



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ESHER SIXTH FORM COLLEGE ACADEMY TRUSTEES

Held by video conference
Wednesday, 23rd September 2020, at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Tim Oliver (Chair)
Dan Dean
Paul Collyer
Berzek Sanda
Ian Leigh
Andrew McVeigh

Declan Mason
Ruth Seabrook
Tom Webb
Fran Stewart
Evie Bennison
Faith Owiny

Terry Price (Member)

Helen Odhams, Deputy Principal
(Advising Officer)

Dan Hards, Assistant Principal (Advising
Officer)

Ken Kehoe (Clerk)

1. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of business interests.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Karin Rowsell and Mark Nelligan. Katie Pattison did not attend. Members, Clarissa Wilks and David Lavarack, had also sent their regrets that they were unable to attend.

3. THANKS

The Chair noted that this meeting was the last meeting for Katie Pattison. He wished to thank her for her service as a Parent Trustee.

4. CONSITUTION

Confirmation of the Chair of the Board of Trustees

The Vice Chair took the chair of the meeting. The Board unanimously voted to re-appoint Tim Oliver as Chair of the Board.

Confirmation of the Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees

The Chair re-assumed the chair of the meeting. The Board unanimously voted to re-appoint Paul Collyer as Vice-Chair.

Confirmation of Committee Membership and Chairs

The Chair outlined some further changes to the proposals that had been circulated prior to the meeting. Mark Nelligan would replace Paul Collyer on the Quality and Standards Committee. Paul Collyer would join Strategy and Policy and Declan Mason would join Finance and Estates. The new Parent Trustee would take the place of Katie Pattison when she took up her post.

In discussion, the Trustees made the following points:

- Darrell Bates was Interim Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee. This should be clarified on the list of committees;
- The Clerk should review the Articles of Association and Standing Orders to determine whether there were any constraints on a co-opted Trustee chairing a sub-committee.

The Board approved the Committee membership and Chairs as set out by the Chair, subject to clarifying that Darrell Bates was interim Chair.

Action: The Clerk should review the Articles of Association and Standing Orders to determine whether there were any constraints on a co-opted Trustee chairing a sub-committee.

Committee Terms of Reference

The Board approved the draft Terms of Reference for the Audit, Finance and Estates, Quality and Standards, Remuneration and Strategy and Policy committees.

The Board also considered the Terms of Reference for the Special Committee. It approved the Terms of Reference, subject to the addition of a table setting out the committee's role in different circumstances.

Action: Clerk to add a table setting out the committee's role in different circumstances to the Terms of Reference of the Special Committee.

Scheme of Delegation

The Board approved the Scheme of Delegation, subject to removing College committees from the chart at the start. Those committees reported to the Principal, not directly to the Board.

Standing Orders

The Board considered the draft Standing Orders. The Chair noted that the Standing Orders had been amended to reflect the change to Academy status. In discussion, the Board considered whether meetings of the Board should be public as those of the Governing Body had been.

In conclusion, the Chair said that the Board was minded to keep its meetings open to the public. The Clerk should investigate the approach taken by other Academies and make recommendations about how information about meetings should be made available.

Action: Clerk to investigate the approach taken by other Academies to opening their Board meetings to the public and make recommendations about how information about meetings should be made available. The Clerk should amend the draft Standing Orders to reflect the discussion of the Board.

Paul Collyer

The Board unanimously agreed to recommend to Members that Paul Collyer should be re-appointed as Trustee.

Action: The Clerk to prepare a Written resolution for Members of the Trust seeking their agreement to the re-appointment of Paul Collyer as Trustee.

5. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Board approved the minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting of 8th July 2020.

6. MATTERS ARISING

The Chair noted that there had been two matters arising. The Members had passed the Written Resolution appointing Mark Nelligan as Trustee. The Clerk was investigating options for broadening the recruitment of Trustees. In discussion, the Board felt that it would be helpful to have a list of Board Trustees and the dates of their terms of office.

Action: The Clerk to circulate a list of Trustees with the dates of their Terms of Office.

