

EDUCATION BOARD

Thursday, 14 May 2026

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Board held at Committee Room 2 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Thursday, 14 May 2026 at 10.30 am

Present

Members:

Naresh Hari Sonpar (Chairman)	Deputy Helen Fentimen OBE JP
Tim McNally (Deputy Chair)	Deputy Caroline Haines
Alderman Elizabeth Anne King, BEM JP	Alderman Robert Howard
Deputy Anne Corbett	Jane Hindle

In Attendance

Officers:

Deborah Bell	- Community & Children's Services
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Jack Joslin	- The City Bridge Trust
Torriano Stewart	- Community & Children's Services
Jayne Moore	- Town Clerk's Department
Kevin Colville	- Comptroller and City Solicitors
Roland Martin	- Headmaster- City of London Freeman's School
Samuel Dang	- The City Bridge Trust
Debby Rigby	- Community & Children's Services
Tim Fletcher	- Communications & Media Affairs
Laura Fuller	- A New Direction
Rebecca Branch	- A New Direction
Fotios Kaymenakis	- Guildhall School of Music & Drama

1. APOLOGIES

At the outset of the meeting, Naresh Sonpar moved that Tim McNally take the Chair until the election of the Chair at item 4.

Apologies for absence were received from James Adeleke.

These Members observed the meeting online: Deputy Caroline Haines, Alderman Robert Howard, Alderman Elizabeth King.

2. ORDER OF THE COURT

The Board received the Order of the Court following the meeting of the Court of Common Council on 23 April 2026.

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

There were no declarations.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

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

5. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR**

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

6. **PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, That the public minutes of the meeting of 22 January 2026 be approved as an accurate record of the proceedings.

7. **APPOINTMENTS TO SUB-COMMITTEES**

The Board considered the report of the Clerk, and reviewed the Terms of Reference for the Nominations Sub-Committee and the Member Development and Standards Committee.

RESOLVED, That the Board approve the terms of reference for the Nominations Sub-Committee and appoint the following Members:

Nominations Sub-Committee

Naresh Sonpar (Chair)

Tim McNally (Deputy Chair)

Deputy Caroline Haines

Member Development and Standards Committee

Naresh Sonpar

Deputy Caroline Haines

Edward Lord expressed an interest in joining both these sub-committees, subject to confirmation of membership at the Court meeting of 21 May 2026.

8. **LONDON CAREERS FESTIVAL INITIAL EVALUATION**

The Board received an initial evaluation of the 8th London Careers Festival that ran from 02-13 March 2026, viewed a promotional video shared on social media, and noted these points:

- The event is trending towards in-person experiences with record in-person attendance in 2026; and
- More workshops and City insight days were held than in any other year.

A Member commented that there is still scope for further work with Innovation & Growth and the Workforce & Skills Team to boost careers opportunities.

The Chair congratulated the Education Strategy Unit and the volunteers in delivering the Festival.

9. **CULTURAL & CREATIVE LEARNING FUND 2026/2027 - APPLICATION REVIEW**

The Board considered the report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.

Referencing section 4, a Member asked how the concept of additionality is highlighted at the application stage and whether specific schools or student groups are targeted. The meeting heard that partners focus on a range of factors including Pupil Premium statistics and location.

In response to a question on how schools are encouraged to make applications where relevant, the meeting noted that a Forum convenes all partners, schools and employers to promote the opportunities available, and consultations are ongoing with the Corporation's team that is currently drafting the cultural strategy to broaden opportunities.

RESOLVED, That the Board delegate authority to the Town Clerk Chair, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Education Board and the Strategic Education and Skills Director, to distribute CCL funds to the relevant cultural partners.

10. **SCHOOL VISITS FUND IMPACT REPORT 25/26**

The Board noted the report of the Director of Community and Children's Services that presented Members with key information relating to the impact of the School Visits Fund in the financial year 2025/26, noting that the total budget assigned to the fund this financial year is £30,000.

