

Appendix 4: Feedback from the City Schools' Boards of Governors

Below is the anonymised collection of feedback on the Parent Governor report submitted to Policy & Resources for 4 July 2019. Responses were received from Governors of all three City Schools.

Number	Comment
1	<p>Where there is a conflict of thought on the Board it is the wishes of the Headteachers that should take priority. They are the ones most likely to be compromised in an adverse situation and I feel their paper is very well balanced and thought through.</p> <p>There are plenty of other schools in the City of London Family that CC's could approach to join a governing body if they are committed to the role.</p>
2	I think we should reflect best practice in other schools and allow parental representation subject to non-involvement where there is financial interest (i.e. fees). I think we should not overly complicate process but look at the right outcome and then ensure it is possible with appropriate governance.
3	<p>My conclusion is that a Common Councilman who happens to be a parent becoming a Common Councilman Governor is an untenable position.</p> <p>That's not to say parents should not be able to have an input - there are recognised parent groups - (at CLSG it's the Friends) and we have two examples on CLSG Board of former parents appointed as Co-Opted Governors, one of whom was a teaching practitioner and who made a hugely valuable contribution to the board over circa 9 years and the current one being a fund raising expert helping us with our current bursary appeal/targets. Involvement of former parents and indeed former pupils can continue to be accessed via the Co-Opted Governor route.</p>
4	Appendix 3 'Report of the Headteachers of the three City of London Independent Schools' states the following 'The role of parent governors is explicitly to represent the views of parents and to act as a conduit for parental views'. My experience is that this is not the role of a Parent Governor. Governor Induction training courses run by the National Governors Association make it very clear to all Governors that they are appointed to the Governing Body, not to represent any other interest or Community Group. In effect the concept is that the Parent Governor appointment, together with Community Governor appointments, or Partnership Appointments are to bring balance and diversity of skills and experience from divergent stakeholders. The Parent Governor is appointed to the Governing Body based on the Nolan principles of public life, and together with the rest of the Governing Body act as a 'critical friend' to the Head Teacher/Senior Leadership Team. They do not, and should not act as a conduit for parental views, which are handled by the Leadership team via normal governance channels.

	<p>Financial conflicts of interest also exist in State Schools where they are carefully managed, alongside Safeguarding, and other sensitive information. In the School where I was Chairman we asked all parents to voluntarily contribute on a monthly basis to our school fund which over time helped with purchases for the School, such as School minibuses, Sports hall equipment etc. In the State Sector it is illegal to ask for payment for education, but voluntary contributions of this nature are allowable - on average half of parents contributed throughout their child's time at the school. I give this example as these type of sensitive matters also exist elsewhere. Another example in the selective environment would be in relation to selective school admission tests where potential conflicts have to be managed. In addition, even if the state sector the concept of bursaries exist as 'school fund' monies are used for hardship cases to help parents with the cost of school uniform, books, computers etc. All again handled with great sensitivity.</p> <p>The core of the debate here is that this concept differentiates 'Parent Governors' from any other type of Governor. All Governors are appointed to the Governing Body on an equal basis who fulfil their fiduciary duties on a collective basis. In my experience, the pool of experience in the Parental stakeholder group can prove fruitful. Election of Governors can be managed by the Chair of the Governing Body outlining what skill set is required for the Governing Body vacancy, (Digital, Financial, etc. and asking for nominations which meet the identified skill set as identified by a skills matrix) A process could then be that there is either an election by parents, or interviews conducted by the Chair of Governors and Head Teacher.</p>
5	<p>I have experience of parent governor elections to State Schools where, as you write, there is no financial implication. However, in my experience, rarely is a parent governor 100% independent. There is often a reason why that parent stood for election and, when their child leaves that school, the parent governor quickly disappears too.</p> <p>If P & R want to go down the road of demolishing the current structure of governing boards of City Schools, then as well as parent Governor appointments, we shall need to have Staff governors, not only teachers, but also admin/support. I already have one of my City Schools bending my ear back that teachers should be represented on Board,</p> <p>I am very much opposed to the Conclusion of the paper for P & R on 4 July, in the first sentence. It must be made explicitly clear that the parents of current pupils are not eligible to serve as governors'</p>