

EDUCATION BOARD

Monday, 24 April 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Board held at Committee Room 2 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 24 April 2023 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Caroline Haines (Chair)	John Griffiths
Naresh Hari Sonpar (Deputy Chairman)	Deputy Shравan Joshi
Alderman Sir Peter Estlin	Benjamin Murphy
Alderman Robert Howard	Mary Robey

In Attendance

Officers:

Deborah Bell	- Community & Children's Services Department
Scott Caizley	- Community & Children's Services Department
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Caitlin McMillan	- Community & Children Services Department
Vasima Patel	- Community & Children's Services Department
Emily Rimington	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Torriano Stewart	- Community & Children's Services Department
Jayne Moore	- Town Clerk's Department
Roland Martin	- Headmaster of the City of London Freeman's School
Melanie Peel	- City of London Schools
Mark Emmerson	- City of London Academies Trust

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mandeep Thandi, and from Ruby Sayed.

The Board noted that Ruby Sayed observed the meeting via Teams.

The Board noted, with regret, that John Griffiths would no longer be serving on the Education Board after today's meeting.

The Chair thanked Deputy Madush Gupta for his service on the Board.

The Board welcomed Steve Goodman in his capacity as guest.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. PUBLIC MINUTES

The public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 06 February 2023 were approved as a correct record.

4. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

The Board received the report of the Clerk.

A Member asked whether a delivery timeline was available on the outstanding actions. The meeting heard that both were under way and ongoing, and that the actions would be the subject of reports to the Board.

5. REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE 2023

The Board reviewed and approved the Terms of Reference, noting that the membership list had been updated since its circulation, noting also that the membership was subject to change at the upcoming meeting of the Court of Common Council (27 April 2023).

6. GOVERNANCE UPDATE

The Board received the report of the Director of Children's and Community Services, noting that there had been no new ratified governor appointments to Local Governing Bodies of the City of London Academies Trust (CoLAT), noting also the governing body membership of the City Family of Schools.

7. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

The Board received a verbal report from the Director of Children's and Community Services.

The Board noted the following points:

- The department has been working to ensure that Tomlinson recommendations are discharged via the City Premium Grants mechanism, reflecting Members' intentions to ensure clear differentiation between CoLAT schools and CoL independent schools;
- Arrangements to transfer administration of Cultural Partnership work (with a focus on schools with 35%+ FSM entitlement) to the Education Strategy Unit as of July 2023 are progressing at pace;
- Work is ongoing to deliver supported internships for young people alongside the Dagenham Market apprenticeship project, as well as growing apprenticeships in hospitality, health and social care;
- Strategies around Education, Creative & Cultural Adult Skills are to be presented to Members during Board Away Days ('The Big Conversation');
- Head Teachers' Forums have encompassed discussions on the challenges of staff recruitment and retention, and opportunities around Artificial Intelligence;
- Synergies between the Education Strategy Unit, Adult Skills and Education Service, and statutory education services are strengthening;

- The CoLC was placed 40th nationally in 2021 among all participating organisations in the Social Mobility Index;
- The work of the Tackling Racism Task Force will be reported to relevant Corporation committees;
- On Outdoor Learning and Environmental Responsibility: a network of Environmental leads are to be identified to co-ordinate initiatives in that area; and
- The Communications and Corporate Affairs sub-committee approved the initial sports strategy report on 19 April 2023 – further information will be circulated;
- The Education Strategy Unit is now publishing a weekly school news sheet that can be forwarded to outside parties.

A Member commented that the 35%+ FSM entitlement criteria for Cultural Partnership applications was high, and asked whether any flexibility was available on that. The matter was dealt with in item 14.

8. EDUCATION BUDGET UPDATE.

The Board noted the report of the Director of Community and Children's Services and The Chamberlain that stated the annual outturn position for the 2022/23 Education Board Budget.

The £16-17K overspend was discussed in the non-public part of the meeting.

9. EDUCATION CULTURAL AND CREATIVE LEARNING AND SKILLS 2021-22 ANNUAL REPORT

The Board noted the report of the Director of Children's and Community Services updating Members on impacts with reference to the Annual Action Plan 2021/22.

