



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

Wednesday, 12 July 2023 at 6.00pm

### Present:

Tim Oliver (Chair)  
 Dan Hards  
 Natasha Meade  
 M ark Nelligan  
 Jane Duscherer  
 Paul Collyer

Declan Mason  
 Stephanie Fudge  
 Kate Parsons  
 Carl Egginton  
 Ross Robinson

David Irving (Member)

David Lavarack (Member)

Sagar Patel, Deputy Principal (Advising  
 Officer)  
 Catherine Davies (Clerk)  
 Claire Douglas (guest)  
 Liz Gilroy-Scott (guest)

Stephanie Wiles, Director of Finance and  
 Estates (Advising Officer)  
 Liz Bentley-Pattison, Assistant Principal  
 John Thater (guest)  
 Sophie Cook (guest)

### 1. PRESENTATION ON LEVEL 3 REFORM

The Principal and Deputy Principal briefed the Board on Level 3 Reform

- T Levels. The Deputy Principal explained that T Levels were introduced as an ambitious technical educational option for students. 1 x T level is equivalent to 3 x A Levels and includes substantial practical learning, an industry placement of 45 days and are assessed via coursework and exam. To encourage students to choose the T Level option the DfE is proposing to defund a number of Applied General Qualifications such as BTECS.
- The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has met with local Sixth form colleges to find out what they are planning to offer. From speaking to other colleges, the SLT has learnt of the difficulty in explaining T Levels to parents and students and the small number of students enrolling especially when a Sixth Form College is offering T Levels in the same geographical area as a Technical College offering a wider range of subjects. A student roll of around 2500 students is also needed to ensure there is enough take up.
- The College has lower entry requirements (5 GCSE's graded 4-9) than both local schools and the entry requirements for T Levels (Grade 5 in GCSE in English and Maths). The College entry requirements have ensured the student roll is inclusive of the local area because everyone has an opportunity to enrol with few barriers.
- The SLT have kept staff updated on Level 3 reform and at a recent management awayday the consensus was that the College should continue to offer A levels and AAQ's, this combination gives students a diverse range of subjects to study. The SLT is working closely with other local Colleges to ensure that

students from feeder schools will have the option to take T levels at another college if that is the Level 3 option they prefer.

- AAQ's. These qualifications are known by the brands of the examination board - Pearson has BTEC and OCR has CTEC. In July 2024 the DfE will announce which AAQ's are being funded for courses that start in September 2025, this creates a short window to publish information for students considering enrolling at the College. There will be 2 types of AAQ; small AAQ's (1 A level equivalent) will provide a vocational qualification in all the subject areas currently offered by the College. Large AAQ's (2 A Level equivalent) will provide a vocational alternative for Sport and Art and Design. The SLT believes that the current range of BTEC's offered by the College will continue to be funded beyond September 2025.
- The Deputy Principal noted that the DfE envisages that students will study 1 AAQ alongside 2 A Levels.
- The Chair added that the College aims to be inclusive and offering a combination of A Levels and AAQ's seems the clearest pathway to supporting the College Mission Statement.
- The Chair suggested the SLT speaks to the Nescot College to find out more about their offering.

The Chair thanked the Principal and Deputy Principal for their detailed presentation.

**ACTION:** Chair to ensure the Principal has an introduction at Nescot College.

## 2. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of business interests.

## 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Fran Stewart, Andy McVeigh and Ben Obese-Jecty.

## 4. CONSTITUTION

- Appointment of External Trustees and Member

The Chair welcomed the 4 guests to the meeting who will all be appointed to the Board in September. The Clerk updated the Board that a candidate for the role of Member has been offered and accepted the position and will be appointed in time for the December meeting.

- Student and Staff Trustees

The Board noted the appointment of Carl Egginton and Ross Robinson as Student Trustees.

The Chair thanked Declan Mason and Kate Parsons who are attending their last meeting as Staff Trustees, Kate will continue to attend meetings in the role of Assistant Principal – Student Services. The Clerk updated the Board that a new staff Trustee, Anna Mawson, has been appointed from September. Anna's application was the only 1 received but when the role was re-advertised 5 applications were received and an election is currently taking place, the result will be announced on the 24<sup>th</sup> July.

- Committee membership and Chairs 2023/24

The Chair of Finance and Estates indicated that he would like to step down from the position. The new external Trustees joining the Committee in September were asked if they would like to take on the role during the coming year.

The Board approved the Committee Memberships and Chairs for the Academic Year 2023/24.

- Schedule of meeting dates 2023/24

The Board approved the Meeting dates for 2023/24.

## 5. MINUTES OF THE ACADEMY TRUST MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 29<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2023.

The Board approved the minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

## 6. MATTERS ARISING

None.

## 7. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal briefed the Board on College developments:

Industrial Relations – There is a possibility of industrial action by the NEU during the Autumn Term, this would be a continuation of the 9 days of industrial action that have taken place during this academic year.