7. PRESENTATION ON EXAMINATION RESULTS

The Deputy Principal introduced the report on the 2020 Examination results. She noted that comparisons with the results of previous years were difficult as the processes for determining grades were so different. The Deputy Principal explained the Government guidance that the College had used for determining centre assessed A level Grades. This process had fed into the calculated grades that the students had received first before the Government's change of policy. After the change, students had the higher of the centre assessed grades or the moderated grades.

The change of policy on A levels had also had an effect on the BTEC awards as Pearson had decided that the change of policy could disadvantage BTEC students. They had therefore reviewed their process and put more weight on the internally assessed grades. Grading for BTECs was different to that for A levels as students had already completed some of their qualification.

The Deputy Principal noted that the GCSE data, in the report included actual results from November 2019 as well as the centre assessed grades from the summer. The English results were good with 100% pass rate and 60% of students made progress in Maths, achieving a pass in functional maths skills or improving their GCSE grade.

The calculation and interpretation of Value Added would be difficult. The issue would be looked at by the Quality and Standards committee later this term. Some 14 students were re-taking A levels in October.

In discussion, the Trustees made the following points:

- The Deputy Principal had provided an excellent overview of the results. The results looked good and the students had earned them.
- How can we use the results to assess whether we need to give particular departments support? The Deputy Principal noted that there was nothing in the results unexpected but the leadership were keeping in touch with those departments that had been identified as needing help last year. They were also looking at the quality control process. But the focus now was on helping 6.2 students after the lockdown given the prospect of exams next year.
- Given the difficulty of historical comparisons, can we benchmark against other Colleges? The Deputy Principal explained that this was also problematic. While all Colleges should have used the same Guidance, they would all have used different internal processes and data to arrive at the centre assessed grades. Comparisons between Colleges would, therefore, not be comparing like with like.

The Board thanked the Deputy Principal for her report and the staff's effort over the examination period.

8. PRINCIPALS'S REPORT

The Principal began by noting that the difficulties of benchmarking examination results this year were illustrated by the fact that Sixth Form College Principals had not exchanged data this year. Moreover, it was clear that some schools had used a different approach to colleges.

In response to a question from a Trustee, the Principal noted that results clinics had been in place for students receiving their results. Counselling had also been available. 28 students had asked for a clerical check; 19 had appealed their centre assessed grades; there were 10 subject access requests and 2 complaints. While each individual case would be considered in the normal way, overall the Principal was confident in the judgements of the teachers.

The Assistant Principal (Dan Hards) noted that only 12% of students had deferred their entry into University down from 16% last year. The students had not been disadvantaged.

Turning to the re-opening of the College for the new Academic Year, the Principal explained that he had had to take account of three factors: the changing Government guidance; the student experience; and ensuring biosecurity. It was impossible to operate bubbles and the College's site was too compact to have all students in at once. He had decided, therefore, to take a blended approach, with some students in one week and then working remotely the next. At any one time about half the students were in and half out. The split had been done alphabetically.

The Principal noted that blended teaching is challenging but the College had done much preparation. Before the summer, they had undertaken pilots across all 3 Divisions and involving A level and BTEC courses. They had carried out 2 training sessions for all staff at the start of the year and the Divisional Directors had produced Frequently Asked Question guides. The guidance covers practical issues, Teaching and Learning, and assessment. They would be holding an Inset Day in 3 weeks to address any challenges that had come up in Teaching and Learning and assessment. The Principal said that the staff were doing a fantastic job. He noted that the approach that had been taken would be reviewed but, without second guessing the review and given recent developments in the COVID 19 crisis, there was little room for manoeuvre.

The Chair asked the Board if they supported the approach taken by the SLT to the re-opening of the College and would they be prepared to issue a statement of support. The Board agreed with the approach taken and, in principle, to issue a statement after the review.

In discussion, Trustees made the following points:

- It may be that a review would identify specific issues with the current system that could be addressed. It would be helpful to be informed of any such issues and how the SLT proposed to address them;
- Was there more that could be done to ease the burden on the SLT?
- There would need to be specific attention to the needs of SEN and EHCP students;
- How is student engagement with the blended approach? The Principal noted that, based on 2 weeks data, attendance data was stronger during the on site week but staff were keeping a close eye on the data and following up on attendance and looking at the data from Teams on the online week.