11. **A NEW DIRECTION - UPDATE**

The Board heard an update on the Primary Arts Programme, noting the following points:

- The final phase of delivery runs from September 2027 to March 2028;
- The programme's legacy is expected to respond to recent government legislation;
- 644 schools are registered as at May 2026 (a 58% increase since Year 1);
- There has been a 96% increase in SEND settings since Year 1;
- The Touring programme has reached 12,000 children;
- Go & See has reached 5,000 children;
- The three COLAT Primary schools have participated in the programme;
- Aldgate School has not yet engaged with the programme; and
- Feedback from teachers and pupils has been overwhelmingly positive.

On the expansion into secondary SEND provision and on follow-up survey responses, a Member asked whether figures on those are available. The Board heard that these will be provided (see action point 1)

A Member asked for more information on the take-up among Looked After Children (LAC). The Board heard that information on LAC is not shared with the Programme, though some proxy measures are taken into account.

A Member asked why there is little engagement from Aldgate School. The meeting heard that no reasons have been given and that the Programme reaches out to the school in the same way as for other schools.

A Member asked whether children's progress is tracked as they move to secondary school. The Board heard that progress is not tracked to secondary level, and that resources are available for secondary school usage.

12. **STEP UP TO MENTORING - UPDATE**

The Board heard the following updates on the City Corporation's Step Up Mentoring programme:

- Since early 2026, the programme has moved from mobilisation into early delivery;
- Mentor recruitment has remained strong, with over 70 mentors recruited to date, supported by continued engagement from over 20 corporate and partner organisations;
- Mentors are completing full safeguarding, care aware and trauma-informed training, with further cohorts progressing through onboarding.
- There are now 20-25 young people enrolled across a growing London-wide network of 12 engaged local authority areas, reflecting the strength of the referral partnerships established earlier in the programme;
- Live-matching has begun with 6 mentor–mentee pairs completed and initial engagement underway;
- Mentee recruitment and conversion remains the key delivery focus and a structured 3-month delivery plan is now in place to scale the programme from approximately 20 mentees to 50+ by June, supported by expanded referral pipelines through Virtual Schools, Family Wellbeing Centres and youth organisations among other things;
- The priority during the rest of 2026 is to:
 - Increase mentee numbers through sustained referral activity,
 - Convert referrals into active participants through structured onboarding.
 - Significantly scale up mentor–mentee matching, moving toward full programme delivery, and
 - Begin capturing early feedback and outcome data as mentoring relationships embed.

A member asked for more information on how success is evaluated on the programme. The meeting heard that evaluation procedures will begin by autumn 2026.

13. **CITY FAMILY OF SCHOOLS VALIDATED RESULTS 2025: SATS, GCSE AND A-LEVEL**

The Board received the report of the Director of Community and Children's Services setting out the validated results for the City Family of Schools, and

noted the City of London Corporation's apprentice Camilla Waddy-Smith for thanks for her high-quality work and outstanding contribution.

A Member asked whether the additional curriculum time allocated to Maths at the schools of the City of London Academies Trust has improved outcomes. Noting the long lead times for curriculum changes, the meeting heard that improvements following KS3 changes first introduced in 2024 are expected at GCSE level for that cohort, and KS4 changes in Maths and English are expected to be realised in the 2027 GCSE cohort.

Members noted that the absence of KS2 data in 2020 and 2021 due to lockdown measures have resulted in no Progress 8 scores being available for that cohort and therefore very little understanding of prior attainment at Y7, and that starting points will be known for the 2027 GCSE cohort.

Referencing section 24 of the report, Members asked for an update on managing inconsistencies across Trust schools. The meeting heard that work is ongoing at the Trust to manage consistency in teaching and learning including measures to address timetabling and curriculum issues, noting in particular the importance of embedding the right culture at a school including leadership, behaviour, attendance and curriculum structures that are monitored via regular scrutiny meetings at each school.

The Board thanked the Trust staff and executive for their role in achieving good outcomes, particularly at Redriff.

A Member asked for the next iteration of the document to show the proportion of Pupil Premium students at each school (see action point 2) for further context.

The Board discussed the role of the Board in receiving the results (see action point 3), noting in particular that the Board's role covers information-sharing and ensuring that the education provision across the family of schools is in line with the Corporation's Education Strategy and the Corporation's policy framework, while the responsibilities and accountability around education delivery rest with the Trust Board and the executive team as set out in the COLAT Articles of Association and Sponsorship Agreement.

