

## **EDUCATION BOARD**

**Tuesday, 21 January 2025**

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Board held at Committee Room 2 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Tuesday, 21 January 2025 at 2.00 pm

### **Present**

#### **Members:**

Naresh Hari Sonpar (Chairman)  
John Griffiths (Deputy Chairman)  
Deputy Caroline Haines  
Steve Goodman OBE

Alderman Elizabeth Anne King, BEM JP  
Deputy Helen Fentimen OBE JP  
Hindle  
Steadman

### **In Attendance**

#### **Officers:**

Deborah Bell	- Community & Children's Services Department
Scott Caizley	- Community & Children's Services Department
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Jack Joslin	- The City Bridge Trust
Julia Megone	- Chamberlain's Department
Torriano Stewart	- Community & Children's Services Department
Chandni Tanna	- Town Clerk's Department
Jayne Moore	- Town Clerk's Department
Kevin Colville	- Comptroller and City Solicitors
Mark Emmerson	- City of London Academies Trust
Barbara Hamilton	- Community and Children's Services Department
Roland Martin	- Headmaster of the City of London Freeman's School
Vasima Patel	- Community and Children's Services Department

### **1. APOLOGIES**

The following Members were unable to attend the meeting in person but observed the meeting remotely: Alderman Robert Howard, Ruby Sayed and James Adeleke.

Add in: Alice Rogers, Jamie Hannon, Laura and Rebecca from AND, Veronica Pearce, Jade Coombes, Caitlyn, Melody Thornton, Kaye S-L, Lizzie Elvidge

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

There were no declarations.

3. **PUBLIC MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**, That the public minutes of the meeting of 02 December 2024 be approved as an accurate record of the proceedings.

4. **REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**RESOLVED**, That the Board agree the Terms of Reference ahead of their submission to the April 2025 meeting of the Court of Common Council.

5. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Board noted the report of the Clerk.

6. **APPRENTICESHIPS AND SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS**

The Board received a verbal update on supported employment programmes (including for SEND learners), and apprenticeships and work experience.

The following points were made:

- trained work coaches are assigned to support a young person throughout their internship;
- a range of entities have expressed an interest in becoming involved in the employment forum for the City-based programme that is expected to lead to supported internships;
- these are the main criteria for supported internships (currently five young people meet these criteria): age 16-24, hold an Education Health and Care Plan, and live within the City of London Corporation's Local Authority area in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidelines;
- two apprentice levy amounts are held at the City of London Corporation (CoLC): one is centrally-funded (up to 100 at any one time, level 2 and level 3) with 97 currently on an apprenticeship; and the other is the centrally-funded apprenticeship levy for upskilling existing staff that currently covers 149 staff across the organisation (level 3 to level 7);
- the financial spend for these purposes at CoLC is approximately £800K and no HMRC returns for the levy have taken place since October 2023;
- the CoLC is working hard to improve work experience placements (currently around 15 placements, though none currently for CoLAT students) and increase engagement with schools, including CoLAT schools including for children who could be excluded; and
- some neurodiversity training at the CoLC is expected to take place to accommodate some work experience students.

In response to a question on whether any flexibility on the part of the DfE exists around that criteria (particularly with a view to widening its scope to CoLAT students), the meeting heard that the matter has previously been raised with the DfE and will be raised again noting that the programme is in its pilot stage.

In response to a question on funding sources and the cost per participant, the Board noted that the programme is funded by the Department for Education and the National Development Team for inclusion.

The meeting noted that there still appeared to some blocks to work experience placements for CoLAT students including issues around equipment, and that the request from CoLAT is for 10 placements – noting also that nine CoLAT students are scheduled to visit Guildhall in late January 2025 with a view to securing work experience placements.

A Member commented on the level of resources within CoLAT to proactively support work experience placements and asked whether enough support was available. The Board heard that schools tended to be held accountable more on measures such as attainment, and that a cross-London platform promoting all relevant opportunities would be a useful resource and discussions are under way with relevant organisations to support such a tool.

Referencing the current Government's pledge to provide a Youth Guarantee announced in November 2024, Members discussed the profile of such a Guarantee at CoLC level for those educated at a CoLAT school and suggested that the CoLC should take the initiative on the delivery of such a programme noting that the CoLC is involved in consultation work in that area (together with the Greater London Authority) to include a City of London Youth Guarantee once the programme is mapped out at Government level.

The Board noted that joint work is ongoing in adult learning and workforce development, with a report on skills development expected to be submitted to the Board in Autumn 2025 that will include trackable metrics on delivery and outcomes.

Members reiterated the drive to improve social mobility in the City and suggested a clear structure be set up to facilitate the dissemination of information on work experience and apprenticeships, particularly across the City's family of schools to include level 4 and above opportunities, noting that some level 4+ opportunities exist at the CoLC though there is more to be done in that arena. A Member asked that information on the processes being rolled out to support the ongoing implementation of level 4+ opportunities be brought to the Board on a regular basis (see action point).

