

EDUCATION BOARD

Monday, 17 June 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Board held at Committee Room 3 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 17 June 2024 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Naresh Hari Sonpar (Chairman)	Elizabeth Anne King, BEM JP (Alderman-Elect)
Helen Fentimen OBE JP	Joanna Tufuo Abeyie
John Griffiths (Deputy Chairman)	James Adeleke
Caroline Haines	Floyd Steadman OBE
Deputy Shravan Joshi MBE	

Also Present:

Catherine McGuinness
Luis Tilleria

In Attendance

Deborah Bell	- Community & Children's Services Department
Scott Caizley	- Community & Children's Services Department
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Jack Joslin	- City Bridge Foundation
Torriano Stewart	- Community & Children's Services Department
Jayne Moore	- Town Clerk's Department
Mark Emmerson	- City of London Academies Trust (CEO)
Barbara Hamilton	- Community and Children's Services Department
Alice Rogers	- Community and Children's Services Department
Kaye Saxton-Lea	- People & HR
Dr Emma Wainwright	- Brunel University
Prof. Dr. Kate Hoskins	- Brunel University
Caroline Hawley	- Guildhall School of Music & Drama
Dami Makinde	- Birkbeck College
Yousra Loudiyi	- Birkbeck College

1. APOLOGIES

Shravan Joshi moved that Caroline Haines take the Chair until the election of the Chair at item 4, which was agreed by the Board.

Apologies were received from Alderman Howard, Ruby Sayed and Mary Robey.

RESOLVED, That Floyd Steadman be considered as physically present for quoracy purposes as proposed by the Chair, until the arrival of James Adeleke at 11:15.

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

Caroline Haines declared an interest in respect of item 12 in her capacity as Deputy Chair of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama Board of Governors.

3. **ORDER OF THE COURT 2024**

The Board received the Order of the April 2024 meeting of the Court of Common Council.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

RESOLVED, That Naresh Sonpar be elected Chair for the ensuing year, a single expression of interest having been received.

The newly-elected Chair welcomed new Members to the Board and thanked Mary Robey, who recently made the decision to step down from the Education Board to focus on her family commitments. The Board congratulated her on becoming a new grandmother and on the forthcoming weddings of her other two daughters in quick succession.

The Board thanked Mary for her invaluable contributions to the work of the Board since March 2021, including in particular her work across decades as a teacher, governor, Chair of Governors and fundraiser for two charities supporting children with complex medical needs. The Board noted that she had been instrumental in the rise of COLPAI to be the school that it is today and thanked her for her insightful input and positive challenge of the Corporation's Education Strategic work.

The Chair congratulated Sir Nicholas Lyons (Alderman) on his recent knighthood, the Director of Community & Children's Services Judith Finlay on her recent CBE, the Head of Adult Skills, Education & Apprenticeships Barbara Hamilton on her recent MBE, and Floyd Steadman on his recent appointment as a Deputy Lieutenant for Cornwall.

5. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR**

RESOLVED, That John Griffiths be elected Deputy Chair for the ensuing year, a single expression of interest having been received.

6. **APPOINTMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

The Board received the report of the Clerk.

RESOLVED, That the Board approve these appointments:

Nominations Sub-Committee:

Naresh Sonpar (as Chair)

John Griffiths (as Deputy Chair)

Caroline Haines

A further appointment will be sought ahead of the Board's October meeting by circulation to be discussed at that meeting.

Member Development & Standards:

Naresh Sonpar

A further appointment will be sought ahead of the Board's October meeting by circulation to be discussed at that meeting.

7. **PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, That the public minutes of the meeting of 16 April 2024 be approved as a correct record.

8. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Board noted the report of the Clerk, and agreed that timeframes are to be stated on actions in future.

9. **GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS UPDATE**

The Board noted the report of the Director of Community & Children's Services updating Members on the recent appointments of governors across the City Family of Schools.

In response to a question on what action is being taken to fill governor vacancies, the meeting noted that action is ongoing to fill the vacancies including notices to Common Council Members and notifications to other groups of potential governors.

10. **EDUCATION STRATEGY**

The Board noted the report of the Director of Community & Children's Services updating Members on final development work for the 2024-29 Education Strategy.

On whether environmental and outdoor education is included in the strategy (referencing point 6) as part of the covering paper, the meeting heard that outdoor education is set out in point 3 of the Corporate Plan as set out in the report (p47 of the agenda pack): "Our Corporate Plan also illustrates our commitment to 'act as a leader on environmental sustainability'."