The Board noted the crucial role played by the IT Department in delivering the blended approach and thanked the IT Department and Dan Loughlin for their work.

Turning to Health and Safety, the Principal informed the Board that they had had 2 confirmed cases to date and that the College had taken Public Health England advice. In one case, 25 students and 2 staff had had to isolate. Overall there were 24 staff in self-isolation but, with the blended approach, they could continue to teach. The Assistant Principal noted that, in each of the first two weeks of term, there had been 10 students with COVID related absences.

Despite the challenging times, the Principal informed the Board that enrolment had gone well with 2034 students in total; there were 1025 in 6.1. Looking at next year, the Principal noted that there would be an Open Evening for applicants on 10 November. At this stage, they were looking for another 750 applicants which was in line with previous experience.

Turning to the building programme, the Principal informed the Board that the 3G pitch was complete, the new classrooms were due to be handed over by the contractor by 30 September and the cafeteria extension after half term. Work on the new Performance Block, however, had been postponed for a year.

The Deputy Principal introduced the Quality Improvement Plan. She noted that Targets 11, 12 and 13 would be carried forward and that there was still more to do. Regarding Target 14, they were piloting a new observation process and they would be reviewing the quality improvement process through the Quality and Standards committee. Target 15, learning to learn, had been a real success with the 10 hours study per subject per week. Finally, in terms of preparations for OFSTED (Target 20), it was unlikely that there would be any inspection before January 2021.

The Board noted the Principal's report.

9. SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Assistant Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead (Dan Hards) outlined the changes to the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance for 2020: there was a greater emphasis on contextualised safeguarding and supporting mental health. He informed the Board that all College policies, procedures and documentation had been updated to reflect KCSIE 2020. Turning to the Safeguarding Policy, the Assistant Principal noted that Tom Webb had been appointed as an additional Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. He also highlighted that all the processes for monitoring and reviewing Safeguarding were set out on Page 3, Page 4 added awareness of contextualised safeguarding as an objective, and bullying had been re-named as peer on peer abuse. He noted that there would be sessions for students

on coercive control and safeguarding. Finally he noted that he proposed to change the requirement for recording of live lessons from “ will be recorded” to “may be recorded”.

The Board approved the Safeguarding Policy, including the change to make recording of live teaching sessions permitted rather than mandatory.

10. TRUSTEE SELF ASSESSMENT

The Board approved the Trustee Self-Assessment Report, subject to any detailed comments that Trustees may have.

Action: The Clerk to investigate the possibility of having a virtual training morning to replace the event postponed from the summer term.

11. LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS

Nothing to report.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Terry Price advised the committee that the first Annual General Meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 9 December at 5pm. All Trustees were welcome to attend.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for 6pm on 9 December 2020.

*The meeting closed at 7.50pm
Attendance was 79%.*

Signed.....

Date.....

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

AT1-001	The Clerk should review the Articles of Association and Standing Orders to determine whether there were any constraints on a co-opted Trustee chairing a sub-committee.
AT1-002	Clerk to add a table setting out the committee's role in different circumstances to the Terms of Reference of the Special Committee.
AT1-003	Clerk to investigate the approach taken by other Academies to opening their Board meetings to the public and make recommendations about how information about meetings should be made available. The Clerk should amend the draft Standing Orders to reflect the discussion of the Board.
AT1-004	Clerk to prepare a Written resolution for Members of the Trust seeking their agreement to the re-appointment of Paul Collyer as Trustee.
AT1-005	Clerk to circulate a list of Trustees with the dates of their Terms of Office.
AT1-007	Clerk to investigate the possibility of having a virtual training morning to replace the event postponed from the summer term.

SUMMARY OF GOVERNOR CHALLENGE [C] / SUPPORT [S]

C/S	Minute	Topic
C & S	7	The Board welcomed the work of the Deputy Principal and all the staff during the difficult examination process. They asked how the data could be used to identify departments in need of support and whether the data could be used to benchmark against other Colleges.
C	8	The Board asked to be informed of any issues raised during the review of blended learning, in particular from SEN and EHCP parents.
S	8	The Board thanked the IT Department for their crucial work during the COVID crisis.