## **7. MENTORING UPDATE**

The Board noted that the mentoring update would take place in the Non-Public session because some of the information could impact the tender process that is currently under way to secure a supplier that will deliver mentoring services to users. Members noted these desired six outcomes:

1. Mentees will build constructive employment networks.
2. Mentees feel supported and empowered to apply for aspirational jobs, including those in the City.
3. Mentees receive tailored guidance that enhances employability skills, self-esteem and key life skills, equipping them with the confidence to pursue aspirational jobs.

4. Mentees build positive, long-lasting relationships that encourage professional and personal development.
5. Mentees develop key life skills such as trust-building, boundary-setting, and forming positive professional networks to navigate barriers to employment and independent living.
6. Mentees benefit from a consistent mentoring schedule with a minimum of monthly interactions, providing structure and continuity in their mentoring relationships.

8. **LONDON CAREERS FESTIVAL UPDATE**

The Board heard an update on the London Careers Festival running from 01 to 13 February 2025.

The Board heard that there are currently 6044 bookings for in-person sessions, and that the year-on-year increase is thanks to enhancements to the offering and developments in partnership work and business relationships, noting also the significant improvement in the SEND-specific and SEND-inclusive offering for which there is high demand.

A Member commented on the potential for dedicated SEND days in future years.

9. **A NEW DIRECTION: DELIVERY OF PRIMARY ARTS**

The Board noted the report of the Interim Managing Director of City Bridge Foundation, noting in particular the updates relating to the full-length Primary Arts programme funded by the City Educational Trust Fund (CETF).

A Member asked how the executive could be confident in whether value for money is achieved. The Board heard that evaluation is undertaken on a continuous basis and assessments take place that centre on value for money, quality of delivery and salary points.

A Member asked whether Aldgate School is included in the programme. The meeting heard that the City of London Corporation is a trustee of the CETF and the charity's objectives are such that there can be no cross-benefit with the City of London's capacity as a Local Authority. While the programme has been circulated to schools in the City of London and across London it is down to the schools themselves to engage with the programme (and some schools are signed up to the platform without having yet made a booking), and the programme does not prioritise one school over any other.

Members were reminded of the opportunities circulated to Board members to visit any of the programme's events.

Members asked for more information on how the programme's impact is measured, whether deprived children are targeted in any way, the evidence base that it makes a difference, and for more information on the evaluation approach generally, noting the summary of the tools set out on p.33 of the

agenda. The executive agreed to share an evaluation framework (see action point) and pointed out that impact metrics are being closely examined. The meeting also noted that previous reports on the programme have set out the programme's rationale and that selection criteria are applied to schools taking part in the programme that include Pupil Premium numbers.

A Member asked about the prognosis on how long the programme would run. Members noted that the programme's design and resources are such that teachers are empowered to continue with the practices set out in Masterclasses and other sessions.

**10. KEY STAGE 4 OUTCOMES ANALYSIS: PERFORMANCE OF SOLE-SPONSORED ACADEMIES IN THE CITY OF LONDON ACADEMIES TRUST**

The Board noted the report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services setting out the Key Stage 4 (KS4) results for the six sole-sponsored academies within the City of London Academies Trust (CoLAT) operating across three Local Authority areas within Inner London, noting the insights into pupil attainment and achievement at school, local authority and national levels.

The Board congratulated the schools on their achievements, particularly the Trust schools of Southwark and Shoreditch Park. In response to a question on what were the next steps, the meeting heard that all schools have targets that would place them in at least the top 20% of schools nationally and the drive towards ongoing improvement is sustained and proactive.

A Member asked what measures were taken to achieve the improvements shown. The Board heard that some difficult decisions were taken, and that a strong improvement model is embedded across the Trust that encompasses high behavioural expectations and rigorous assessments and timely interventions that are tailored to pupils' learning gaps and particular needs.

A Member commented on the merits of implementing a system that tracks CoLAT students after they finish their compulsory education.

**11. CITY PREMIUM GRANT 2024/25 ROUND 2 APPLICATIONS**

The Board considered the report of the Strategic Education & Skills Director.

A Member asked for more information on the reason for the existence of two rounds of applications. The meeting heard that the second round was to allocate resources remaining from the first round of applications.

A Member asked for more information on the criteria and impacts, commenting on the importance of ensuring that children have good speech and language (S&L) skills noting the significant shortfalls in S&L services. The meeting noted that a key element of the City Premium Grant (CPG) is additionality, as set out in section 3 of the report, and that S&L are deemed to be elements of the school's core offering.

A Member asked for more information on the costs involved in running the programme. The meeting noted that synergies are always sought and efficiencies are achieved with the centralisation of some of the functions as per the Corporation's Tomlinson Report recommendations.

A Member asked whether there are any issues in carrying bids over to the next year. The meeting heard that the issue is to be discussed with the relevant schools.

**RESOLVED**, That the Board delegate authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and the Strategic Director of Education and Skills to distribute Round 2 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.

