

EDUCATION BOARD

Thursday, 9 September 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Board held in committee rooms 3 & 4,
and virtually, on Thursday, 9 September 2021 at 10.00 am

Present

Members:

Caroline Haines (Chair)
Deputy Philip Woodhouse (Deputy Chairman)
Alderman Sir Peter Estlin
Alderman Robert Howard
Shravan Joshi
Benjamin Murphy
Ruby Sayed
Tim Campbell
Deborah Knight
Mary Robey

In Attendance

Officers:

Emily Garland	- Town Clerk's Department
Kerry Nicholls	- Town Clerk's Department
Dionne Corradine	- Town Clerk's Department
Andrew Buckingham	- Town Clerk's Department
Chris Oldham	- Town Clerk's Department
Anne Bamford	- Community and Children's Services Department
Fatema Chowdhury	- Community and Children's Services Department
Natasha Hanckel-Spice	- Community and Children's Services Department
Catherine McGovern	- Community and Children's Services Department
Daniel McGrady	- Community and Children's Services Department
Gerald Mehrtens	- Community and Children's Services Department
Joshua Nkatiah	- Community and Children's Services Department
Aqib Hussain	- Chamberlain's Department
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Emily Rimington	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Abigail Tinkler	- Open Spaces Department
Jenny Brown	- Headmistress, City of London School for Girls
Rachel Thompson	- Head, City Junior School
Katie Kerr	- Director of Strategic Projects, City of London School for Girls
Prince Genuh	- Principal, City of London Academy Highgate Hill
Charlotte Heath	- Co-Headteacher, Redriff Primary School

Guests

Ann Holmes

Mark Emmerson

- Chief Executive Officer, City of London Academies Trust

With the Board's consent, the order of business was amended as follows.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Randall Anderson, Tijs Broeke, Alderman Nicholas Lyons, Rachel Bower and the Rt Hon the Lord Mayor, William Russell.

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

Alderman Sir Peter Estlin noted that he was Chair of the Association of Apprentices.

3. PUBLIC MINUTES

The public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 1 July 2021 were approved as a correct record.

At this point the Chair took the opportunity to express the Board's thanks to Daniel McGrady, outgoing Lead Policy Officer (Education, Skills & Culture), for his contribution to the Education Board over the previous three years, particularly in relation to the Tomlinson Review. The Board noted the success of the projects he had contributed to during his time at the Corporation and wished him well in his new role.

4. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Members received a report of the Town Clerk regarding outstanding public actions of the Board.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

5. NOMINATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE - CO-OPTED MEMBER APPOINTMENT PROCESS REVIEW

Members received a report of the Town Clerk regarding the Nomination Sub-Committee's proposed changes to the Co-Opted Member appointment process, including the introduction of a skills audit.

RESOLVED, that the proposed skills audit and Co-Opted Member appointment process be approved.

6. COVID-19 AND RETURN TO SCHOOL UPDATE

The Director of Community and Children's Services was heard relative to the COVID-19 and return to school update. The following points were noted:

- The Education Unit were committed to ensuring that all pupils experienced as much normality and stability as possible in the return to school and remained hopeful that the upcoming academic year may experience less disruption to education, especially with most adults

having been vaccinated and those pupils aged 16 and above or Clinically Vulnerable and over 12 years of age being urged to be vaccinated.

- Schools were being contacted via their local authorities to participate in the rolling young persons' vaccine programme. The Unit would keep schools updated of any changes in Governmental directives regarding staying safe and healthy in school. By now, schools should have received extra supplies of PPE and home test kits. New lateral flow test devices were being delivered to schools that make the testing quicker and easier, requiring nasal swabs only.
- Maximising face to face attendance in education settings in the new academic year would aim to counter the detrimental impact of the last 18 months.
- There had also been changes to requirements around periods of isolation which was hoped to make organising pupils and staff a little easier.
- Face coverings were no longer recommended in education and childcare settings, but still recommended on dedicated school or college transport in line with Government expectations to wear face coverings in crowded areas when prevalence is high.
- On Saturday 21 August it was announced that CO2 monitors would be provided this term to state-funded education settings, including early years, schools and further education providers, backed by £25 million in Government funding.
- These would enable staff to identify areas where ventilation needs to be improved and provide reassurance that existing ventilation measures are working, helping balance the need for good ventilation with keeping classrooms warm over the winter period.
- Singing, wind and brass instrument playing was now permitted in the schools.
- Regarding adult learning and apprentices, 60% of adult learning courses had returned to being in person with the remainder remaining virtual for the foreseeable future.