The Board noted the significant variance in context across the family of schools depending on the background of the students and the school culture.

14. VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADTEACHER REPORT

The Board received the report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services setting out updates on the City of London Virtual School including the Annual Report, giving details and impact of the work from the academic year 2024/2025. Members also reviewed the School Development

Plan 2025/2026 providing detailed information about current activity, successes, challenges and plans.

A Member asked whether young carers are covered by the Virtual School. The meeting heard that information on young carers is discussed at the Corporation's Safeguarding committee entities and that the information can be shared on request.

In response to a question on the extent of the involvement in children at the City family of schools, the Board noted that the Virtual School covers children living in the City of London rather than children attending schools in other boroughs, noting that there is overlap in some cases. Members also noted that training is provided to staff at the family of schools, and heard details of the involvement of the City's independent schools in various educational provisions to those children.

The Head Teacher of Freeman's School offered further discussion with the Head Teacher on partnership potential, especially regarding Freeman's Forest School activities and resource.

15. ADULT SKILLS EDUCATION AND APPRENTICESHIP SERVICE: ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT AND THE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Board received the report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services and the Strategic Director for Education and Skills setting out the City of London Adult Skills, Education and Apprenticeship programme that delivers a wide range of nationally accredited apprenticeship, education, and skills qualifications.

The Board reviewed the programme's key strategic documents, including the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

Referencing section 6, a Member asked for an assessment of the impact of the withdrawal in 2027-28 of the Corporation's contribution of £157K. The meeting heard that the impact will primarily impact space allocation and how the programme is delivered as a result of those space constraints. The meeting heard that discussions are ongoing in respect of space allocation (7,000 sq ft) across various City assets.

A Member commented on the importance of space allocation and asked whether further support was needed. The meeting heard that Member support around the space allocation issue would be welcome.

The Board noted the Self-Assessment Report and the Quality Improvement Plan.

16. ADULT SKILLS AND EDUCATION SERVICE (ASES) - STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Board considered the report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services setting out the Adult Skills and Education Services (ASES) strategic development plan.

RESOLVED, That the Board approve the ASES strategic development plan.

17. CITY YOUTH GUARANTEE

The Board received the report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services providing an overview of the City Youth Guarantee – the collective set of programmes, services and opportunities delivered or commissioned by the City of London Corporation for young people connected to the City of London.

A Member commented on the benefits on ensuring that communication is ongoing with the Lead Member for Youth at the Corporation, including in the creation of a landing web page for the Youth Guarantee. A webpage describing the City Youth Guarantee will be created with Members support, engaging the Lead Member for Youth specifically.

18. GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS UPDATE

The Board received the report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services.

Members noted section 6.2 of the COLAT Sponsorship Agreement:

When appointing or removing the Chair of any Local Governing Bodies or committees under Article 100 of its Articles of Association, the Trustees shall inform the Sponsor of such appointment or removal. The Sponsor shall be informed of the establishment, terms of reference, constitution and membership of any such Local Governing Body or committee.

The Board noted that the vacancy at the Aldgate School for a Governor (following the resignation of John Fletcher) has been filled by Tim McNally following the circulation of the vacancy at the Court of Common Council's meeting of 23 April 2026.

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

There were no questions.

20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no items of urgent business.

21. 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.

22. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

The Board considered the non-public minutes of the meeting of 22 January 2026.

23. CPG ROUND 1 APPLICATIONS 2026-27

The Board noted a verbal update on the City Premium Grants process.

24. FINANCE UPDATE: THE CITY EDUCATIONAL TRUST FUND (CETF) AND THE COLC COMBINED EDUCATION CHARITY (CEC)

The Board considered the report of the City Bridge Foundation & Charities Finance Director.

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

The Board reviewed the report of the Principal, Guildhall School of Music & Drama.

26. CITY OF LONDON FREEMEN'S SCHOOL - EASTER REVISION RESIDENTIAL

The Board received the report of the Headmaster of City of London Freeman's School

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

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

The meeting ended at 12.30

Chairman

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