10. CITY PREMIUM GRANT 2023-24

The Board considered the report of the Director of Children's and Community Services that updated Members with key information relating to the first round of City Premium Grant applications for 2023/24.

Members heard that:

- 88 applications have been received from 13 schools;
- The combined cost represents 70% of the City Premium Grant funding available to the family of schools for that time period;
- Two schools missed the deadline, and three schools made no application (those three schools have been contacted to discuss the reasons for the absence of any application);
- The 88 applications are divided as follows: 54 from the Disadvantaged Pupils Grant, 18 from the Partnerships Grant, and 16 from the Strategic Grant;
- At least 33 unique partnerships have been created as a result of the process.

A Member asked whether the information on how the money was spent could be shared with schools, and the meeting heard that a summary document could be shared with Head Teachers, and Chairs of Governing Boards.

The meeting heard that independent school partnerships work would be submitted to the Board for the June meeting.

A Member sought clarification on why delegation was required. The meeting heard that additional work was involved during this first year of roll-out and that delegation was required in order to approve projects in a timely fashion.

A Member asked for further information on the profile of the non-submitting schools. The meeting heard that schools had been comprehensively briefed on the CPG applications and that further exploratory work was under way to pinpoint the reason for any non-submission, with a view to streamlining processes where applicable. A comment was made that some schools might find the process over-complicated (and that sharing the benefits could be a motivating factor), and that some schools were waiting for costings before submitting any bid.

A Member asked what would happen with the unspent money. The meeting heard that the underspend would stay in place for a second round in early 2024, and some of the allocation would be directed at outcomes of scrutiny meetings.

A Member commented that there was merit in providing a short summary at the conclusion of the roll-out of whether the initiative had been successful, where a clear evaluation of parameters was available. The Board noted that evaluation criteria and strategy were being discussed, and that a degree of experimentation was to be welcomed.

In response to the comment that the 35%+FSM-entitlement criteria could benefit from a degree of flexibility, the meeting heard that criteria could be adjusted where deemed necessary, noting also that 55% of attendees at CoLAT schools were entitled to Free School Meals. The Board agreed that there was merit in exploring that option, as well as addressing the issue specifically of SEND-related projects.

RESOLVED, That the Board delegate authority to the Chair and the Strategic Education and Skills Director to distribute Round 1 awards from the City Premium Grant: Disadvantaged Pupils Grant; the City Premium Grant: Partnerships Grant; and the City Premium Grant: Strategic Grant to the schools.

11. **PUPIL PLANNING AND PROJECTIONS**

The Board noted the report of the Director of Children's and Community Services informing Members of pupil projections of demand for school places across the London local authorities where there are City of London Corporation (CoLC) sponsored academies.

The Board noted that a more detailed report would be submitted in June 2023.

The Board that two secondary schools (in Islington) had low projected numbers.

12. PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

The Board viewed a presentation on the parental engagement toolkit (one for primary school parents, one for secondary school parents) from Cristina Odone (Chair of The Parenting Circle charity, and Head of Family Policy Unit at the Centre for Social Justice).

The Board noted increased levels of disengagement among parents generally (evidenced partly by the near-tripling of PA figures nationally) and the ongoing work to engage with parents being undertaken by CoLAT, which will be running the toolkit pilot as of September 2023 (with updates to be provided to the Board in late 2023/early 2024).

13. EVENTS UPDATE

The Board received the report of the Director of Children's and Community Services updating Members on recent events and activities delivered across the three strategies overseen by the Education Board: Education, Cultural and Creative Learning, and Skills, and noted the calendar of meetings, forums, and events for the 2022-23 academic year.

The Board viewed images of previous events, including Wren 300 workshops and a recent chess tournament.

A Member commented that there was merit in arranging an event targeted at school-leavers across the CoL family of schools. The Board expressed strong support for the idea, and the Education Strategy Unit resolved to examine the logistics of running an event in 2023 or 2024. The meeting heard that no budget had been set for such an event for 2023 and that the calendar was already crowded, but resolved to build in such an event for the 2024 leavers.

