



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

Wednesday, 10 July 2024 at 6.00pm

Present:

Tim Oliver (Chair)
 Dan Hards
 Natasha Meade
 Anna Mawson
 Emma O'Brien
 Daniela Rivas

Jane Duscherer
 John Thater
 Dave Roberts
 Mark Nelligan
 Stephanie Fudge

David Irving (Member), David Lavarack (Member)
 Sagar Patel, Deputy Principal, (Advising Officer)
 Kate Parsons, Assistant Principal for Student Services, (Advising Officer)
 Catherine Davies (Clerk)

1. PRESENTATION ON LEARNING SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

Kate Parsons, Assistant Principal for Student Services, briefed the Board on the work of the Learning Support Department, highlights included:

- The number of students with an EHCP (Educational Health and Social Care Plan) is 35 and the Department supports 18 different access arrangements. Around 25% of all students have at least one access arrangement and these include extra time, use of a computer, rest breaks and alternative rooming (not being seated in the Sports Hall). The Department also receives referrals from teachers for students to be screened and assessed for support.
- A summary of what an EHCP is (a legal document outlining the needs of the student) and the provision that the College is required to provide. It was noted the number of students enrolling with an EHCP is due to increase.
- Access Arrangements; how students are assessed and the levels of evidence needed to meet the exam board thresholds.
- The Learning Support team is based in the Study Centre that opened in 2022, students who have an access arrangement have 1 period of study in the Centre each week.
- Quality First Teaching is a strategy that has been implemented across the College to ensure teaching is inclusive. The new role of Learning Support Lead Teacher has supported this strategy.
- The College strives to be inclusive and accommodates the EHCP's of the students who meet the entry requirement criteria. The increased demand for alternative rooming is challenging to manage.

A Trustee asked for more information regarding recruiting Learning Mentors and the Assistant Principal gave an overview of the skill set required from candidates when applying for this role.

The Board discussed the difficulties of processing EHCP forms from a range of councils who each use a different format and the expectation that the volume of EHCP's will increase.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for her interesting and informative presentation.

2. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of business interests.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Paul Collyer, Claire Douglas, Alex Cronje, Sophie Cook and Liz Gilroy-Scott.

4. CONSTITUTION

4.1 Student Trustees

The Board noted the appointment of Alex Cronje and Daniela Rivas as Student Trustees.

4.2 Resignation of External Trustee and External Trustee vacancy

The Chair outlined the recruitment of more than 1 External Trustee from September to fill both the current vacancy and the retirement of a Trustee in December 2024.

4.3 Committee membership and Chairs 2024/25

The Board approved the Committee Memberships and Chairs for the Academic Year 2024/25

4.4 Schedule of meetings dates 2024/25

The Board approved the Meeting dates for 2024/25.

4.5 Code of Conduct 2024

The Board approved the Code of Conduct 2024

5. MINUTES OF THE ACADEMY TRUST MEETINGS OF 27th MARCH 2024

The Board approved the Minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting of 27th March 2024.

6. MATTERS ARISING

None

7. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal updated the Board with highlights from his written report:

Election 2024 – The new Minister for Education is due to update soon with proposals for the sector. The SCFA will continue to lobby the Government with priorities around funding, pause and review of AGQ and teacher recruitment/retention.

Level 3 Review – The College has taken the decision to no longer offer the IT BTEC extended certificate from September, this pause will give the new Director of Computer Science and IT time to identify a new course. The Department Insight Reviews into BTEC's has led to options to change courses, for example switching Applied Science for a single Science BTEC course.

Industrial Relations and Pay – There is a differentiation between the pay claim from the teaching unions and what the sector can afford. The School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) has delivered its recommendation for 24/25.

Staff Recruitment – Anna Mawson is taking on the Interim Assistant Principal role for the Autumn Term and a permanent role is being advertised later this summer. Declan Mason has

been appointed to cover the maternity leave of Kate Parsons, (Assistant Principal of Student Services) from November 2024 to August 2025. The new Director of HR is overseeing the re-organisation of the department and will oversee the developments of all College people related activity.

The new Network Manager has joined the College, and a Director of IT is due to start in August.

Student numbers – Attendance at the Taster Days and Parent Information evening was high, and the College aims to enrol 2050 students for the upcoming academic year. The Open Evening attracted up to 5,000 visitors.

The Principal thanked the Head of Marketing and her team for their hard work in ensuring the success of the events.

New Classroom Block The tender presentations for the build of the new classroom block took place today and the preferred builder will be notified.

The Chair asked for clarification regarding the costings of the project and a Trustee asked for more information regarding the fixed price aspect of the contract.

Action: Principal to update the Chair regarding fixed price contract.

7.1 Student Union Report

The Vice President of the Student Union gave an overview of the events that have taken place at the College since May, such as a bake sale to raise funds for a charity during Mental Health Week. The Summer Festival was successful despite the weather and the football match involving the local police was a highlight. The SU enjoyed attending the S7 Conference and shared ideas for fundraising and raising awareness.

