> Mrs Hillier opened the meeting and made introductions and welcomed parents to the second of SUA's Parents' Forum meetings explaining the purpose of these meeting.</p> <p><b>Summer results overview</b> Mrs Hillier provided a Powerpoint presentation about the summer results and provided parents with an overview of the data. It was explained that there are concerns with maths. That we want to ensure students are making enough progress, and that it appears we have not stretched our students enough.</p> <p>Our English results were better than the maths results. In some areas students significantly underachieved and we are doing a huge amount of work rapidly to ensure that this does not continue.</p> <p>Sixth Form students, there were only 14 students in Y13, we are very proud of their results.</p> <p>A new maths software package has been purchased, Hegarty maths. All students have been given login details. It focusses on mathematical problems and there are quizzes for students. We have linked up with some new teaching schools, Painsley Catholic College, who are working closely with our English and Maths departments. They are an outstanding school. Also St Joseph's College another outstanding school based in Stoke.</p> <p>Sound Training has also been introduced, and there has been a change in the Year 11 exam board for English Language to AQA. We have identified areas where gaps appeared in students learning; analysis is taking place to address this. Maths mock exams are taking place this week in an effort to get the students used to having these more regularly during the run up to their external exams.</p> <p>The reward system has been changed and this has provided an encouraging start to the term with students being ready to learn when arriving at school, dressed and equipped accordingly.</p>	

Ms Owen has taken a lead in the Maths department and we encourage parents to use the Hegarty maths software as this will provide students great support and learning opportunities.

### **Statement of Action**

The academy has provided a Statement of Action, which provides a detailed account of the objectives and timescales, this will be taken to the Local Academy Council meeting next week for approval. We have identified the priorities for the academy and produced the action plan in accordance with those priorities. The plan carries objectives through to December 2018 and it has been quality assured by Challenging Education. An abridged version of the document, once approved at the Local Academy Council meeting next week, will be made available to parents.

The academy strives to get better. We have built a lot of support for teaching across of the academy. The governing body are part way through a review of existing governance to provide support and recommendations for improvement. The Sixth Form received a requires improvement judgement from the most recent Ofsted report. Sixth Form is an area we need to continue to grow.

The academy is on a progress journey, we have introduced additional middle leaders as Heads of Year who have made a good impression on staff and students.

Parents raised their concern at the last forum about the creative subjects. A new project has been launched with Year 7 students who are involved with the Birmingham Repertory theatre. As part of the project they will get the opportunity to perform live on stage at the Repertory theatre and get involved in this venture.

Mrs Hillier spoke about the website demonstrating to parents the changes we have made to the home page. Letters will be sent home fortnightly to indicate the improvement being made, these letters will also appear on the website. The Principals' Blog section is new which will be updated regularly and there is the Twitter/Facebook news from events within the academy. Feedback in relation to the website was welcomed.

### **Behaviour for Learning and Rewards update**

Mr Allsopp explained the context of where he has worked, and his background in education. SUA has adopted a zero tolerance to unacceptable behaviour. We have a clear RESPECT agenda in place within the academy. This has made a sharp difference within the academy already, students must show respect at all levels. There are posters around the academy and students are challenged if in breach, we want our students to be respectful to each other. The "3P's", prepared, punctual, presentable, including pen, pencil and the new student planner. This has had a great impact, staff are making sure students have it ready at the beginning of the day and are being consistent. The majority of students are doing well and are prepared and ready for learning. Students can record their homework and the planner is used more than ever as a behaviour tool. There is an area for parents/staff messages, this has created clear lines of communication. Moving the tutor time to the beginning of the day has had a positive impact. Things are running smoothly with the split lunchtimes. Additional seating in the gym has provided for a calmer atmosphere. The experience of the three Head of Years appointed has permeated across the academy and the pastoral coordinators are working across the academy and are making significant inroads. Praise postcards have been relaunched for rewards, ensuring that every students is rewarded in the correct way.

### **Homework**

After feedback from the last Parents' Forum meeting we have uploaded this information to the website for easier access to parents. This is a general overview of what teachers are expecting them to complete each week, depending on their set, but it will be per subject, it details what homework is due and when.

### **Attainment Bands**

Mr Allsopp spoke about the new attainment/bands for target setting. Students will be challenged in lessons according to ability, every student will have a colour, to plot their flight path to KS4. SUA to ensure that the curriculum is fit for purpose and the bands are personalised for each student. There are 5 colours, every class has a colour band. Students can naturally see their projection. Staff have a sticker on student books to indicate if they are either meeting, below or above their projection linked to assessment and ability. SUA to ensure that students are challenged in the appropriate way.

All the students have had the banding system explained during assemblies and what it means and the importance of the rationale behind this. Forecast data in the past has not been accurate enough. This should allow us to confidentially plot where students should be.

