



never give up.

# Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020  
at 18.00

ACE Schools MAT  
Unit 3 Ensign House, Parkway Court,  
Longbridge Road, Marsh Mills,  
Plymouth PL6 8LR

## **TRUSTEES IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Andrew Dunkley – Trustee.  
Mr Gavin Gracie – Trustee and CEO.  
Mr Peter Cubbon – Trustee.  
Mr Peter McDonnell – Trustee.  
Dr Tim Searle – Trustee.

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs Andrea Chick – PA to the CEO/Clerk to the Trustees/Administrator ACE MAT.  
Mrs Anna Rumsby – Finance Manager.  
Ms Beccy Woods – Estate and Compliance Manager.  
Mrs Hannah Smart – Head of ACE Tiverton.  
Mrs Karen Felix – IT Manager.  
Mr Lee Earnshaw – Head of Courtlands.  
Mr Matt Bindon – Head of ACE Schools Plymouth.

## **APOLOGIES:**

Mrs Annette Benny – Chair of Trustees.  
Mr Denis Parsons – Trustee.  
Mrs Jo Warn – HR Manager.  
Mrs Ruth Westwood – Deputy Head Teacher ASP.  
Mr Dan Ayling – Deputy Head Teacher Tiverton.

Minute No.	Agenda Item	Action
1.	<p><b>WELCOME, SIGNING OF ATTENDANCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST REGISTER.</b></p> <p><b>PM</b> had agreed to Chair the meeting and welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p>	
2.	<p><b>APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS.</b></p> <p>i. Board of Trustees Meeting 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019.</p> <p>ii. Board of Trustees Extraordinary Meeting 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020.</p> <p>Item 2. Add the Members at the AGM on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019 had resolved to authorise the Trustees to co-opt Peter Cubbon if they considered him suitable.</p> <p>Item 4v.i Add also agreed a full and transparent process for the recruitment of a substantive Chief Executive will be run.</p> <p>It was <b>RESOLVED</b> that the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Trustees held on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019 and 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.</p>	
3.	<p><b>MATTERS ARISING.</b></p> <p>i. Item 4 iii Strategic Plan: Skills Audit. <b>GG</b> and <b>ALL</b>.</p> <p>All been completed and Sally is evaluating today with a report by the end of the week.</p> <p>ii. Item 4 iv CEO Position: Draft job description <b>AB</b> and <b>CEO Trustees</b>.</p> <p>a) <b>AB</b> will develop a job description for the turnaround role with <b>PM</b> and <b>PC</b> with a draft for approval by the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020.</p> <p>b) <b>AB</b> will produce a paper for Part 2 of the Board of Trustees meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 which sets out the rationale and the outcome.</p> <p>Taken in Part 2.</p>	
4.	<p><b>PRESENTATION OF THESIS – SAM MORAHAN.</b></p> <p><b>SM</b> introduced himself as a teacher of PE at Bretonside, completed his training at Marjons in Plymouth before starting at ACE as an NQT. He is now following a Doctorate in Education with his thesis around the work he has already done while at ACE using a system aiding children back into a mainstream school. The system is called Star Skills which allows teachers to make a judgement on whether the child is ready to progress. The stages are visual on a star shape with each point having 5 stages, with 5 being the upper where the students are expected to be able to go onto further education or into the workplace with the lowest stage where they are still on a 1:1. The student is initially assessed then given 3 targets. Tracking is done on SIMS and the teachers enter their judgements for each student. This also produces data which allows deep diving to give the school priorities. Currently, the whole school initiative is around managing emotions. Sam is going to propose this as a thesis to Plymouth University around situated learning theories and development priorities which are research informed practice (ongoing doctoral studies), refining the Star Skills assessment systems and training for staff related to Star Skills. He thinks this will benefit the staff and students as it's evidence based practice.</p> <p><b>PM</b> asked what research he had done to validate each point on the star, bearing in mind different age groups. <b>SM</b> used some entry forms and identified key things around the 10 top key words. ACE was part of the Pixel group and he had conversations with various leaders and AP schools, looked at the descriptors they were using, current research and blended the</p>	

