

FEDERAL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

ISLINGTON FUTURES – FEDERATION OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
Copenhagen School, Treaty Street, London N1 0WF
Wednesday 20 May 2020 at 6.30pm – 7.45pm

Clerk to the Governing Board: Hilary Furey (HF)

PRESENT:

1. Jill McLaughlin (JMc)	Chair of Full Governing Board
2. Jo Dibb (JD)	Executive Head of Federation
3. Caspar Woolley (CW)	Vice- Chair of Full Governing Board
4. Amardeep Panesar (AP)	Copenhagen Head of School
5. Alan Streeter (AS)	Beacon High School Headteacher
6. Will Garner (WG)	Co-opted Governor (Chair Vittoria and Copenhagen SCs)
7. David Harrison (DH)	Co-opted Governor (Chair F, R&R Cttee)
8. Pauline Edgar (PE)	Co-opted Governor (Chair Achievement Cttee)
9. Alex Bols (AB)	Co-opted Governor (Chair Beacon High SC)
10. Denise McCarney (DMc)	Vittoria Headteacher
11. Suezanne Awotwi (SA)(arr.7pm)	Co-opted Governor
12. Aanya Madhani (AM)	Co-opted Governor (Safeguarding Lead)
13. Serena Kern-Libera (SKL)	Co-opted Governor – Careers Lead
14. Mary Berrisford (MB)	Co-opted Governor (Chair EGA SC)
15. Florence Wilkinson (FW)	Co-opted Governor
16. Diane Stirling (DS)	Co-opted Staff Governor
17. Sarah Ward-Lilley (SWL)	Associate Member
18. Bisi Williams (BW)	Associate Member
19. Sarah Evans (SE)	Associate Member
20. Tim Archer (TA)	Associate Member
21. Martin Knight (MK)	Associate Member
22. Safia Ali (SAI)	Associate Member
23. Matthew Akinnayajo (MA)	Associate Member
24. Kat Lambrou (KL)	Associate Member

Also Present:

Tina Southall (TS)	Observer/Deputy Executive Headteacher
Karen Tumbridge (KT)	Senior School Business Manager

Item		Action
	Welcome	
1.	Virtual Meeting Protocol The Virtual Meeting Protocol had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was Approved.	
2.	Apologies and Consent Zaleera Wallace, Angelo Weekes and Becky Thompson. Resolved: To consent to the absence of all.	
3.	Declaration of Interest No declarations of interest were made.	
4.	Composition – Appointments and Resignations of Governors and Associate Members, Attendance and Training All resignations, intentions and nominations, as set out on the Agenda, to be notified to the Chair and Clerk at the earliest opportunity. Primary staff governor nominations will be invited, following Becky Thompson's resignation. The meeting schedule for 2020-21 was noted.	
5.	Minutes and Matters Arising – 3 March 2020 Governors agreed the minutes and Confidential minutes of 3 March 2020 and were signed by the Chair. Matters Arising	
6.	Committee Reports – Chairs' Committee The Chair updated all present on the recent Chairs' Committee meetings, including safeguarding and student engagement, and minutes and action notes can be found on GovernorHub.	
7.	Safeguarding Policy – updated for Covid 19 The London Borough of Islington's Safeguarding Policy amendment to meet the needs of the Covid 19 working arrangements was noted as having been approved and policies had been updated and implemented in all four Federation schools.	
8.	Executive Head report including Data Dashboard The Executive Headteacher's report had been circulated in advance of the meeting, and governors heard that much of it was now historical and staff were thanked for their work in supporting online learning. Students - it was noted that there had been mixed response and engagement to online learning with some students saying that they had had too much, and others not enough. Staff were responding where	

possible to ensure that work continues, and all were very conscious of the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students. With respect to students' achievements and grades, JD said that historical trends would be taken into account when looking at grades to be awarded, however Beacon High had been expecting to make gains and students who had worked hard would want to be awarded their expected grades. MB wanted to know whether students would be able to re-sit exams if they felt they had not achieved the deserved grade. JD said that students would have left the school but may be able to re-sit some exams in their post-16 destination settings. The Chair wanted to know if there was anything for Year 11 students to do now and was told by AS that students had been provided with programmes to support them now in preparation for their next steps, whether college or apprenticeships.

In response to a query JD said that exclusion data, usually included as confidential items but noted here as information was anonymised, had been reduced at Beacon High and this had been noted at the last Governing Board meeting. TS said that there had been a particularly difficult week at the end of February/early March at EGA when there had been a large lunchtime confrontation between Year 9 and Year 11 students and that this, and early matters, had centred on three particular students, and support was now in place to manage the situation. . The Chair said that it was important to remember what behaviour was like both before and after lockdown so that this could be borne in mind, and TS was vigilant on this matter. CW wanted to know what schools were doing for mental health week, currently underway. JD said that all schools were constantly aware of mental health issues for both staff and students.

