



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

Held by video conference
Wednesday, 24th March 2021, at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Tim Oliver (Chair)	Declan Mason
Dan Dean	Mark Nelligan
Paul Collyer	Ruth Seabrook
Berzek Sanda	Fran Stewart
Ian Leigh	Evie Bennison
Andrew McVeigh	Faith Owiny
Cindy Dawes	

Terry Price (Member)
Clarissa Wilks (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 interests.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Tom Webb. David Lavarack (Member) had also sent his apologies.

3. CONSITUTION

External Trustees. The Chair informed the Board that Karin Rowsell had resigned from the Board. The recruitment process had begun to fill the vacancy and the vacancy that would be created with Ian's departure. The Principal informed the Board that there had already been 5 applications and that there were signs that the effort to attract more diverse applications was bearing fruit. The closing date for applications was 28th March.

Chairs of Committees – Succession Planning – The Chair noted that with the loss of Karin Rowsell and Ian Leigh, there would be vacancies for the Chairs of the Audit and Quality and Standards committees. The Chair also noted that he had taken on the Chair of Strategy and Policy committee but that while arrangements had been made for the meetings next term, he would be talking to Trustees over the coming term to identify those willing and able to become Chairs.

Members of the Trust - Terry Price informed the Board that the Members had agreed to increase the number of Members to 5, in line with DfE recommendations and to allow for future Membership change. Paul Collyer and David Irving have agreed to become the additional Members. The Clerk informed the Board that the existing Members would have to pass a Written Resolution to appoint the new Members.

Action: The Clerk to circulate a Written Resolution to existing Members to appoint Paul Collyer and David Irving new Members

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Board approved the minutes of the Board of Trustee meeting of Wednesday 9th December 2020.

5. MATTERS ARISING

The Board reviewed the matters arising:

AT2-001 Clerk to add future Board meeting dates to College website. **Done.**

AT2-002 Clerk to schedule a Training Morning in May. **The training morning is now scheduled for Friday 2 July 2021.**

AT2-003 The Director of Finance and Estates to confirm to the Chair of the Finance and Estates committee whether the budget included the additional funding for high value courses. **The Director had confirmed that the budget does include (within the ESFA recurrent funding line) the additional funding for high value courses.**

AT2-004 Clerk to investigate possible dates for virtual training session on the Academy accounts and Trustees to inform the Clerk if they would like to attend. **Done.**

AT2-005 The Chair of Trustees to sign the Report and Letter of Representation **Done.**

AT2-006 Trustees to inform the Clerk if they wished to continue receiving hard copy Board papers. **Done.**

6. PRINCIPALS'S REPORT

The Principal informed the Board that there were three key issues that had been the focus of much work in the College:

- Mass Testing: Setting up and running the mass testing system for students had involved a huge effort and the Director of Finance and Estates, the Deputy Site manager and College Nurses deserved much thanks. The system had, so far, identified one asymptomatic case.
- The approach to learning before the Easter break: The College had adopted a blended approach, reflecting the need for space for testing, the desire to enable continuity of education, and to ease staff and students back into onsite learning. The approach had been discussed at the Strategy and

Policy committee and the committee had supported it. The College would be returning to full onsite learning after the Easter holiday. An official from the Department for Education had been in contact about the blended approach.

- Preparations for examinations: The Ofqual Guidance was open to significant differences in interpretation. The College had to ensure the integrity of their system while ensuring that their students were not disadvantaged in an environment where the level playing field could not be guaranteed. He was concerned that there would be only 5 weeks after Easter to generate further evidence for teacher-assessed grades and that the results day had been moved forward to 10 August, explicitly to allow student appeals.

In response to questions, the Principal said that, at present, he believed that it would be for the College to check for the accuracy of the data in any appeal, but it would be for the Examination Board to hear any appeals against the College's judgments.

Turning to the College's adult provision, the Principal informed the Board that enrolment on adult courses had been declining, that the profit from such courses contributed little to the College and that the postholder currently in charge was resigning. In light of these factors, the Principal proposed to pause offering adult recreational courses in the next academic year, while maintaining the counselling and life courses. In discussion, Trustees noted that the adult education courses had been a part of the College's engagement with the community but that the opening of the new sports facilities would offer new ways of engaging with the community.

The committee agreed that the provision of adult recreational courses should be paused next year, in light of the continuing pressures on the leadership and staff of the College.

