



never give up.

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 20th May 2020
at 18.00

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

TRUSTEES IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs Annette Benny – Chair of Trustees.
Mr Denis Parsons – Vice-chair of Trustees.
Mr Peter Cubbon – Trustee.
Mr Peter McDonnell – Trustee.
Dr Tim Searle – Trustee.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Gavin Gracie – CEO.
Mr Tim Thexton – Observer and Trustee in waiting.
Mrs Hannah Smart – Head of ACE Tiverton.
Mr Lee Earnshaw – Head of Courtlands.
Mr Matt Bindon – Head of ACE Schools Plymouth.
Mrs Andrea Chick – PA to the CEO/Clerk to the Trustees/Administrator ACE MAT.

Minute No.	Agenda Item	Action
1.	<p>WELCOME, SIGNING OF ATTENDANCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST REGISTER.</p> <p>AB welcome everyone to the meeting. The video call was evidence of meeting attendance, no declarations of interest.</p> <p>Mr Tim Thexton attended the meeting as an observer while he waits for his DBS check to be completed.</p>	
2.	<p>TO NOTE APOLOGIES.</p> <p>Mr Denis Parsons would be arriving late.</p>	
3.	<p>APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25TH MARCH 2020 AND 16TH APRIL 2020.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The minutes of the meetings of the Board of Trustees held on the 25th March 2020 and 16th April 2020 were confirmed and signed as a correct record. 	
4.	<p>i. <u>Matters Arising from the meeting of the 25th March 2020.</u></p> <p>4. Matters Arising:</p> <p>i. Education and Safeguarding Chair's Report: Parking at North Hill.</p> <p>ACTION: AB and GG to follow up in August 2020. Carry forward.</p> <p>5. Flash Training:</p> <p>Carry forward to next meeting to identify progress and priorities for training.</p> <p>6. Head teachers' Update:</p> <p>ACTION: HEADS to work with GG to start the short, medium and long term (September) planning and report back to Board meetings.</p> <p>All planning is in progress, end of year forecast virtually completed with short term budget reviews starting next week with completion 2nd or 3rd week in June. Next F&A committee is in July but GG would like to complete as soon as possible</p> <p>ACTION: Trustees to discuss with GG support and help for the staff. Carry forward.</p> <p>ACTION: GG to discuss with Trustees and Members what will the wash up plan be. Carry forward</p> <p>8. Chief Executive's Report:</p> <p>ii. Medical retirement of the HR Manager.</p> <p>ACTION: AB and GG to discuss further.</p> <p>An approved final date of employment is 31st May 2020. AB and GG will arrange a gift and card.</p>	<p>AB/GG</p> <p>GG</p> <p>Trustees</p> <p>Trustees Members GG</p> <p>AB/GG</p> <p>Trustees</p>

	<p>PCC are cutting funding places which will deplete the budget; however this is being reviewed by PCC around concerns on the circulation of pupils within schools. The MAT are looking at various solutions and are trying to avoid staff redundancies. This is included on the Risk Register. PC asked if any external pressures could be placed on PCC. MB informed a national project is ongoing around national funding levels.</p> <p>The contracts register/supply list is part of the purchasing project which is being monitored by the F&A committee and is ongoing.</p> <p>The new Risk Register which is populated via the F&A committee is near completion and will be a continuum document at each Board meeting showing changes from the previous meeting.</p> <p>It was AGREED to have the Risk Register on every Board meeting agenda.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Focus on Governance and recording of meetings. ii. Produce a framework for key points each academic year. iii. Minutes to be read and feedback given as soon as possible. iv. Link each item back to the key objectives of the Trust and legislation. v. Trustees to be aware of their duties and responsibilities. vi. Papers authored to be referenced to the Financial Handbook and other documents. vii. Study the detail in the Governance Handbook which gives a clear focus for the Board and sub-committees. viii. Complete a half yearly check list and document resolutions completed. ix. Trustees complete a self-assessment of what has been achieved as a group and individually at year end. x. Have a formal end of year scrutiny report and be clear what will be reviewed over the next few months. <p>ACTION: ALL to re-familiarise themselves with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academies Financial Handbooks 2019. • Governance Handbook (updated March 20219). • Governance Competency Framework. • Governance Clerking Competency Framework. 	ALL
6.	<p>CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT.</p> <p>GG has been in discussions with the RSC and ESFA who are seeking reassurance on a number of points. AB asked if there were any particular areas which need to be concentrated on. GG and the working party are addressing all areas piece by piece and substantial progress is being made but the Trust still remains under scrutiny. 5 days funding to assist with the project has been approved by the regulators and the previous SMRA has been appointed to assist. TS had concerns about the regulators but understands the Trust is under scrutiny especially as the outsourcing of central services is a novelty for them. GG explained normally the concept of a MAT is to provide the benefit of scale to obtain a better level of service but the cost is very high even though costs have already been greatly reduced but still resulting in poor service levels. The question the regulators are asking is if costs are already driven down and the service level still poor, why don't the Trust re-broker the schools.</p> <p>The MAT has demonstrated to be in control, following the least cost option for a workable platform which is making them excited about the outsourcing proposal. PC understands there is an element of pace as well as making sure the MAT doesn't slip back. Staff resources are low so Trustees can help by working the project through the F&A and E&S committees. Other experts have been brought in to lead and focus on certain areas.</p> <p>Applications have been submitted for de-amalgamation of ASP (Plymouth, Cornwall and Exeter) but will be a slow process. Both LAs are relieved as they see this as a commitment</p>	