Staff – the Data Dashboard showed that there were a significant number of staff who were unable to attend school. JD asked for her thanks to staff to be noted.

Community - on re-opening of schools, JD said that young people can't learn unless they feel safe and comfortable, and this was a big challenge with just a small number of students in schools. Schools were trying to create a sense of community, particularly at Copenhagen and Vittoria where the number of participants was greater than expected, and would continue with smaller tutor groups, however this would be a challenge when schools re-open.

Finance – governors heard that school budgets had been challenging and JD thanked all who had worked incredibly hard on very good budget management across the Federation. Governors heard that all budgets had been through the process of analysis and scrutiny by the Finance, Resources & Risk Committee. Overall, budgets were better than expected with savings made, however each school was setting an in-year deficit budget, with some reserves being used. Governors heard that 3-year budgets were more worrying as it was never certain what might happen in the future, such as changes to numbers of students, or staffing, With regard to funding, it was noted that there had been cuts in real terms and pay rises had been recommended, although there was no guarantee of funding for this so schools had been cautious in trying to look at worst case

	<p>scenarios. Schools had also looked at their own wish lists and had been able to include some, but not all, items. .</p> <p>DH thanked JD for her useful summary of the financial situation and asked governors to note that scrutiny had taken place at committee level. DH said that the F,R&R Committee had met in two separate parts, being sensitive to challenges in respect of virtual meetings, and that lots of time had been spent discussing each school's budget and the challenges each faced due to the current situation and also in respect of declining pupil numbers. The F,R&R Committee had considered whether budgets were sufficiently prudent or unreasonable, and whether schools needed to build in extra room for anticipated items, e.g. COVID-related school environment improvements, and DH was confident in commending the budgets for approval by the Governing Board. DH added that the Federation was delivering in a number of ways, as had been hoped, not only in operational savings but in shared resources and knowledge.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>2020-2021 Budget – for Approval</p> <p>Beacon High – JD told governors that the Beacon High budget deficit would be much lower going forward and that the school would be back in credit by the end of the 5-year deficit repayment period which the LA had agreed, rather than the usual 3-year period. Referring to staffing, JD said that the school still had some excess staff members in relation to pupil numbers but that this was necessary in order to be able to provide the curriculum. The Year 7 Base would continue for the new Year 7 pupils, and a specialist SEN Base would be set up as the first step in moving towards the new Beacon High model. Pupil numbers were healthier than the previous year and the school had more first choice pupils. The Chair said that it was helpful to receive the 5 years' deficit support. CW s noted that there appeared to be a dip in pupil numbers for another couple of years, but then rising. DH asked governors to formally approve the budget, noting the very tight financial management across all four schools. DH asked for the Governing Board's thanks to SLT across all Federation schools for very good performance in a challenging financial period and asked to be minuted, and the budget was Approved.</p> <p>Copenhagen – the carry forward was greater than anticipated due to more children in Nursery and the postponement of the planned playground works. The number of children staying on into Reception had greatly increased on previous years and the great work of the school was noted, however governors were told that there would be no impact on the current year's budget. JD said that lots of parents had put their faith in the school by sending their children there and that the appointment of a new Early Years leader would strengthen and consolidate this area of the school. In response to a question, JD said that the recruitment process for an Early Years leader was underway. The budget was Approved.</p> <p>EGA – the budget was better than expected due to savings in staffing and JD explained that the school had decided not to go ahead with the City Year mentoring project, instead restructuring had been carried out to move to a Year group system, not House groups, and with five Pastoral Leads instead of 4 Heads of House. The school had healthy financial reserves and</p>	