Student Roll – The target number of students to be enrolled at the College for November enumeration is 2050, this is a figure that the estate can currently support. The estimated number of students enrolling in September is 1950 and any additional enrolments needed to reach 2050 will be drawn from the reserve list of 450 students (which has yet to be accessed).

The Open Evening held on 3<sup>rd</sup> July for students considering enrolling in September 2024 attracted 5,000 attendees. The marketing is being revised to include a welcome event in November for students and parents after they have received their offer of a place from the ballot.

Teacher Recruitment – All teaching vacancies have been filled and the Deputy Principal is leading a working group across the S7 Colleges to look at teacher recruitment issues.

Examination Results – The Principal reminded the Board that Ofqual has informed schools and colleges for results due in 2023 there will be a return to the grading structure used in 2019 rather than the mitigations that have been in place for the past 3 years.

SLT – The Leadership team have completed a development course which included individual and group coaching sessions. The SLT have benefited from the excellent course and look forward using their team building skills.

The Principal expressed condolences to the family of Jackie Ferguson, a valued member of staff who sadly passed away. She is greatly missed by her colleagues; a bench is being installed and rose bush planted in her memory.

A Member asked how much communication the reserve list of 450 students receives and the Principal replied that communication is sent at appropriate intervals with as much guidance given as possible regarding when a place may be offered.

**ACTION:** Clerk to circulate a letter from Ofqual explaining the grade distribution for this summer.

**ACTION:** The Chair asked the Deputy Clerk to circulate a list of upcoming calendar events that Trustees are invited to attend.

### 7.1 Student Union Report

The President and Vice President of the Student Union introduced their report. They have been busy delivering their manifesto promises including improving the Personal Development Programme. They enjoyed giving a tour of the College to the Mayor of Elmbridge and Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Education. ECAT (Esher College Africa Trust) has been given new support with the creation of 3 new ECAT Ambassadors and the Summer Fair will raise funds for the charity. The Student Union

representatives for Marketing and Communications and Equality and Welfare have also been active and making an impact.

The Principal thanked the Student Trustees for their participation in the Open Evening and Introduction days and the excellent start they have made in their roles leading the Student Union.

#### 7.2 Finance Reports and approval of budget 2023/24

The Director of Finance and Estates introduced the Management Accounts and Reports for April and May and noted the Accounts had been considered and approved by the Finance and Estates Committee. The Director highlighted that the EBITDA (Earnings before Interest, Tax and Depreciation and Amortisation) was on target against budget and the cash balance was healthy.

The Board approved the April and May 2023 Management Accounts and Reports.

The Director of Finance and Estates then turned to the Budget for 2023/24 and noted this had also been considered by the Finance and Estates Committee and was recommended to the Board for ratification. The Director outlined the assumptions underlying the 2023/24 budget and medium-term projections. The EBITDA is set to reduce considerably unless a funded pay increase is offered by the Government. The Board discussed the challenging economic climate and the possibility of a change of Government having an impact on funding.

The Board approved the Budget for 2023/24.

#### 7.3 Health and Safety Report

The Director of Finance and Estates briefed the Board on the Annual Health and Safety Report noting that the annual Fire Risk Assessment had been carried out by a new company who downgraded the risk to Moderate. The recommendations from the company have been actioned and a survey of fire doors has taken place and resulted in a list of improvements to the estate.

A Member asked what the cause of the downgrade from Tolerable to Moderate was and the Director replied that it was due to the new company being more thorough. A guest suggested a proactive approach she has used in a manufacturing setting to identify and eliminate risk.

#### 7.4 Review of Quality Improvement Plan

The Deputy Principal focused on 7 Points in the plan:

- a) Target 2 – The Deputy Principal is pleased that following a successful pilot the Department Development Cycles system of teacher observations will be launched in September. The new process has been well received by staff who feel it will give them more scope to focus on teaching and learning.
- b) Target 3 -The Deputy Principal confirmed there are 4 Ukrainian students at the College.
- c) Target 6 – The Deputy Principal is keen to deliver Quality First Teaching (QFT) at the College. This teaching strategy ensures that the explicit instruction style of teaching is benefitted by all students and not just those who have access arrangements for exams or an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). A Staff Trustee explained how the strategy will be implemented in the initial stages and that it is a long-term aim in the QIP. The Principal added that 25% of the students enrolled at the College have access arrangements. (Access arrangements include extra time, scribe, rest breaks and the option of sitting in a small room during examinations).

A Trustee asked how many EHCP students are enrolled and the Principal replied that its 29 across two year groups.

A Trustee asked if the number of students with an EHCP is increasing, and a Trustee replied the increase is due to the stigma of having a learning difficulty being reduced. A discussion followed focusing on the increased number of students experiencing anxiety and what the College can do to help students cope.

d) Target 8 – The Deputy Principal noted that 4 Teaching and Learning Leads have been recruited.

e) Target 15 – The Deputy Principal noted the target to develop a long-term Alumni strategy is being carried over to next year. The College has benefitted from using the Alumni network to recruit teachers this year and this strategy is being developed.