	<p>to longevity and the areas. Cornwall Council will do everything they can to find appropriate accommodation.</p> <p>Project Blaze soft marketing is underway but is a little behind schedule due to Covid-19.</p> <p>GG, Heads and Business Managers are drafting SLAs for Central Service functions.</p> <p>Schools are closing for half term and plans for re-opening on the 8th June 2020 are well advanced. The MAT schools model rotas have been picked up and used by other schools in the area.</p> <p>GG has been sending a monthly report to the RSC and ESFA and will now send a weekly rather than monthly report to the Board and Members.</p> <p>The Board noted the report..</p> <p>PC left the meeting.</p>	
7.	<p>HEAD TEACHERS' REPORTS.</p> <p>ASP have delayed their phased re-opening until the 8th June due to the risk to staff confidence in returning too early. A full JCNC meeting was held with the unions on the 19th May with a further meeting between MB and staff reps on the 22nd. This wasn't sufficient time to consult with members and renegotiate rotas to ensure reassurances to staff. The JCNC reviewed risk assessments for building and staff safety.</p> <p>The Trustees asked for assurance the appropriate risk assessments are in place and how this assurance will be given. Trustees will oversee and challenge the assurances on the decisions made by the Executive team in an appropriate way.</p> <p>GG confirmed school operating reports and plans are being submitted to him to monitor but any decision made and process needs to be dynamic due to the speed of events and changing government guidance and decisions.</p> <p>PM had, via the E&S committee, received excellent safeguarding reports from all the Head teachers therefore has had assurance.</p> <p>TS asked GG to include this topic on his weekly update as this will give the Trustees the opportunity to work through the challenge and be satisfied.</p> <p>ACTION: GG to include risk assessments in his weekly update.</p> <p>HS reported successful recruitment to a full complement of staff ready for September. AB was happy with the schools' safeguarding and welling for all but had concerns for families who now had little or no income and would be eligible for free school meals. HS advised food boxes are being delivered and she is using the budget slightly differently but funding for free school meals will catch up in the end.</p> <p>DP left the meeting.</p> <p>Courtlands are having a slow staged increase in numbers and rotas are being prepared to move from a 3 week to a 2 week cycle as numbers increase.</p> <p>The first exclusion in 12 years at Courtland took place earlier in the year with a MAT Exclusion panel held on the 23rd April 2020. The exclusion decision was upheld by the panel which was challenged by the family. The matter is referred to an Independent Review Panel sitting on the 22nd May 2020.</p> <p>The Board noted the Heads reports</p>	GG