**12. UPDATE ON PARTNERSHIP WORK AT CLS AND CLSG**

The Board viewed a presentation delivered by the Director of Partnerships at City Schools (City of London School, and City of London School for Girls including City Junior School) that included the following details of partnership work during 2024, noting also that some partnership information is available on the websites of the schools:

- 4140 hours of partnership enrichment was generated for partner students
- State partner school pupils were beneficiaries of 60% of that provision
- Staff at CLS and CLSG dedicated 256 hours to partnership projects and events (equivalent to approximately 48 full teaching days)
- New Science opportunities for pupils were launched (Maire Fondazione partnership, CitySPARC, Primary Masterclasses)
- New careers and work experience opportunities were made available
- There is a continuing focus on climate and sustainability
- A dynamic inspiring conference on Re-Imagining Our Future took place
- Primary Summer School sessions took place
- Events held included sessions on poetry, oracy, music, debating, mentoring, leadership skills, a Dragon's Den Sustainability Challenge, and sixth form readiness
- Conference themes included Theology, Divestment Conference at Schroders, and InterClimate Conference (Mock COP)

**13. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE BOARD**

There were no questions.

**14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

The Board heard an update on the research and parental engagement work of the Education Strategy Unit and noted the following three points:

- Parental engagement (initiated in 2022): a range of events have taken place including round table events and reports have been published
- SEND: Three Education Professors are engaged on their SEND-first approach, the outcomes are expected to be of interest at central Government level as part of a curriculum review among other things
- Music education research: working with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, a researcher has been appointed

The Board heard that the findings are expected to be reported by Autumn 2025.

The Board also heard an update on the project Bloomberg Finance Fundamentals that supports the development of fundamental financial skills, and heard that five of the schools within the City's family of schools, 20 students have signed up, and the feedback is positive.

The Board thanked the Business Administration & Events Apprentice Georgie Stewart-Smith for her valuable contributions to the work of the Board at her final meeting.

**15. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** – That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following 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.

**16. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**, That the non-public minutes of the meeting of 02 December 2024 be approved as a correct record.

**17. FINANCE UPDATE - 1. THE CITY EDUCATIONAL TRUST FUND (CETF) (290840) & 2. CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION COMBINED EDUCATION CHARITY (CEC) (312836)**

The Board considered the report of the City Bridge Foundation & Charities Interim Finance Director (representing the Chamberlain) and noted its contents and appendices.

**RESOLVED**, That the Board

- i. Approve draw down of CETF funds of £2m in April 2025 (**paragraph 6 of the report**) to enable the charity to meet its grant commitments as they fall due and allow for certainty in planning for the charity's closure; and
- ii. Approve draw down of CEC funds of £150k in April 2025 (**paragraph 10 of the report**) to enable the charity to meet its grant commitments as they fall due.

**18. GROWTH STRATEGY - RECONSIDERATION OF EXISTING STRATEGY FOR CITY OF LONDON ACADEMY TRUST (COLAT)**

The Board considered the report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services summarising the current position relating to the growth of the City of London Academies Trust, also proposing an indicative growth flight path to 2028, seeking ratification from the Education Board representing the City of London Corporation as Sponsor.

Members commented that a detailed business plan ahead of detailed discussions on growth to 20 schools would be beneficial.

The Board agreed to discuss the matter in greater detail at the Board's May meeting.

**19. PLASHET SCHOOL APPROACH TO JOIN CITY OF LONDON ACADEMY TRUST (COLAT)**

The Board considered the report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, noting that the joining of Plashet School is commended as a positive opportunity for the Trust and the pupils of Plashet School.

In response to a Member question on whether this was the Board's final chance to discuss the matter, the Board heard that there will be further opportunities to discuss the issue.

**RESOLVED**, That the Board approve the proposal that the CoLAT Board of Trustees pursue detailed due diligence regarding Plashet School joining the Trust, noting that – should the Education Board approve the proposal for Plashet School to join CoLAT and pending satisfactory detailed due diligence – the matter will then go to the Corporation's Policy and Resources Committee on 13 February 2025 as per the agreed process set out in the report.

**20. UPDATE ON VAT - INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**

The Board heard an update on the impact of changes to legislation relating to VAT on independent school fees that included the following information:

- the City's independent schools have mitigated the imposition of VAT in various ways, including a 5% discount, an upfront discount, and/or refraining from raising the fees for the next academic year;
- some of the City's independent schools are in discussion with the Corporation's Chamberlain's Department to discuss loan repayment scheduling and extensions to existing loans have been requested;
- there has been an increase in bursary applications in at least one school;
- the impact of the changes in VAT legislation on student numbers will not be known before March 2025 but there are early signs of significant movements towards state-sector sixth form provision at all the independent schools;
- the legislation is having a significant impact on the workload of finance and administration teams;
- some of the City's independent schools have been negatively impacted by strident expressions of disappointment on the part of parents, particularly around issues such as having to charge VAT for music lessons;

- City schools being obliged to follow City processes can be a hindrance to VAT mitigation initiatives; and
- the change in legislation is likely to impact negatively on a wide range of enrichment activities.

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

There were no items of urgent business.

**The Chairman welcomed the Chief Commoner to the meeting.**

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

There were no questions.

**The meeting ended at 4.15 pm**

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Chairman

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