



never give up.

Trustee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 20th September 2017
6pm-8pm

ACE Schools Plymouth, Bretonside

Trustees:

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Dr Tim Searle | Chair |
| Mr Peter McDonnell | Vice Chair |
| Mr Alastair Wright | Vice Chair Elect |
| Mrs Annette Benny | Trustee |
| Mrs Sarah Gillett | Trustee, CEO & Head Teacher of ACE Schools Plymouth |
| Mrs Joan Watkins | Trustee & Chair or Governors ACE Schools Plymouth |
| Mrs Sue Bickle | Trustee & Chair of Governors Courtlands |

In Attendance

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Mr Paul Turner | Director of Finance ACE MAT |
| Mr Chris Humphries | Director of School Performance ACE MAT |
| Mr Paul Winterton | Director of School Improvement ACE MAT |
| Mrs Cheryl Reuben | Clerk |

Signed: _____

Date: _____

1. **Chairman's introduction**
The Chair welcomed the Board. He reflected on the purpose of the Board and reminded those present of the service it works on behalf of and what it offers the young people it serves.
2. **Apologies**
None.
3. **Verbal declarations of interest**
Annette advised that she now works across the New Devon and South Devon & Torbay Clinical Board.
4. **Approve minutes of the previous meeting**
Approved
5. **Matters & Actions arising from previous meeting**
None.
6. **CEO Update**
The CEO update documents were circulated to the Board
 1. Promotional Video- the Board viewed the draft version of the promotional video from LGF. There are some edits to be made however, on the whole that Board agreed that they were impressed with the video.
 2. Inset day- SG covered the content of the inset day presentation which she gave on the first day of the new academic year. This was a whole Trust meeting with staff from all bases and schools within the Trust in attendance. The focus was on the achievements of the Trust in the last academic year and those which are being aimed for this year.
 3. Buildings had been signed for in Launceston and Exeter. A 4th service has been requested in Cornwall. SG advised that the services of Teaching Personnel had been exceptional. Communication is still ongoing with DFE over the Bournemouth Provision. A conference call is taking place with RSC tomorrow. Offers for Dorset/Somerset/Bath are also under consideration although conversations will need to take place with OFSTED over how the School can be inspected.
 4. Visit from DFE- The representative due to visit was off sick so this has been deferred.
 5. LA consultant interview on the Plymouth Specials Estate- The consultant will make recommendations to the LA for the Plymouth Special Schools Estate for the next 3/5/10 years, He indicated that the estate in Plymouth should amalgamate and there is to be an increase in Academies. The main barrier would be the Special Schools themselves. The report will be released in 5 weeks.
 6. A potential premises has been found for Trust Office/education facility. There are positives and negatives to the site proposed. PM will visit on behalf of the Trustees and feedback.
 7. SG gave an update on the case pending. She advised the Board that if they had any specific questions to make contact with her direct.
 8. Succession planning- SG congratulated the work of the current SLT following the restructure. She suggested the concept of placing Ruth Westwood as Acting Head with a view to potentially recruiting a Deputy with Mainstream experience. The Board were asked to give consideration to this proposal. The Board agreed to consider the thoughts of the ACE Schools Plymouth Local Governing Body. The Remuneration Committee are due to meet before the next Trust meeting under the Business Plan where the feedback collated would be deliberated and a plan of action agreed.

The PCC update was summarised. It was suggested that it could be beneficial for Jayne Gorton & Judith Harwood to attend one of the upcoming Trustee Meetings. The Board expressed their appreciation for the progress made.

7. **Review of Governance**
PW advised that there were some tweaks in the Financial/Governance handbooks. One of which is the encouragement for trusts to set up an Audit/Finance Committee. The Committee would review the financial reports/audits/Risk register and feed back to the full Board for their approval. It was suggested that the Committee met 6x per academic year and Full Board Meetings 6x per academic year.

The Board agreed to the appointment of a Finance & Audit Committee.

The MAT Executive Team would put together a work plan to be presented at the next Board meeting.

The working party to review governance will comprise of PW, PT, AW & AB. The aim will be for them to meet from December onwards however, this will be detailed in the work plan.

SG reminded the Board that the Pay Committee for ACE Schools Plymouth were due to meet in October.

PT clarified the amendments contained within the handbooks surrounding Governance and Clarity in respect of the finance meetings.

Action 1: Declarations of Interest to be updated.

8. **Update from the Director of Finance.**
PT summarised the financial reports for ACE School Plymouth.
The Board accepted the content of the reports.

Questions:

AB: Is there a contingency 'pot' for Courtlands?

PT: Yes, although it is very small following the decision to delay the implementation of the Business Plan at the end of last academic year. The income for Courtlands' is much more steady and predictable.

The Board accepted the content of the reports.

9. **Courtland's Business Plan**
Following the decision to defer the Business Plan to this meeting, some changes have occurred, namely the staff who have taken voluntary redundancy and the decision to retain the 3x MTAs until Spring 18.

SB/LE requested that the consultation for the redundancy of the 0.5 Teacher, took place when all potentially effected teaching personal were present.