7.2 Finance Reports and approval of Budget 2024/25

The Principal introduced an overview of the management accounts and reports for April and May and noted the Teacher Pension grant has been received, adult education will be cost neutral and there are variations regarding salaries but the full year variation is realistic. The Estates budget is slightly overspent but should come in on budget. Cash held is above budget due to the increased level of funding per student which was above the pay forecast.

The Board approved the April and May 2024 Management Accounts and Reports.

The Principal then turned to the Budget for 2024/25, the College should have Outstanding financial health for the next year and then drop to Good for the remainder of the forecast period. This is due to the assumptions that there will be no increase in funding and higher levels of pay and inflation. The Director of Finance and Estates has drawn up sensitivity calculations that highlight the income impact for increasing student numbers.

The Finance Department is well staffed with a payroll team in place.

The cost of the new classroom block looks to be within the estimated cost plus the 20% contingency.

A Trustee outlined the positive position that the College finances are in looking towards 26/27. The Board discussed the level of capital spend on IT and the new Director of IT will be asked to look at the IT replacement policy at the College.

The Board approved the Budget for 2024/25.

7.3 Health and Safety Report

The Principal gave a brief overview of the Health and Safety Report.

7.4 Review of Quality Improvement Plan

The Deputy Principal introduced the QIP and highlighted key points including:

- a) Target 3 – The Spring exam results showed there have been significant improvements in many subjects, but others remain a concern.
- b) Target 4 - Proposals for new BTEC subjects have been approved and the new courses will be offered from September 2025 onwards.
- c) Target 9 - An Attendance strategy will be presented to staff and Trustees in 24/25.
- d) Target 13 - The College's enrichment programme and progression pathways programme has been reviewed and the structure is to be adjusted for September 2024. The extended offering will encourage a curious culture amongst students.
- e) Target 16 – The Director of HR will write a People Strategy in conjunction with the Deputy Principal over the Summer to ensure the recruitment of high-quality teachers. Mathematics and Computer Science continue to be areas where it's difficult to recruit teachers.
- f) Target 18 – The best use of Teams across the College is continuing to be reviewed.

A Trustees asked the Deputy Principal how the College is planning to improve the usage of Teams in the Classroom and he outlined how subjects have moved from the Portal to Teams.

The Board took note of the Quality Improvement Plan.

8. MISSION STATEMENT AND COLLEGE VALUES

The Board approved the Mission Statement and College Values.

9. SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

The Board approved the Sustainability Strategy.

10. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER UPDATE

The Principal gave an overview of the Risk Register that was reviewed at the recent Audit Committee meeting. The overview included decreasing Targets 2 and 5 in 2025 and continuing to monitor the risk of a cyber attack (Target 9) and industrial action (Target 10). Target 12, the relative inexperience of the new SLT, will also be monitored.

The Board approved the Strategic Risk Register.

11. LINK TRUSTEE REPORTS

Safeguarding and EDI – The Link Trustee for Safeguarding and EDI outlined her recent meeting with the Director for Safeguarding and EDI.

Careers Progression – The Link Trustee for Careers Progression has met with the Head of Progression Guidance and the Enterprise Co-ordinator for Surrey Careers Hub. The number of opportunities for students to have a meeting with a careers advisor is being extended from September. A Higher and Degree Education Fair is taking place at the College in October and employers who offer apprenticeships are being sought to attend.

12. REPORT BACK FROM COMMITTEES

The Chair of the Audit Committee briefed the Board on the discussions held at the Committee Meeting including the Internal Audit Reports, a solution is still being sought regarding disaster recovery testing.

The Chair of Quality and Standards highlighted the Committee’s discussion on Student Retention and external quality review. The Board agreed that Student Retention will be integrated into the Student Services SAR.

The Chair noted that much of the Finance and Estates Committee’s work has been considered earlier in the Agenda. The cost of renovating the Caretaker’s Cottage into 2 flats is being sought by the Director of Finance and Estates.

The Chair of Strategy and Policy noted that the format of the Trustee’s QIP is under review.

The Chair thanked Trustee, Dave Roberts, for his help with the Mission Statement and College Values.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Principal congratulated Tim Oliver on receiving an OBE for services to Local Government in the King’s Birthday Honours.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 25th September 2024 at 6pm

*The meeting closed at 7.24pm
Attendance was 69%*

Signed and date

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

AT4-001	Principal to update the Chair regarding fixed price contract for the classroom block build.
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SUMMARY OF TRUSTEE CHALLENGE [C] / SUPPORT [S]

C/S	Minute	Topic
S	1	The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for her interesting and informative presentation on the Learning Support Department.
C	7	The Chair asked for clarification regarding the costings of the project and a Trustee asked for more information regarding the fixed price aspect of the contract.
S	12	The Chair thanked Trustee, Dave Roberts, for his help with the Mission Statement and College Values.