	<p>two. Descriptors use the same common language eg rarely, frequently, all the way up to consistently and up to stage 5 where it can be seen how behaviour affects other people. <b>GG</b> asked <b>SM</b> if site specific drivers can be identified or teacher requirements and is the system being utilised. <b>SM</b> confirmed it was and he will prioritise and inform the leaders who will let him know how they want to proceed eg pastoral support.</p> <p><b>GG</b> asked if substantial movement is being seen from each intervention. <b>SM</b> is hoping at tracking point 2 an improvement will be seen, whether it has worked or not worked and what needs to be done differently next time.</p> <p><b>GG</b> asked how the overlap between whole life teach model and trauma informed sit with each other. <b>SM</b> has discussed this with <b>MB</b> and understand there is going to be whole school training for this; these will evolve over the year but he is hoping that the two will overlap.</p> <p><b>LE</b> stated it was introduced as a concept to Courtlands in 2018 but for long stay cohorts who are significantly more complex, it doesn't work as it's too simplistic. He looked at the research around trauma informed practice and started building a bespoke curriculum around the key parts of learning which is a level that would sit underneath this. Courtlands tend to look at what is going on for that child and then identifying steps for learning for that child. <b>LE</b> has just introduced an online package called Emotional which assesses the children against psychological markers which you score around traumatic backgrounds. The children with high scores around specific areas can be identified and he is able to see the impact of the interventions; this Friday is the time for the data snapshots. <b>GG</b> would like to see the impact of the interventions from both sides.</p> <p><b>PC</b> asked how the parents are involved and did <b>SM</b> have any feedback from them re their child's behaviour at home. <b>SM</b> advised ACE are always looking for a parent voice, sometimes it works both ways where the child is good at home but not at school and vice versa. ACE has learning mentors who work closely with the groups who take the collective picture but it does tend to be more what we see in school.</p> <p><b>TS</b> asked if there was anything similar already out there. <b>SM</b> advised the emotional competencies criteria is the closest with a scale of approximately 60 points which would give a huge workload for staff, other schools are using a scaled down version. He wanted to do something which took the staff workload into consideration. <b>TS</b> suggested the challenge is to work out what is practical on the ground, with the tensions of the academic world where a deep dive needs to be taken. <b>TS</b> would be interested to see where it goes as it is a great project. <b>SM</b> stated it was good in some ways but there are still other avenues to explore.</p> <p>The Trustees thanked him and <b>GG</b> thanked him for a tool that is understandable to a layman which then becomes a proper tool.</p>	
5.	<p><b>CHAIR'S REPORTS.</b></p> <p>i. <u>Finance and Audit Committee 29th January 2020.</u></p> <p><b>AD</b> reported he still had some concern as there is a deficit position especially around ASP, recruitment and long and short term employees. <b>GG</b> explained the difficulty with ASP is staffing levels move frequently and he has made a proposal in his report around recruitment. <b>AD</b> thinks it's important discussions and decisions are made with PCC and the decommissioning of places as this is affecting costings so the Trust must make sure the budgets are balanced and the children get the money spent on them. <b>MB</b> advised the key point is where staff are transferred from temporary to full time. ASP have not been astute on putting the person on to a permanent contract after 3-4 weeks if they are the right fit for the team and the child, so this is a piece of learning.</p> <p><b>AD</b> spoke of another piece of learning at Bretonside around safety, following procedures and not allowing the behaviour to become a culture. <b>GG</b> reported this will be revisited by <b>GG</b> and <b>BW</b>.</p>	