A Member asked for further information on the reach of the strategy, and the resources available to implement them. The meeting heard that resources include the agreed non-statutory budget, and that the strategy would be forwarded to the Town Clerk's SLT, to Policy and Resources in July 2024, and to Community and Children's Services Committee if required once approved by the Board (noting the CCS's oversight of the Aldgate School).

In response to a question on the value of the budget referenced above, the meeting heard that most of the money was the City Premium Grant (£2.3M pa), the total annual budget being c. £4M.

Noting potential policy changes around education following the July 2024 general election, a Member asked whether any assessment had been made of the need to include any proposed changes as set out in various political manifestos. The meeting heard that flexibility had been built into the strategy at an early stage to take into account potential policy changes, a key drive being improved social mobility that all political parties sought to achieve.

A Member asked for more detail on the process around implementing the actions set out in the report (including connecting with other committees) and how best value would be extracted from resources – including clear alignment of the City Premium Grant (CPG) with the new strategy. The meeting heard that the revisiting of the CPG's deployment is the subject of item 11, and that the activities themselves are currently in the planning stage and that regular updates to the Board would be provided (together with a review at least once a year).

Members noted the Board's key focus of improving social mobility.

RESOLVED, That the content of the 2024-29 Education Strategy be approved.

11. CITY PREMIUM GRANT 2023/24 ROUND 1 APPLICATIONS

The Board considered the report of the Director of Community & Children's Services updating Members on key information relating to the first round of City Premium Grant (CPG) applications for the 2024/25 academic year.

The Board noted that applications for 106 projects have been received and reviewed. Of these projects 90 were deemed successful, and these projects collectively request £1,503,279 of funding representing 68% of the City Premium Grant funding available to the Family of Schools for the 2024/25 academic year.

Members noted the administration process for the CPG and an overview of all proposed projects in the two appendices.

The executive agreed to circulate the CPG allocation criteria for the benefit of new Members (see action 5).

RESOLVED, That the Board delegate authority to the Chair and the Strategic Education and Skills Director to distribute awards from the City Premium Grant to fund successful bids.

12. REVIEW OF FUNDING TO THE GUILDHALL SCHOOL OF MUSIC & DRAMA FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

The Board considered the report of the Principal of Guildhall School of Music and Drama (GSMD) reviewing the City Corporation's payment of £30,000 per annum to the school as part of the implementation of the City Corporation's Grants Service Based Review. The Board noted that the payment has historically been used to fund scholarships, noting the impact of the funds on the School and on the scholarship recipients in 2023/24. Members were asked

to agree to continue the annual payment for the financial years 2024/25 and 25/26 and to review the payment again in two years' time in the context of the City Corporation's wider education offering.

A Member asked whether the £30K was the only sum available for supporting disadvantaged students or whether any other funds are also used to promote social mobility. The meeting heard that students are supported by more than one fund, noting that about half of GSMD's higher education students are supported (half of whom are supported on the basis of financial need), and that the Young Artists are supported by bursaries based on financial need.

The Board noted the partnership initiatives between CoLA Hackney and the GSMD, particularly for the school's sixth form.

On whether any partnership exists with the Aldgate School, the meeting heard that the information would be checked and circulated at a later date (see action point).

As noted at item 2, Caroline Haines withdrew from the discussion.

RESOLVED, That the Board

1. approve as satisfactory the submission of the School's impact report on the use of the £30,000 grant in 2023/24, in particular noting Appendix II which outlines how social mobility is embedded in Guildhall School's scholarships policy; and
2. approve the grant continuation to 2024/25 on the basis of this satisfactory submission.

13. APPRENTICESHIP LEVY SPEND UPDATE

The Board noted the report of the Chief People Officer, People & HR providing an overview of the advancements made in bolstering apprenticeship opportunities and how the apprenticeship levy is spent within the City of London Corporation.

The Board noted the marked increase in the number of both centrally and levy funded apprenticeships, from 47 in December 2022 to 276 apprenticeships in April 2024, as well as the impressive decrease in the amount of digital levy funds being returned to HMRC dropping from a return of £53,188 in December 2022, to a (zero) return in August 2023 which has been maintained to date.

Referencing the zero return of the levy back to the Government, a Member asked whether any transfer of excess to businesses was in place. The meeting heard that some excess has been transferred in that way to local SMEs and charities.

On the funding (0.5% from the payroll), a Member asked for the value of that funding and the meeting heard that the sum amounted to c. £900K pa and that

some apprenticeships are centrally funded, and that the levy is also being used to upskill staff members.

