

Committee	Dated:
Education Board	8 November 2018
Subject: Governor Clerking Survey Results	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Decision
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Summary

Members are asked to note the results of a survey on the current provision of governor clerking services across the City Corporation Family of Schools. This paper presents the key findings from the survey responses and makes recommendations. **Appendix 1** includes summary tables from the survey results.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the findings from the survey and consider and approve the recommendations contained within the report.

Main Report

Background

1. At the September 2018 Education Board meeting, Members endorsed a request for the Education Unit to develop and distribute a survey to the Family of Schools to map the current provision of governor clerking services for Full Governing Body (FGB) and Sub-committee meetings. The survey was distributed to the Family of Schools and focused on the current arrangements for governor clerking services, the costs to school budgets, whether the current arrangements are working, and what schools would like to receive and prioritise from clerking services. The survey also sought to identify whether governor clerking is an area for greater collaboration between schools and a potential area for cost-savings and improved quality. This report summarises the findings from the survey and offers recommendations.

Key Findings

2. There were 9 respondents to the Governor Clerking Survey, covering 13 schools (1 response covered the tri-governing body model between City of London Academy Southwark, Redriff Primary, and Galleywall Primary).
3. Schools have an average of four FGB meetings and nine sub-committee meetings per year. The average for sub-committee meetings was elevated by the tri-borough model which has a greater number of sub-committees due to the Local Advisory Board meetings.
4. Most schools responded that less than 25 hours per annum (8 hours per term) was spent on clerking duties for LGB meetings. The majority answer for sub-committee meetings was 75-100 hours per year (25-33 hours per term).
5. Satisfaction rates across the nine responses:
 - 6 schools were 'completely satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied' with their clerking service for FGB meetings.
 - 3 schools were 'somewhat dissatisfied' or 'completely dissatisfied'.
 - No schools were expressly dissatisfied with the governor clerking for sub-committee meetings.
6. Provision of clerking services for FGB meetings:
 - 3 schools use services provided by an external company.
 - 2 schools use Local Authority provided services in their local area.
 - 2 schools use City of London Corporation clerking services.
 - 1 school employs a staff member for clerking on a contractual basis.
 - 1 school uses an existing staff member who also has other roles within the school.

7. Provision of clerking services for sub-committee meetings:
 - 3 schools used the same external provider for sub-committee meetings as the FGB meetings.
 - 2 schools use City Corporation clerking for both FGB and sub-committee meetings.
 - 3 schools used a staff member with other roles in the organisation, usually the PA or Office Manager.
 - 1 school did not currently have regular sub-committee meetings due to the size of the school.
8. Estimated average cost of clerking services:
 - FGB meetings: £2,697 per year for 1 school. This does not include the costs for City of London Corporation Clerking to the Independent Schools as no estimates were provided.
 - Sub-committee meetings: £4,223 per year per school. However, 5/9 schools (including two Independent Schools) did not provide estimates for annual costs of clerking for sub-committee meetings.
9. Estimated average cost and satisfaction rates across types of provision:
 - Local Authority: This represented the most expensive type of provision averaging at £4,050 per year for FGB meetings. This type of provision also had consistently low satisfaction rates. No schools used Local Authority provision for sub-committee meetings.
 - External company: The average cost for using an external provider for governor clerking is £2,7527 per year for FGB meetings and £2,296 for sub-committee meetings. Satisfaction was either 'completely satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied'.
 - Contracted staff: The average estimated cost is £2,100 per year for FGB meetings. There was low satisfaction with contracting a designated member of staff.
 - Existing staff member: The cheapest type of provision was using a school staff member with other roles. However, this was only used at City of London Primary Academy Islington which is a small school and it was noted in the survey response that this will not be a sustainable model as the school grows. Three schools used this provision for sub-committee meetings but did not provide cost estimates.
10. When asked what the three most important factors are for governor clerking, the most popular answers for both FGB meetings and sub-committee meetings were:
 - Quality of provision.
 - Cost effectiveness.
 - Using the same clerk for Full Governing Body and Sub-committee meetings.
11. Although using the same clerk for FGB meetings and Sub-committee meetings was one of the top three priorities, this is currently only happening where the school is using an external provider or City Corporation clerking services.
12. Eight out nine respondents answered 'yes definitely' or 'possibly' when asked if they would consider sharing clerking services with other schools for their FGB meetings. All respondents answered that they would consider sharing services for sub-committee meetings.

Recommendations

13. Members and officers to share the findings of the survey with Local Governing Bodies to enable them to benchmark their own use of governor clerking services with other schools in the Family of Schools.
14. Commission further investigation into the cost and feasibility of a series of options. Based on the initial findings on cost and quality of those services currently provided across the Family of Schools, the main options for further analysis could include:
 - Obtain quotes from external providers based on 125 hours per year per school (FGB and sub-committee meetings) multiplied by the number of schools who may want to take part. The benchmark should be less than £6,920 per year per school for both FGB and sub-committee meetings.

- Explore options for creating a shared Framework Agreement for governor clerking services. In this case, and the option above, costs may be increased by the need for proper contract management.
- Compare the quote for an external supplier with the cost of around three (depending on number of school participants) full-time members of staff employed as designated clerks at an organisation and seconded to other participating schools. These organisations could include: A school; City of London Academies Trust Central Team; Education Unit Central Team; and City of London Committee Services. This comparison should use the same benchmark, £6,920.00 per school, to ascertain whether the option benefits from economies of scale.

Conclusion

15. This report provides members with the key findings from a survey on governor clerking services across the Family of Schools and provides recommendations for building on these initial findings and taking the work forward. Members have been asked to consider and approve the recommendations.

Appendix

- Appendix 1 – Summary tables from the Governor Clerking Survey responses.

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