	<p>ii. <u>Education and Safeguarding Committee 30th January 2020.</u></p> <p><b>PM</b> still has concerns re the parking at North Hill especially the £30K cost on staff parking. <b>GG</b> thought it worth writing a letter from <b>GG</b> and <b>AB</b> to the CEO of PCC which was <b>AGREED</b>.</p> <p><b>ACTION: GG and AB to write to the CEO of PCC regarding the parking issue for staff at North Hill.</b></p> <p><b>HS</b> advised DCC give priority to school staff. <b>BW</b> stated PCC say North Hill staff are not essential workers so she would like to go back and challenge. <b>PC</b> agreed as it is PCC who are putting these children into learning. <b>MB</b> reiterated he was told at the beginning business parking permits would be allowed and then told this was not the case. He has a very preliminary plan on moving some staff out of the building as there are other issues which are being looked into.</p> <p>Courtlands have 6 pregnancies which will involve maternity leave so staffing will have to be taken into consideration.</p> <p>The School Development Plan and Ofsted reports were all discussed and the committee were assured that processes and mechanisms are in place. <b>PC</b> asked for any incidents to come through to Trustees so they can work with this and watch the trends. <b>MB</b> is writing his report for the Clusters which will come to the E&amp;S committee.</p> <p>Online Safeguarding training completed by <b>PC</b> and <b>PM</b>.</p> <p><b>PC</b> asked who would be carrying out the Head Teachers appraisals now Paul Winterton has left as an Executive. <b>LE</b> advised there are statutory procedures to follow so nothing needs to be changed as this is in the Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> This to be discussed at the E&amp;S committee in the future.</p>	<p><b>GG/AB</b></p> <p><b>PM</b></p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>OPERATING PRESENTATIONS.</b></p> <p>i. <u>CEO.</u></p> <p>a) <b>GG's</b> paper had been circulated previous to the meeting. Following on from last year's audit the TRA and the School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) are visiting to check ACE are using resources as efficiently as possible. <b>GG</b> would like to look forward rather than where ACE has come from so he has sent various papers to them eg the presentation to the RSA and various work streams; he will be having another conversation with the SRMA before she visits. <b>HS</b> reported on an article that was published this week around SRMA's being extremely useful.</p> <p>b) RSC Meeting 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020, Bristol.</p> <p>The Trust asked the RSC for separate URNs for each of the Cornwall bases. This will not make a great deal of difference to the managers or staffing but will make a difference to advertising the provision within local communities as their school. <b>MB</b> explained the complication arises where two URNs will be set up in buildings with limited life eg St Austell. There is a risk with this but with the current single URNs it is possible to take children from other bases and locality base them as a URN isn't flagged to an address. A permanent property hasn't been found in 12 months of searching so if the school where the bases are closed there could be problems. <b>AR</b> asked if the URN has any sway in placing children within the MAT. <b>MB</b> advised the Trust made it clear to the RSC on the benefits in governance and Ofsted with hundreds of nuances.</p>	

**GG** suggested having further discussions with the RSC and if the Board is happy to put in a proposal to the RSC for either 1 or 3 separate URNs.

It was **RESOLVED** that **GG** and **MB** continue their discussions with the RSC and report back to the Board with progress made.

- c) **GG** asked the Board if they wished to hold their position re the situation of decommissioning of pupil places by PCC. There are no mechanisms to channel students away from us but at the moment there would be 250-300 children with no educational places in PCC and the same in Devon and Cornwall. The commercial risk is fairly low with demand for places strong. The clear driver from the RSC, LAs and other academies is to expand the outreach project. **PC** asked what the value is for current contracts where the LAs haven't paid. **GG** advised £60-80K which is not the same gap as last year, however year end is coming up with some natural wastage so it's a fine balancing act.