As an academy we need parents to have clear and accurate information from subject progress and enable them to see the flight path their child is on. We will provide parents with a broad view of expected progress. Mr Allsopp showed the report template to parents on a Powerpoint presentation. Mr Allsopp asked parents to consider for next time, what level of comments parents would like to see from staff, based on their child's progress.

### **Parental Questions:**

- Parent: In relation to the new grading system, can the grading be provided in a way that I (parents) can relate to.

Mr Allsopp: If a student is outside a zone, then the academy will provide intervention. The coloured banding will indicate on which flight path the student is on. This is based on Key stage 2 assessments. The student will know which band they are in and therefore parents should expect them to say "I'm working above/below" their attainment. Ms Owen said for example the green band (1-2) they are doing what they need to do. Parents will get a personalised report, you will know if your child is on the right track, and the information will be on the front of every single book.

- Parent: Will intervention for students start early this year?

Ms Owen: Yes – Heads of Year and Pastoral Coordinators will concentrate on the interventions, we have a set timetable for assessments, which will be published on the website for parental information. This details when a Key stage 3/4 students will sit an assessment/test. This will help parents support in the build up to these.

- Parent: The planners/diaries are much better. However the size is an issue, too small.

Mr Allsopp: We have noted that we need to give more pages each week, the planners are termly and can be changed.

- Parent – Homework has increased across the academy. From Friday to today we have had 4 pieces which are all in tomorrow.

Ms Owen indicated that all students should have a week to complete any homework which is set in line with the academy policy. The parent suggested that this was not always the case, sometimes homework has been due the following day. Ms Owen said that this was good feedback to receive and she will address this issue with staff. At the last meeting parents had said that there was not enough homework of quality. We have addressed this and will speak to staff about timescales for the return of homework.

- Parent: Her child is frustrated by the colour of her attainment band, she thinks that she should be working above this band.

Mrs Hillier offered to speak individually to the parent and explained that the attainment bands will be reviewed regularly. Intervention will be put in place in accordance with the attainment bands and this will be monitored regularly. The students need to be challenged and this is what we are seeking to achieve. Please be assured this will happen.

- Parent: Her daughter was not challenged enough and that she should be on a higher band.

Mr Allsopp said that he will speak to the student personally to alleviate concerns. Ms Owen said that we will track the projections and will move students to the next band when relevant, these attainment bands are not about capping student success, we want to ensure that students are receiving enough challenge.

- Parent: Impressed with the reward systems and that her daughter was settled at the academy. She commented however, she does not know what rewards are in place. Is her daughter doing well?

Mrs Hillier said that all students have a Class Charts login which parents can access. This displays points which they are awarded and the reasons why. Their login details should be recorded in their planner. Mr Williams said that there is space in planner to indicate how many reward points and how many behaviour points have been issued to a student and this should be being filled in every week.

- Parent: The toilets and the zone areas during the split lunch times are an issues to some students.

Ms Owen said that it is important for students to be in zones/areas to ensure staff can monitor them. At certain times throughout those areas toilets are available for the students. A parents commented that there were broken locks and lacking of soap/toilet roll. Ms Owen said that she would fully support addressing this and said that if any female student wanted to speak to her directly with any issues to please do so. We will address these concerns with our caretakers.

- Parent: Year 11 interventions, will they be advertised on the website?

Mr Allsopp confirmed that any intervention that is on at the academy, we will send letters home. Our first Saturday intervention is on 7<sup>th</sup> October. This will also be available on our website.

- Parent: Will Sixth Form classes still have intervention on Saturday, they are currently doing period 6 lessons.

Mr S Andrews said that intervention will start early, Sixth Form results have improved, addressing which students are underachieving and those that are achieving/progressing well will be liaising with Mr Allsopp. Information also available online and letter come home too.

- Parent: The government stance in relation to creative subjects is still not positive.

Mrs Hillier said that Mr Allsopp is a drama specialist. SUA believe that it is important and we are investing time in the creative subjects. We are the only school in Staffordshire with a link with the Repertory theatre in Birmingham. All Year 7 students are involved in the script and writing programme, they will be involved in a production at the theatre, this is the first stage. Our new Head of Faculty, Miss Humpage, is offering private tuition and music lessons/vocal/strings after school. All years can benefit from the creative arts subjects. There is more creative subjects on the timetable and there is a great atmosphere amongst the students in relation to the academy production.

Mrs Hillier asked if there are any agenda items for the next Parents' Forum meeting:

Reporting

You said /we did Powerpoint slides

Students can put their questions forward – Mr Andrews said that the Student Council has been elected

Rewards/sanctions see how that is progressing.

Mr Williams Chair of the Governors explained that we are seeking two parent governors to join the Local Academy Council and would value the input of a parent. He added that there is a commitment involved in the role, if any parent is interested please see Laura Heelis to put your name forward or request more details.

**Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting date Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017 6-7pm.

**Meeting closed 7pm**