	<p>a significant IT refresh is planned for this year. This may be revised given the current need for home learning. The Chair reminded governors that Jo Dibb was Executive Headteacher and currently acting in the role of Headteacher of EGA. The budget was Approved.</p> <p>Vittoria – it was noted that this had been the trickiest budget to set as the school had a very small carry forward and, following discussions, an association between Vittoria and The Bridge School did not go ahead. To ensure in-year savings, the number of supply teachers had been kept low, unless needed to cover vacancies, and the school had considered whether to remove 2 year old provision, however, like Copenhagen, it was felt important to recruit pupils into the school. The budget was Approved.</p> <p>DH thanked Karen Tumbridge and School Business Managers, as well as Headteachers, for their work in these testing times.</p> <p>Resolved: that the Chair would visit EGA on Tuesday to sign all budgets prior to submission to the LA.</p>	JMc
<p>10.</p>	<p>Preparing for pupils on site - process, risk assessment, communications</p> <p>The Chair told governors that school Governing Boards held responsibility for the re-opening of schools following the lockdown period, and that if they did not open this would deny education to children, but they had to be confident that schools would be able to ensure a safe environment for all those returning, children and staff alike.</p> <p>JD and TS gave a presentation covering all key aspects for consideration in re-opening and this had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The main points highlighted were as follows:</p> <p>Slide 2 – schools may open from 1 June 2020.</p> <p>Slide 3 – provide an overview of the 4 different strands concerned: 1) Safety – school level Risk Assessments; 2) Communications – most important, lots of time spent talking to staff and parents at different layers; 3) Logistics – what schools will look like; and 4) Curriculum entitlement and provision.</p> <p>Slide 4 – Staff - TS outlined the terminology: Extremely Clinically Vulnerable – those who were shielding or had received a letter from the Dept. of Health; Clinically Vulnerable – anyone with an underlying health condition, or pregnant, and who would be supported and deployed to work from home, where possible.</p> <p>Slide 5 – Students – DfE and LA definition of Vulnerable students are those with a social worker or EHCP, however where schools had students with any external support prior to lockdown these were taken into consideration. Any student living with someone ECV or CV does not attend school.</p> <p>Slide 6 – Safety 1 – Risk Assessments had been carried out at all four schools.</p> <p>Slide 7 – Safety 2 – TS outlined the restrictions on those allowed on site, anybody showing symptoms of Covid 19, and the requirement for</p>	

individuals to be tested, and for pods to stay away from school in specific circumstances; provision of food and breaks to be staggered.

Slide 8 – Communication – in response to a question regarding TS said that staff had been surveyed about returning to work. JD had emailed all staff on a regular basis and had encouraged any questions, as well as having met the Union representative. Advice from HR is to be as flexible and supportive of staff as possible and to deal with each individual on a case by case basis, which has been done and TS will liaise with Mental Health in Schools to arrange staff support. JD said that all staff had been encouraged to talk and were not being pressured to come into school as the last thing she wanted was for anyone who was vulnerable to feel at risk. The Chair was cognizant of risk regarding age and other factors, and wanted to know about First Aiders on site. TS said that the number of First Aiders varied across the four schools, with EGA planning to hold more training and looking to train more and younger staff, and looking to extend certificates for five months where expired. Plans were in place for September.

TS

Slide 9 – Communications were regular with department/line management/SLT and Middle Leader meetings. Staff FAQs were being finalised and Students/Parents were being surveyed on transport needs. With respect to Year 10 students, JD said that they were being involved in questions and all students were in regular contact with their teachers and tutors, and all information was being sent out to both students and their parents.

Slide 10 – Logistics – all schools had carried out a thorough analysis of staff availability, training and were reviewing expectations and looking at how to monitor students' behaviour around increased anxiety. Schools were all in the planning stage of timetabling and scheduling.

Slide 11 – Curriculum – this was complicated and TS said that while EGA could accommodate all Year 10 students in school, she was aware that at least 50% would not come into school. Some school leavers had not been engaged in learning for 5 weeks and could fall behind. Entitlement was a huge issue and schools needed to find a model to allow as close an experience to concentrate resources. Similarly, at primary schools online learning needed to continue and the DfE had said that schools should not operate on a rota basis, however if all Year 1, Year 6 and Reception children returned schools would not have enough rooms or teachers to manage this. It was noted that there would need to be at least two days' training for staff and that, as yet, there was little clear guidance for secondaries. Primaries would open on 2 June to prepare Year 6 students for transition to secondary, with learning supported by EGA and Beacon High, with a reduced/recovery curriculum, however schools had been advised by Public Health and the LA not to get Year 7 students into school. Primaries were also concerned about Early Years learning and the emphasis on the impact of oracy on achievement. Beacon High has enough space for smaller groups of pupils and plans to have all students in school who wish to return with a recovery curriculum of Maths, English and Science, then optional subjects, and a scripted 1:1 conversation with each student.

	<p>CW wanted to know how schools and governors could align themselves behind a settled position on how to reassure staff, students and parents that what schools are doing and putting into place will ensure everyone's safety in a safe environment, with the overall goal of getting all to willingly return to schools and the school community. JD stressed the importance of framing the information correctly and succinctly, and she hoped that everyone would feel reassured once they could see that the schools can operate safely without a spike in new cases. The Chair said that she had met with Mark Taylor, Director of Schools at the LA, who said that the Council will stand with schools on their decision whether to re-open, subject to having carried out Risk Assessments, and recognising that each school is different. TA congratulated JD and all school staff on their phenomenal work.</p> <p>Resolved: that the Governing Board's decision to re-open schools, subject to Risk Assessments, would be delegated to the Executive Headteacher and the Chairs' Committee.</p>	JD/Chairs'
11.	<p>Confidential items There were no confidential items to report.</p>	

Next Federal Governing Board Meeting: Tuesday 15 September 2020 – 6.30pm – 8.30pm

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting	
Chair's signature	
Chair's name	
Date	