RESOLVED, that the update be received.

7. **TACKLING RACISM TASKFORCE ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

The Director of Community and Children's Services invited representatives from the City Family of Schools to present to the Board their recent progress in relation to tackling racism.

The Co-Headteacher of Redriff Primary School provided a brief presentation outlining the school's approach to identifying and providing interventions for underachieving groups, which consisted of three waves of intervention. Members noted the success of the school's focus on improving reading in the school and that behaviour policies were being developed to aid their longer-term strategy.

A Member sought further clarification of one of the charts used in the presentation slides and it was confirmed that it represented percentages of those that were in groups of higher risk of underachieving.

Another commended the school on the steps taken to recover the previous reading standards following a temporary decrease one year but enquired what lessons could be learned from the year before this which would allow the school, as well as others, to pre-empt any future declines. It was confirmed that staff had identified previous changes in school staffing and reading routines that may have led to this and that it had been addressed in their longer-term strategy.

The Principal of the City of London Academy, Highgate Hill then offered a presentation to the Board highlighting concerns regarding the English Literature curriculum offered across Key Stages 3 and 4 (KS3 and KS4) and how the school was working to address this. Students within the schools had identified a lack of diversity in the pieces studied which led to the school inviting the student body to suggest alternative books for inclusion in the KS3 curriculum. Members noted that KS4 curriculum pieces were currently restricted by the AQA Board.

One Member raised the question of how the Board could offer support to the City Family of Schools in helping influence the literature choices made by examining bodies. It was added that this issue had received a significant amount of media coverage recently as many people felt the amount of diverse content in exams had been reduced over recent years. Officers welcomed any support the Board were able to provide in this area.

While Members were supportive of the school's approach of engaging the student voice in diversifying curriculum, some raised concerns of relying on this method too much. They felt that curriculum should be decided by those with a wealth of experience in the subject matter, which in this case would be the relevant examining bodies. It was further highlighted that curriculum pieces should be selected due to their high quality and the opportunity they create for young people to learn and be challenged on a variety of topics, and not purely because of the diversity of the author. There was however a recognition that there was a lack of BAME authors featured in KS4 curriculum. Concerns were also raised around localised curriculums as this could lead to children from disadvantaged areas not having access to the same English literature as those from privileged areas, furthering any inequalities.

The Principal thanked Members for their feedback on this matter and assured the Board that this would be taken into consideration in future planning.

The Chair thanked both guests, on behalf of the Board, for their presentations.

RESOLVED, that the presentations be received.

8. **EDUCATION, CULTURAL AND CREATIVE LEARNING AND SKILLS UPDATE**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding an update on the City's educational, cultural and creative learning, and skills related activities.

The Board were reminded of the upcoming away day, scheduled for Monday 11 October 2021, and that the agenda would be circulated shortly.

The Chair thanked the Lord Mayor for his recent activities in supporting educational skills and representing the Corporation at relevant events.

The Chair also reminded those who wished to attend any listed events to contact the Education Unit. Calendar invitations were due to be sent to Members' City email addresses shortly.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

9. **EDUCATION BOARD BUDGET UPDATE**

Members received a joint report of the Director of Community and Children's Services and the Chamberlain regarding the Education Board's Budget update for the 2021/22 Financial Year.

It was again highlighted that there was a predicted overspend on salaries. Officers were looking at mitigating actions and the Board could expect an updated balance sheet in due course.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

10. **GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS UPDATE**

The Chair requested that Item 10 and Item 11 be considered together.

11. **REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN: GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS**

Members received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services regarding an update on Governor Appointments and a report of the Town Clerk regarding a Governor Appointment that was ratified under urgency procedures.

The Clerk began by offering a clarification that the appointment of the Chair of the City Academy Hackney was ratified by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair, rather than approved by them as it stated in the report at Item 10.