In response to a question on what plans are in place to work more collaboratively with suppliers and other partners, the meeting heard that work is ongoing with external organisations to continuously improve the apprenticeship offering. The Board noted that a small cohort of T level students have been placed at the CoLC though there were challenges due to the fact that the students were not employees which prevented access to some IT systems.

The Board noted the ongoing need for work experience opportunities for students at the CoLAT apprenticeship academy.

A Member asked what the main challenges were for the programme. The meeting heard that (in the case of new apprentices) it had been difficult in the post-Covid era to find new apprentices that wanted to join the CoLC, but that the retention rate is good as is the conversion rate (apprentice to employee).

The Board noted that regular updates on apprenticeships would be provided to include how many new people were taking advantage of the apprenticeship offering.

14. **LONDON CAREERS FESTIVAL 2024 EVALUATION**

The Board noted the report of the Strategic Director of Education and Skills updating Members on the outcomes of the London Careers Festival (LCF) 2024 which engaged primary, secondary, and post-16 pupils and young people aged up to 25 from across London in work-related and skills development activities.

A Member asked what steps are being taken to further involve the City's family of schools in the event. The meeting heard that notifications and information in the 2025 iteration has been circulated, and that all CoL schools are being contacted – noting in particular the online events.

Members pointed out the importance of emphasising the USPs of the CoLC Careers Festival, one of those being the connections to the CoLC and the square mile, and asked what opportunities existed to further engage Square Mile businesses in the Careers Festival. The meeting heard that engagement is ongoing, including around on-location events.

Members commented on the importance of exploiting the connections among CoLC Common Councillors and on the potential for incorporating apprenticeship opportunities into the event.

In response to a question on the reasons for the 'OK' responses, the meeting heard that some of that was attributable to a specific group of young people.

15. **ADULT SKILLS AND EDUCATION SERVICE UPDATE**

The Board noted the report of the Strategic Director, Education and Skills and the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services.

A Member sought clarification on how the work of the service fitted into the overall education work of the CoLC at a strategic level. The Board noted that those services sit within the work of the Education Strategy Unit.

The Board noted that, following a Member's suggestion, all documents submitted to the Board would directly reference the relevant section of the education strategy now that it has been approved.

16. **PRESENTATION OF BIRKBECK COLLEGE - UPDATE ON BURSARIES**

The Board noted the £180K award over three years to support new foundation year bursaries worth £3K for each student to help non-traditional students continue their studies. The Board noted that 10 foundation year bursaries were awarded in 2022, and 13 were awarded in 2023. The Board welcomed students Dami Makinde and Yousra Loudiyi to explain the benefits of the award.

The Board noted that the funds came from the CoLC's Combined Education Charities.

17. **PARENT RESEARCH WITH BRUNEL**

The Board viewed a presentation on parents' views that focussed on three areas: parents' experiences of school/college engagement; parents' views on current and future educational priorities; and ideas for further engaging parents in developing and shaping educational priorities. The Board noted these four conclusions:

- Parents **spoke highly** of CoLAT schools and compared them **favourably** to their experience and knowledge of other schools;
- Parents' educational priorities are shaped by what they perceive to be in their children's best interests and influenced by **everyday challenges** facing low-income households;
- There was an emphasis on the **importance of parental voice** and being part of a school learning community; and
- The **Impact of COVID-19** pandemic and school closure periods is still being felt by families.

18. **PARENTAL TOOLKIT UPDATE**

The Board noted the parental toolkit update co-produced by the Corporation and the Parenting Circle commissioned in 2023, noting that the toolkit may be rolled out nationally.

A Member asked whether further research on non-CoLAT schools was expected. The Board heard that the research focussed on the City Family of Schools but would explore widening the scope of the research to that end.

19. **OUTTURN REPORT 2023/24**

The Board noted the report of the Director of Community & Children's Services and the Chamberlain.

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

There were no questions.

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

Members noted that the Natural Environment Board recently agreed to establish a Youth Natural Environment Board.

Board Members took the opportunity to thank Sir Alan Wood who has completed his assignment with the City of London Corporation (at the request of the Chief Town Clerk) and its family of schools, his work having been much appreciated. The Board thanked Sir Alan for his wisdom and insight during his work with the Corporation, and Members asked that a request be made to the Town Clerk that his reflections and findings be shared with the Board in the future.

22. **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.

The meeting ended at 1.30 pm

Chairman

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