**TS** asked if the Trust is any the wiser on the situation with PCC at the moment. **LE** informed he sits on some of the Boards where this is being discussed and PCC are not playing games. They are held to their governance through Schools Forum who have to be presented with different papers, various models that are being tweaked and then have to go back to another meeting. **GG** thinks the problem is higher around the track record as for 10 years it's been stasis; the first thing they want to know is what the governance is going to look like, and how it will be imported rather than what is going to happen. Tony Bloxham (**TB**) was hired by the RSC to look at the Plymouth-wide problem. He is now working on mobility as Plymouth has the highest in the country. He has identified PCC as a large part of the problem and not the solution because of the stasis with ACE in the crossfire. Both sides are being totally transparent and **TB's** interface is with the CEO and the cabinet member for SEN of PCC. **AR** advised GAG statements are due out at the end of March. **MB** stated PCC have decreased their initial decommissioning numbers by 10 so the RSC and EFSA will have to be contacted to let them know. **GG** advised the Trust needs to hold their nerve. **AD** wants to be fair to the staff and if PCC aren't going to make a decision then the Board needs to let them know. **MB** informed the year would end with 300 pupils but the way alternative provisions works there is always a natural loss so he is looking to protect permanent staff.

- d) **TS** would like to have policies summarised into a one minute guide. **BW** agreed as she asks all staff to read the Health and Safety policy which is 30+ pages **GG** also agreed but resources need to be found to do this.

It was **RESOLVED** to continue the dialogue with PCC which can't go on indefinitely.

ii. School Reports.

There were no school reports. **LE** explained reports require new data to make the report valid and as the timing of meetings is out of sync with the mid-year data drop there is nothing new from the previous report. Data drops are three times a year maximum so **LE** suggested add to the agenda when there is something that needs reporting. **HS** recalled discussions being had around the way the Heads report back to the Cluster, E&S and then the Board. **GG** advised this will be discussed at the Away Day. **HS** stated currently different reports go to the Clusters than to the Board and she would rather write one document which is multicultural; also some efficiencies can be made with the schools working together.

**PM** has completed online training modules, one on governance which explains reports and reporting.

It was **RESOLVED** to note.

	<p>iii. <u>Service Reports:</u></p> <p>a) HR – <b>JW</b> had given her apologies and a report had been previously circulated.</p> <p>b) IT - <b>KF</b> reported on site connectivity including slow access at Tiverton and peak time capacity at Bretonside, the ongoing issues with Sophos web filtering which Taurus engineers are working on, the new service desk which is in operation. The security report completed by Taurus who have echoed Francis Clark’s audit report which is the overall network and email systems are secure. All network and server critical and high issues will be resolved by the end of next week as some of them involve downtime and testing. Exeter are now complete with their update. <b>KF</b>’s team have been working closely with DELT on ensuring the Office 365 suite is secure for sharing sensitive data via TEAMS and SharePoint. DELT are providing some training for her team this week and then need to work on the methodology for the Trust to use TEAMS and SharePoint going forward.</p> <p>c) Facilities and Compliance – <b>BW</b> updated on the strength of staff in her team. Interviews for the Maintenance Operative for Courtlands will be held shortly and she has joined forces with ASP to employ 2 administrators for Camborne and St Austell. <b>GG</b> reported on previous friction when staff were doing tasks they shouldn’t have been doing so other staff are being employed which has helped a great deal. A new auditing system for Courtlands is being put together with the help of the competent person Andrew Young from Plymouth Learning Partnership (PLP) with support from them for <b>BW</b> to complete audits for ASP and Tiverton. The Bicton site is not going ahead. <b>TS</b> asked how urgent the situation was and <b>GG</b> responded it was very urgent as 20 children are affected. The current base lease is near the end and the landlord is looking for another 6 year renewal which means a temporary renewal must be negotiated.</p> <p>d) Finance – <b>AR</b> the data she was giving was in addition to the reports sent out to the Finance and Audit committee on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020. She would like to develop KPIs for cash flow against cash, project performance against the critical path and move towards better internal controls with the budgeting process to be able to pinpoint critical places and report to Trustees. <b>GG</b> informed there were critical projects in Finance at the moment with poor previous ledgers which need stabilising plus a permanent full time member of staff having a serious medical event. A new purchasing system needs to be in place and working before the end of the academic year in readiness for next year’s audit. By the end of March, beginning of April budgets will be complete so reports can be submitted to the Treasury and EFSA. <b>TS</b> asked if a contingency plan was in place. <b>GG</b> advised there was as a temporary person will be recruited with a need to differentiate between clerical and higher level staff. <b>LE</b> stated the <b>AR</b> is doing an amazing job.</p> <p>e) <b>PM</b> would like written reports in advance of the meeting so he can mull over the reports beforehand. <b>BW</b> agreed and explained it is time allowance and what to present to the meeting. <b>PM</b> suggested reporting on what needs to have a decision made on. <b>AD</b> would like a two page only report with appendices.</p> <p>It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to note.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Factor into the next SLG meeting to discuss.</p>	<b>ALL</b>
7.	<p><b>GOVERNANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT.</b></p> <p>i. <u>ACE Schools MAT Risk Register:</u></p> <p>Risk Register training will start on Friday this week and will be rolled out next term.</p>	