PT clarified that the purpose of the Business Plan was to better address the small deficit budget submitted to the EFA for 2017/2018 and to be able to achieve a balanced budget in the year.

The Board accepted the Business plan, subject to PT's comments above.

10. **Internal Audit**
PT provided the Board with some context regarding the decision to undertake an internal audit and why Francis Clark were appointed to do this.

Questions:

JW: Why was an internal audit undertaken rather than a peer review?

PT: It is unlikely that we would be able to source a qualified peer who would undertake this level of work. If they did, there would still be a cost associated with this. The formal internal audit carries much more gravitas and will stand us in good stead for the annual audit.

The Board thanked the finance team for their continued efforts and praised the fact that the items highlighted to be addressed were very minimal.

11. **Risk Register**

PT summarised the Risk Register and suggested that if the Board had any other areas for the Trust to review, this should be submitted to PT for inclusion from January 2018.

Questions:

AB: How often is the Risk Register updated?

PT: The work detailed within the register is being carried out consistently however, the updating of the register itself is not that frequent. This will be addressed with the formation of the Finance & Audit Committee and will be a standing item.

12. **Pay Policies**

CH advised the Board that the previous policies, whilst written as MAT policies following ACE's conversion, were one so on the basis of an empty MAT. This Policy is the first which will combine aspects of the ACE Schools Plymouth and Courtland's Policies.

CH summarised the context of the proposed policies.

Questions:

AB: How will feedback to the proposed changes be received?

CH: If agreed by the Board, there will be a period of consultation.

The Board agreed for the drafted Teachers Pay Policy to be put to staff for consultation

The Board discussed the proposed options regarding the teachers' pay uplift.

Due to the fact that SG, CH & PW would be affected by the outcome of the Board's decision, they declared that they were only in a position to present the information and could give no comment or indication to influence the Board's decision.

CH & PW were not entitled to vote in their capacity as attendees.

SG was did not vote as this would be a conflict of interest.

TS sought advice from the PT as the Director of Finance. His recommendation was to consider option 3.

The remaining vote carrying Board Members (TS/AB/SB/PM/AW & JW) voted and agreed to proceed with Option 3 .

PT advised the Board that this would only effect those subject to Teacher's Pay & Condition. This will not affect NJC staff.

13. **LGB Reports**

The Board acknowledged receipt of the reports from the LGBs for ACE Schools Plymouth and Courtlands.

TS enquired as to whether the concern raised regarding the class sizes and staff/student ratios had now been resolved? SB advised that this was all in hand. Staff had started the academic year feeling rather dispirited but the Head Teacher was working through this with staff.

SB read the Board the content of a thank you card from a parent praising the work of the Courtlands staff.

14. **Elect Chair & Vice Chair.**

SG proposed the roles of Chair & Vice Chair remained with TS & PM respectively. This was seconded by AW, AB, SB & JW.

TS will serve as Chair for a further 12 months.
PM will serve as Vice Chair for a further 12 months.

15. AOB.
(Items should be generally lodged with the clerk at least **48 hours before the meeting**).

JW advised that following the amendment of the ACE Schools Plymouth LGB meetings taking place every other month, JW would only be travelling to Plymouth on the months where the LGB was also taking place. The Board agreed that provision would be made for JW to contribute to the meetings she could not physically attend by way of conference facility.

SB advised that Dene Terry (HLTA, Courtlands) had been proposed as a new LGB member.

The Board ratified this appointment.

16. Reserved Business

Pending Items:

| Item | Date Added (meeting date) | Review Date |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Terms of Office – length of service | | |
| Policy review | | |
| Trustees meeting dates | | |
| Trustee Work plan | | |

Dates of Future Meetings:

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Wednesday 18 th October 2017 | 18.00-20.00 |
| Wednesday 15 th November 2017 | 18.00-20.00 |
| Wednesday 13 th December 2017 | 18.00-20.00 (AGM) |
| Wednesday 17 th January 2018 | 18.00-20.00 |
| Wednesday 21 st February 2018 | 18.00-20.00 |
| Wednesday 21 st March 2018 | 18.00-20.00 |
| Wednesday 25 th April 2018 | 18.00-20.00 |
| Wednesday 23 rd May 2018 | 18.00-20.00 |
| Wednesday 20 th June 2018 | 18.00-20.00 |
| Wednesday 18 th July 2018 | 18.00-20.00 |

Board of Trustees:

| | | |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Dr Tim Searle | tim.searle@acemat.uk | Chair |
| Mr Peter McDonnell | peter.mcdonnell@acemat.uk | Vice Chair |
| Mr Alastair Wright | alastair.wright@acemat.uk | Vice Chair Elect |
| Mrs Annette Benny | annette.benny@acemat.uk | Trustee |
| Mrs Joan Watkins | joan.watkins@acemat.uk | Trustee & Chair of ACE Schools Plymouth LGB |
| Mrs Sue Bickle | sue.bickle@acemat.uk | Trustee & Chair of Courtlands LGB |
| Sarah Gillett | sarah.gillett@aceschools.net | CEO of ACE Schools Trust |