The Chair asked a guest what her experience of the alumni network had been and she replied it's been positive and she is looking forward to contributing to the College as Trustee.

A Guest asked how the alumni network is managed and the Deputy Principal replied that it's via a LinkedIn page.

f) Target 17 – The Principal explained that this target has been achieved as the College is able to deliver 580GLH for all students in 23/24.

g) Target 20 – The Assistant Principal explained that this target is being carried over as the new Designated Safeguarding Lead is being trained as a Mental Health Lead.

A Trustee asked the Deputy Principal if the grading on the QIP could use the terms achieved, partly achieved, and not achieved and the Deputy Principal agreed.

**ACTION:** Deputy Principal to use grading of achieved, partly achieved, and not achieved on future QIP's.

The Board took note of the Quality Improvement Plan.

## **8. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Director of Finance and Estates introduced the Financial Regulations that have been updated to reflect the Academy Trust Handbook (ATH). The Scheme of Financial Delegation has been reviewed to increase the number of staff who are cheque signatories.

A Member asked if legal advice had been sought to review the document and the Director of Finance and Estates replied that the document had been aligned to the ATH in line with previous advice received on academisation.

A Member asked if the word "managed" in Point 4.4 could be reviewed and changed to "ensure" and the Director agreed.

A Trustee asked the Clerk if Point 2.4 concerning the appointment of staff trustees by Members was reflected in the Articles of Association. The Clerk replied that she will cross reference the Financial Regulations against the Articles of Association and the Procedure for Staff Trustee Elections.

**ACTION:** Director of Finance and Estates to edit the word "manage" in Point 4.4

**ACTION:** Clerk to cross reference the Financial Regulations against the Articles of Association.

The Board approved the Financial Regulations with consideration given to the Action Points in Item 8 of the Minutes.

## **9. RISK REGISTER UPDATE**

The Principal gave a brief overview of the Risk Register that was reviewed at the recent Audit Committee Meeting. The overview included Target 8 which highlights the increased risk of a cyber attack and the Principal noted that the role of Artificial Intelligence will be added to the next version of the Risk Register.

A Guest suggested an improvement to the risk register would be to note when the risk was raised, when was it updated and who is accountable.

**ACTION:** Principal to amend Risk Register to improve the accountability for each issue.

## **10. FEEDBACK FROM LINK TRUSTEES**

Careers Progression – The Link Trustee noted that with a change of counterpart on the College staff now would be a good time to hand the Link Trustee role over to a new Trustee.

## **11. REPORT BACK FROM THE COMMITTEES**

The Chair of the Audit Committee briefed the Board on the discussion held at the Committee Meeting regarding appetite for risk. He also briefed the Board on the Annual Audit Plan.

The Chair of Finance and Estates noted that much of the Committee's work had been considered earlier in the agenda.

The Chair of Quality and Standards highlighted the Committee's discussion on Student Retention and the external quality review.

The Chair of Strategy and Policy highlighted the Committee's approval of Complaints Policies.

## **12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Director of Finance and Estates briefed the Board that Surrey County Council has informed the College that it needs to find a new payroll provider in time for the November 2023 payroll run. The Director is working with other S7 Colleges in the same position to appoint a new provider and transfer the necessary data.

The Principal briefed the Board that the College Portal is due to be taken out of action and Microsoft Teams may be used for sharing Governance documents in the coming year.

The Chair thanked Declan Mason and Kate Parsons for their service in their roles as Staff Trustees.

The Chair expressed sympathy and sent Best Wishes to the family of Jackie Ferguson.

## **13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled for 6pm on 20th September 2023.

*The meeting closed at 8.00pm  
Attendance was 78%*

Signed.....

Date.....

**SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

<b>AT5-001</b>	Chair to ensure the Principal has an introduction at Nescot College.
<b>AT5-002</b>	Clerk to circulate a letter from Ofqual explaining the grade distribution for this summer (Done)
<b>AT5-003</b>	Deputy Clerk to circulate a list of upcoming calendar events that Trustees are invited to attend.
<b>AT5-004</b>	Deputy Principal to use grading of achieved, partly achieved and not achieved on future QIP's
<b>AT5-005</b>	Director of Finance and Estates to edit the word "manage" in Point 4.4
<b>AT5-006</b>	Clerk to cross reference the Financial Regulations against the Articles of Association.
<b>AT6-007</b>	Principal to amend the Risk Register to improve the accountability for each issue

**SUMMARY OF TRUSTEE CHALLENGE [C] / SUPPORT [S]**

<b>C/S</b>	<b>Minute</b>	<b>Topic</b>
C	7	A Member asked what the cause of the downgrade from Tolerable to Moderate was on the H&S report.
C	7	A Trustee asked the Deputy Principal if the grading on the QIP could use the terms achieved, partly achieved, and not achieved and the Deputy Principal agreed.
C	9	A Guest suggested an improvement to the risk register would be to note when the risk was raised, when was it updated and who is accountable.
S	12	The Chair thanked Declan Mason and Kate Parsons for their service in their roles at Staff Trustees.