	<p>ii. <u>ACE Schools MAT Scheme of Delegation:</u></p> <p>The Scheme of Delegation is in the process of being reviewed and will be taken to the next Board meeting.</p>	
8.	<p><b>GOVERNOR SCHOOLS VISITS.</b></p> <p><b>MB</b> had produced a governor school visit form which is a draft at the moment and will evolve as it is used. <b>GG</b> would like visits to be targeted with specific topics looked at eg safeguarding, H&amp;S and buildings for an opinion to be formalised. All visits must be co-ordinated so all topics are covered. <b>TS</b> asked the form to be kept brief so it will be doable and sustainable. He understands the targeted part doesn't wish to dehumanise everything with a need to balance the human element. <b>PM</b> recommended the form is used as a prop but at the visit it may be the Head teacher wants to talk to the governor. <b>AD</b> thinks it's a good idea but he would go off piste and follow his intuition. <b>GG</b> reminded it's important to record feedback from the students and the staff. <b>AD</b> would still like an off the record chat if the staff member would like one. <b>MB</b> would want to know the governor's understanding on what is happening within the school not for the governor just to visit to check up.</p>	
9.	<p><b>LOOK AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) REPORT 2019.</b></p> <p>The report was circulated for information only. <b>PM</b> thought a tremendous amount of detail had been put in the report but he has a recollection from previous years of details around pupil premium and how it's spent. <b>LE</b> advised pupil premium data is an annual report on how the funding was spent the previous year and a planned spend for the next year which is produced in September plus it's on the website. <b>GG</b> stated it was a good how the LACs tend to outperform the general cohort on most of the matrix and the MAT doesn't make enough of this. <b>MB</b> explained because there are such a high number of LAC at ASP most of the pupil premium is spent on 1:1 staff which makes a real difference. <b>HS</b> reported Tiverton school doesn't have any LAC.</p>	
10.	<p><b>PART 2.</b></p> <p><b>GG</b> left the meeting.</p>	
11.	<p><b>ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS.</b></p> <p>None.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 20.10.</p>	

Signed:

Date:

Chair

Dates of Future Meetings:

Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	18.00 – 20.00
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2020	18.00 – 20.00
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2020	18.00 – 20.00

**Board of Trustees:**

Annette Benny	Chair of Trustees.	Gavin Gracie	Trustee/CEO
Andy Dunkley	Trustee.	Peter Cubbon	Trustee.
Denis Parsons	Trustee.	Peter McDonnell	Trustee.
Tim Searle	Trustee.		

## ACTIONS ACE SCHOOLS MAT BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING 12<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2020

Minute Number	Action	Who	Date to be completed by
5.	ii Education and Safeguarding Chair's Report: <b>Action: GG and AB</b> to write to the CEO of PCC regarding the parking issue for staff at North Hill.	<b>GG/AB</b>	As soon as possible.
6.	Operating Presentations: i. CEO RSC Meeting 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2020, Bristol: <b>GG and MB</b> continue their discussions with the RSC and report back to the Board with progress made. iii. Service Reports: f. Written report timing and content: <b>To be discussed by the SLG.</b>	<b>GG/MB</b>  <b>SLG</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> March 2020  Ongoing.