On other matters, the Principal informed the Board that:

- the College's funding would rise above £10 million for the first time in 2021/22;
- the College had appointed to the new post of Assistant Principal (Curriculum);
- the College was recruiting for a number of teaching posts, following decisions by existing postholders to retire. Some of the vacancies were in shortage subjects. The College was open to NQTs.

The Trustees asked that the Director of Finance and Estates inform the Chair of the Finance and Estates committee when the results of the new build bids were known and asked that the Principal provide an update on teacher recruitment at the next meeting.

Action: The Director of Finance and Estates to inform the Chair of the Finance and Estates committee when the results of the new build bid were known

Action: The Principal to provide an update on teacher recruitment at the July meeting

Student Union Report

The President and Vice President of the Student Union introduced their report, drawing the Board's attention to the work that the student representatives had done on environmental matters, to support 6.1 students with UCAS and to reflect Black Lives Matter. They also thanked the Principal for his input into a FAQ document on exam grading for 6.2 students.

The Chair thanked Faith Owiny and Evie Bennison for their Report, for their work, and the work of all their team, over the last year and for their service on the Board. The Board concurred.

Management Accounts, plus forecast outturn, cashflow and commentary for 4 and 5 months to 31.12.20 and 31.01.21.

The Chair of the Finance and Estates committee introduced this item. He drew the Board's attention to the extra costs of COVID 19, set out on Page 18 of the report; he noted that because of the College's financial position, the costs were not recoverable from the Government. He also highlighted the receipt of £200k of CIL money that had not been included in the original budget.

The Board approved the management accounts, the forecast outturn, cashflow and commentary for periods to 31 December 2020 and 31 January 2021.

Review of Quality Improvement Plan

The Deputy Principal reviewed the QIP:

- Target 1 - the assessment process had been amended, with the January formal exams cancelled as a result of the lockdown. But progress reviews had been carried out. The College was now focussed on how to teach and prepare to deliver teacher assessed grades in only 9 weeks;
- Target 2 – the approach to quality assurance had been revised at the last Quality and Standards committee meeting and would be reviewed at the next meeting after Easter;
- Target 3 – the approach to setting minimum grades for 6.1 students had been reviewed in light of the changes to how the GCSE grades had been determined last year. A lower uplift gave a grade distribution more aligned to previous cohorts. The minimum grades for 6.2 students had been rolled over;
- Target 13 – the College had had to amend how attendance was monitored, given online learning, but tutors had been good at identifying students in need of support and remote attendance had been strong;
- Target 16 – the date had been amended in light of the COVID crisis.
- Target 17 - the Deputy Principal informed the Board that a 3-day online internship had been offered to 6.1 students that involved a combination of tasks, project work and talks from industry representatives;
- Target 22 – the Deputy Principal noted that the College had used INSET days and online champions to drive online provision.

A trustee asked what action was being taken to meet Target 23 on staff well-being. The Principal explained that he engaged with the staff through a variety of channels to explain decisions and listen to feedback. The Deputy Principal also noted there were a number of informal channels for supporting staff well-being. The 8th February Inset Day had been brought forward to focus on the important issue of staff and student well-being. The Principal informed the Board that the staff had done a fantastic job given the difficult last year.

The Board thanked the Deputy Principal for her review.

7. ADMISSIONS POLICY 2022

The Principal introduced the draft Admissions Policy for 2022; it was largely unchanged from previous years, but the draft now made it clear that it was for the Board of Trustees to decide which schools would be included under the Guaranteed Place scheme.

In discussion, Trustees questioned whether the definition of step-sibling, in particular that they share the same address Monday to Friday, was too restrictive. Acknowledging that that this definition came from the County Council, the Trustees agreed that matter should be raised with the County Council Director of Children's Services.

Action: The Chair to raise the definition of step-sibling with the Director of Children's Services at Surrey County Council.

The Principal informed the Board that he had had recent discussions with the Head Teacher of Richmond-Upon-Thames School about whether that school wished to be added to the College's Guaranteed Place scheme. The Principal would welcome guidance from the Board. The Head Teacher of the school was also consulting her Governing Body.

The Board agreed, in principle that, if Richmond-Upon-Thames School requested that their students be added to the Guaranteed Place scheme, the school could be added to the list.

The Board agreed the Admissions Policy 2022, subject to any revisions necessary following the discussions with Surrey County Council and any request from Richmond-Upon-Thames school.

8. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY 2022

The Assistant Principal introduced the draft Policy, explaining that the main change was the addition of "Inclusion" to the policy. The Strategy and Policy committee had considered the draft and recommended it to the Board. The Link Trustee, Ruth Seabrook, said that she had had a chance to comment on an earlier draft and thought that it was very good.

In discussion, the Trustees noted that the reference to the Equality Act 2010 needed to be amended and asked about the work that the College was doing, in light of recent events, to combat misogyny. The Assistant Principal outlined the initiatives that the College were taking and assured the Board that their approach included ensuring that male students understood their role in tackling misogyny.

The Board approved the policy, subject to the amendment to the reference to the Equality Act 2010.

9. REPORT BACK FROM COMMITTEES

Finance and Estates - The Chair of the committee noted that the main issues had been covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Strategy and Policy - The Chair said there was nothing to add to the issues already covered in the agenda.

10. LINK TRUSTEE REPORTS

There were no Link Trustee Reports. The Chair asked the Clerk to add oral updates from each Link Trustee to future Board meetings.

Action: Clerk to add individual, oral updates from Link Trustees to future Board Agenda.

The Assistant Principal raised the position of Safeguarding Link Trustee. The role had been filled by the Chair, during Karin Rowsell's absence, but now that Karin had resigned, it was necessary to find a permanent replacement.

Action: Clerk to circulate a note to Trustees inviting volunteers for the role of Safeguarding Link Trustee.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A Trustee asked whether, in recognition of the efforts of the staff over the last year and of the healthy budget position, it was possible to make an additional payment to them. The Principal said this recognition would be greatly welcomed by staff.

The Board agreed that, in principle, a payment to staff was merited and that the Principal and the Director of Finance and Estates should consider options and present a proposal to the Chair of the Board of Trustees and the Chair of the Finance and Estates committee.

Action: The Principal and the Director of Finance and Estates should consider options and develop a proposal.

Action: Chair and Chair of Finance and Estates to use powers delegated by the Board to make a decision.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair noted that the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 7th July, which would be in phase 4 of the Government's published roadmap out of lockdown. It may be possible, therefore, to meet in person. In light of that, the Chair asked Trustees to reflect on the experience of how the Board had operated over the last 12 months and to inform the Clerk of their conclusions.

Action: The Trustees to reflect on the operation of the Board over the last 12 months and to let the Clerk know of their conclusions.

Action: Clerk to draw up a paper, in light of Trustee conclusions, on lessons learned from the COVID crisis for Board and committee operations for discussion at a future Board meeting.

*The meeting closed at 7.15pm
Attendance was 93%.*

Signed.....

Date.....

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

AT3-001	The Clerk to circulate a Written Resolution to existing Members to appoint Paul Collyer and David Irving as new Members.
AT3-002	The Director of Finance and Estates to inform the Chair of the Finance and Estates committee when the results of the new build bid were known.
AT3-003	The Principal to provide an update on teacher recruitment at the July meeting.
AT3-004	The Chair of the Board of Trustees to raise the definition of step sibling with the Director of Children's Services at Surrey County Council.
AT3-005	Clerk to add individual, oral updates from LINK Trustees to future Board Agenda.
AT3-006	Clerk to circulate a note to Trustees inviting volunteers for the role of Safeguarding Link Trustee.
AT3-007	The Principal and the Director of Finance and Estates should consider options and develop a proposal for an additional payment to staff.
AT3-008	Chair and Chair of Finance and Estates to use powers delegated by the Board to make a decision on the proposal.
AT3-009	The Trustees to reflect on the operation of the Board over the last 12 months and to let the Clerk know of their conclusions.
AT3010	The Clerk to draw up a paper, in light of Trustee conclusions, on lessons learned from the COVID crisis for Board and committee operations for discussion at future Board meeting.

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

C/S	Minute	Topic
c	6	<p>QIP Target 23</p> <p>Trustees sought assurances from the senior leadership team about the actions that were being undertaken to safeguard staff well-being.</p>

C	8	<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy</p> <p>The Board questioned what the College was doing to tackle misogyny, in light of recent events, and sought assurances that the burden of tackling this issue was not being left to female students.</p>
S	11	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The Board agreed that, in recognition of the work of College staff during the COVID crisis, the options for some form of payment should be explored and a proposal brought forward.</p>