14. CULTURE MILE LEARNING SCHOOLS VISITS FUND

The Board received the report of the Director of the Museum of London that included a quarterly update information on the Schools Visits Fund that Culture Mile Learning (CML) was asked to provide as a condition of its funding for 2022/23, as well as data on uptake of the fund and its impact on schools.

A Member commented on the apparent flexibility referenced on page 2 of the report around the 35% threshold, and the Board heard that strategies were being developed towards different kinds of partnerships.

15. CONNECTING COMMUNITIES UPDATE

The Board received the report of the Director of Children's and Community Services updating Members on the Connecting Communities programme.

The Board noted the recent rise in unemployment, and noted (in response to a question) that the end-of-period evaluation would be conducted by Central London Forward. A Member commented that getting 300 people into sustained employment represented a 6% return – noting also that that figure was from a hard-to-reach group, and that it was important to learn lessons from the

exercise, particularly given the level of investment. The Board noted that the CoL would be carefully examining the outcomes of the evaluation.

16. LCF UPDATE

The Board received a verbal update on the London Careers Festival 2023, noting that booking numbers appeared to be good so far for primary level events.

The Board noted the range of virtual and in-person session available encompassing apprenticeships, media/theatre, sports, construction and tech domains, noting also the involvement of apprentices in the event itself.

17. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE BOARD

There were no questions.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

The Chair reminded the Board of the upcoming Awaydays: 28 April 2023 at City of London School, and 12 June at City of London Freeman's School.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank Deputy Chairman Naresh Sonpar for his contribution as panellist at the Financial Inclusion Summit at Mansion House on 12 April 2023.

19. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for subsequent items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

20. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 06 February 2023 were considered.

21. NON-PUBLIC OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

The Board received the report of the Clerk.

22. EDUCATION CHARITIES REPORT

The Board considered the report of the Managing Director of Bridge House Estates, noting the output of the £50,000 development work to date.

RESOLVED, That the Board approve:

1. the funding request to the CETF from A New Direction;
2. a grant of £650,000 across a 14-month pilot period with future decisions arising from the pilot to be brought back to the Board for consideration; and
3. subject to approval of the first two items, approve the amended project delivery timeframe over a total of five years, rather than the previously approved four-year timeframe.

23. CHAIRS' UPDATE

The Board received a verbal update from the Chair of the CoLAT Board of Trustees, and from the Trust's CEO. The Board noted that the national Persistent Absence rate was 27% at secondary level (22% in primary schools) and that all but one CoLAT schools had PA rates that were better than the national average. The Board noted the improved suspension rates, noting also the background to suspension rates and strategies, particularly around behavioural improvement. The Board noted that a recent Ofsted inspection of The City Academy, Hackney appeared to have been positive, particularly in respect of the sixth form.

The Education Board confirmed its continued support in principle of the expansion of CoLAT to 12 schools (subject to due diligence as set out in section 4 of the sponsorship agreement of May 2016) on behalf of the Sponsor (the Corporation), and confirmed that further additional requests for expansion would be considered in due course, should that be proposed by CoLAT.

The Chair noted the importance of CoLAT Company Members honouring the original expansion agreement to 12 schools, subject to due diligence, and providing support to the Trust beyond the Star Review.

Due to technical difficulties no update was received in respect of the independent schools, however it was subsequently ascertained that no significant updates were to be reported to the Board.

24. TRUSTEE REAPPOINTMENT MARCH 2023

The Board received the report of the Clerk.

25. NON PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE BOARD

There were no questions.

26. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE BOARD AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

On the £16-17K overspend referenced at item 8, the Board heard that the overspend related to legal fees regarding preparation for the Star Review. Concern was expressed at how those fees could have been accrued, given the small amount of input. The Board noted that the original proposal had been for a peer review but that the remit had expanded beyond that. The Board noted that discussions were ongoing on the matter.

The meeting ended at 1.15 pm

Chairman

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