The Board noted that all appointments were now up to date and officers thanked the Clerks of the relevant Local Governing Bodies for providing prompt updates.

A Member informed the Board that, contrary to the report, Jonny McIntosh was an elected Parent Governor at the City of London Academy, Shoreditch Park.

A Member of the Board, also Chair of City of London Primary Academy Islington, informed the Board that the school had recently been awarded the honour of 'Governing Board of the Year' at the Islington Education Awards 2021. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, congratulated the Governing Body on this achievement.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

12. TWO YEAR REVIEW OF THE OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT'S LEARNING PROGRAMME 2019-21

Members received a report of the Director of Open Spaces providing an overview of the Open Spaces learning programme from 2019 to 2021, highlighting how it adapted and engaged audiences throughout the pandemic.

Highlights included:

- A series of activity sheets, designed to help those with limited resources, having been delivered via food banks
- Virtual Epping Forest exploration sessions for young refugees, and
- Adapted Covid-safe outdoor only programmes for schools which placed an emphasis on improving mental health during lockdown.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

13. LONDON CAREERS FESTIVAL 2021 EVALUATION

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding an evaluation of the London Careers Festival 2021.

Officers gave a brief presentation outlining the key outcomes of the festival which included:

- Over 20,000 bookings were made and, with many bookings being for large numbers of students, it could be estimated that the number of children with bookings reached around 50,000 in total. No cancellations were received.
- 55 webinars took place with over 50 employers involved.
- 181 schools engaged with the festival, with 25% of these being from outside of London.
- Feedback received had been very positive, with many being complimentary of the virtual environment.

The Board congratulated officers on the success of the virtual event and noted that plans were underway for the 2022 festival, with hopes for a hybrid format which would allow three days to be dedicated to engaging in person attendees and a further three days to take place virtually, allowing a wider outreach.

A Member suggested that the feedback forms should be split into separate forms relevant to each stakeholder, to gain more meaningful results. The Chair confirmed that it was recognised that there were some areas for improvement in evaluation techniques but that officers were already working to develop these for the following year.

RESOLVED, that the report and presentation be noted.

14. **SOCIAL STRATEGIES 2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT**

Members received a joint report of the Chamberlain and Chief Financial Officer, Chief Grants Officer and Director of City Bridge Trust, the Director of Innovation and Growth, and the Director of Community and Children's Services presenting a combined annual report of the Responsible Business, Social Mobility, Digital Skills and Climate Action Strategies for 2020-21.

The Board were reminded that reporting on these strategies was not a statutory requirement but that officers volunteered to provide meaningful evaluation of their progress to Members. They noted that ongoing work resulting from the Tackling Racism Taskforce recommendations complemented the strategies well.

Members were reminded that the upcoming away day would focus on issues surrounding social mobility.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

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

There were no questions.

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

There were two items of urgent business.

Outreach Programme

A Member informed the Board of a recent meeting with the Senior Outreach Officer at St Anne's College, Oxford about trialling a new higher education outreach programme at the City of London Academy Southwark. The Board would be kept updated as this progressed.

Livery in Education 2021 Booklet

The Chair reminded the Board that the latest edition of the Livery in Education 2021 Booklet and offered copies to those present at the meeting. Those unable to attend in person would receive a copy either by post or in their Guildhall pigeonhole.

17. **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.

18. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2021 were approved as a correct record.

19. **NON-PUBLIC OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Members received a report of the Town Clerk regarding the Board's non-public outstanding actions.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

21. **SIXTH FORM STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Chair invited the Chief Executive of CoLAT to address the Board, providing an update on the CoLAT Sixth Form Strategy.

20. **PROGRESS REPORT ON CITY JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Members received a report of the Heads of the City of London School for Girls and City of London School providing an update on the progress of the City Junior School.

22. **FINANCE SCRUTINY MEETINGS FOR CITY SPONSORED ACADEMIES**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding the standards scrutiny meetings of City Sponsored Academies.

23. **2021 RESULTS DATA FOR THE FAMILY OF SCHOOLS**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding the 2021 results data for the Family of Schools.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was one item of non-public urgent business.

The meeting ended at 12.39 pm

Chair

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