8.	<p>PROJECT BLAZE.</p> <p>GG detailed the IT and HR expenditure for carrying through the project until the beginning of September 2020. Delt have assisted with the IT project via staff working groups. This will give due diligence for the outsourcing project, IT assets and contract register. The first prototype will be completed within the next week to 10 days and will be issued to each working group member to test drive by the middle of June. Once testing is complete and agreed, the full-blown model can be developed. Full IP and ownership of the prototype with the timeframe enough to go with the preferred outsourcing option.</p> <p>The HR project is six months behind for various reasons. The approach is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at recruitment process. • Reviewing of policies and procedures. • Appraisal processes will be built into a dynamic framework within the whole organisation with middle management starting to have 1-1s with their staff encouraging staff to have a strong development path within their career and the MAT. This will ensure a much wider process through the year. The purpose is to encourage management at all levels to have a management overview with the people they are trying to manage. <p>The second part of the quote is to provide temporary cover the HR and Payroll Manager for the current time. The benefit of doing this has already pulled a great deal of expertise into the organisation rather than using an external body for these skills.</p> <p>AB asked GG to confirm if the quote was including VAT which he confirmed it did.</p> <p>AB queried the financial functions of signing of a single tender action and what was required. GG advised the process was being done in accordance with the Financial Handbook and because of the speed in which things need to be completed for the new academic year there is no time to work through three tenders.</p> <p>PM asked if there were any IP obligations with Delt. GG advised all IP elements are retained by the MAT and is written into the contract.</p> <p>TS asked for confirmation the software was a combination unique to the MAT. GG stated the project is designed to facilitate a single log on across all platforms, simplify access to data platforms used, and to move to the Cloud. There is nothing unique to the MAT other than the overall system design. The IT project is approximately 2-3 days ahead of schedule and going well and HR have covered more ground than expected. Delt have feedback how motivated and engaged the MAT staff have been.</p> <p>TS requested performance milestones to be constantly monitored along with interim contract reviews and performance tests. GG informed the software are starter packages which gets the MAT to certain stages, this then gives tools to implement internally and Delt will assist with the internal training. The initial financial request for Project Blaze was £50K to cover legal fees when the contract stage is reached.</p> <p>AB asked for assurance the funding is available to continue, GG confirmed it was.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Approve £30K including VAT for the IT project. ii. Approve £19K including VAT for the HR project. 	
14.	<p>PART 2.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Approve the Part 2 Minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting held on the 25th March 2020. 	

	<p>It was RESOLVED that the Part 2 minutes of the meetings of the Board of Trustees held on the 25th March 2020 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.</p> <p>ii. Remuneration and Nomination.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to accept the proposal of the CEO.</p> <p>iii. Objectives of CEO. These are still to be completed and will be circulated as soon as by week ending 5 June ???</p>	
15.	<p>ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS.</p> <p>An Extra-ordinary Board of Trustees meeting to be held during June regarding the business case.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 20.15.</p>	

Signed:

Date:

Chair

Dates of Future Meetings:

Wednesday 15th July 2020

18.00 – 20.00

ACTIONS ACE SCHOOLS MAT BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING 20TH MAY 2020

Minute Number	Action	Who	Date to be completed by
4.	<p><u>Matters Arising:</u></p> <p><u>Re-appointment of Trustees:</u></p> <p>ACTION: AC to send letters to the Trustees.</p> <p>i. <u>Education and Safeguarding Chair’s Report: Parking at North Hill.</u></p> <p>ACTION: AB and GG to follow up in August 2020.</p> <p>i. Matters Arising from the meeting of the 25th March 2020.</p> <p><u>Flash Training:</u></p> <p>Carry forward to next meeting to identify progress and priorities for training.</p> <p><u>Head teachers’ Update:</u></p> <p><i>ACTION: HEADS to work with GG to start the short, medium and long term (September) planning and report back to Board meetings.</i></p> <p>ACTION: Trustees to discuss with GG support and help for the staff. Carry forward.</p> <p>ACTION: GG to discuss with Trustees and Members what will the wash up plan be. Carry forward</p> <p><u>Chief Executive’s Report:</u></p> <p>ii. Medical retirement of the HR Manager. ACTION: AB and GG to discuss further.</p> <p>ACTION: All Trustees to send AB wording for a card by the 29th May.</p>	<p>AC</p> <p>AB/GG</p> <p>AB</p> <p>Trustees</p> <p>Members / Trustees/GG</p> <p>AB/GG</p>	<p>1st week in June.</p> <p>August 2020</p> <p>6th July 2020</p> <p>6th July 2020</p> <p>6th July 2020</p> <p>29th May 2020</p>

