

EAST SUSSEX Schools' Forum

Minutes of a meeting of the Schools' Forum held remotely with Microsoft Teams on 20 September 2024

MEMBERS

Primary

Richard Blakeley (Parkside Primary)
Laura Cooper (St John's CE School)
Vicky Anderson (Catsfeld CEP School)

Primary Governors

Peter Hughes (South Malling Primary School)
Debra Vice Holt (Oak Tree Federation)

Secondary

Emily Winslade (Priory School)
Helen Key (Chailey School)

Secondary Governor

Monica Whitehead (Claverham Community College)

Special School

Paul Prest (Grove Park School)

Academies

James Freeston (King Offa Primary Academy)
Gavin Bailey (Swale Academy Trust)
Sam Cornelius (University Of Brighton Academies Trust)
Zoe James (MARK Education Trust)-Chair
Sally Hill (Aquinas Trust)

Special Academy

Kirsty Prawanna (Glyne Gap)

Pupil Referral Unit

Neil Miller (LSEAT)

Non School Members

Phil Clarke (Trade Union representative)
Joanna Sanchez (Diocese of Arundel and Brighton)
Jon Gilbert (Diocese of Chichester)
Hannah Caldwell (Post 16 East Sussex College Group)

ESCC representatives

Cllr Bob Standley (Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability)
Elizabeth Funge Assistant Director Education
Nathan Caine (H of Ed SEND & Safeguarding)
Honor Green (BSD Finance)
Edward Beale (Acting Finance Manager - Children's Services)
Sarah Rice (Finance Manager - Schools)
Kirsten Coe (Schools Funding Manager - Acting)
Sarah Allen (Clerk)

1 Welcome and Apologies(Note)

1.1 It was confirmed the meeting was quorate, recognising the apologies below

Laura Cooper
Vicky Anderson
Debra Vice Holt
Carolyn Fair
Kirsty Prawanna (Richard Preece attended as a substitute)
Joanna Sanchez (Paul Barber attended as a substitute)
Neil Miller (Guy Walsh attended as a substitute)

2 Agenda Item 2: Minutes Of Previous Meeting 12 July 2024 (Approval)

2.1 The minutes for the meeting held were approved as a true record and will be signed by the Chair.

3. Agenda Item 3: Matters Arising And Declaration Of Interests (Discussion)

3.1 Matters arising - No matters arising

4. Agenda Item 4: De-delegation (vote for approval)

4.1 Recommendations:

Recommendations were made for maintained school representatives to agree delegation for: contingency, behaviour support services, administration of free school meals, jury service and union business, and headteacher partnerships. The Support for ethnic minority pupils has been subject to a two-year agreement; this was voted on last year so was not brought to a vote in this meeting.

4.2 Comments:

There were comments provided from a headteacher last year who felt the meetings were not being arranged and not getting much from the contributions.

Details of the range of meetings that the partnership de-delegation funded were provided, these included the full range of headteacher meetings (which were well attended) as well as funding headteacher boards, EIP and Alliance Meetings as well as Early Years, subject and SENCO Hubs.

A query was also raised with regards to the behaviour support services in that some schools missed out on support last year as a result of recruitment difficulties. It was asked, if every primary school benefit from the TASS service fully this year.

In response it was clarified that the TASS team are now fully staffed with advisers and it is a priority that all primary schools will be provided with their services.

Members were requested to vote and approve the De-delegation.
Results as below:

De-delegation	Primary Phase		Secondary Phase	
	No. of 'Yes'	No. of 'No'	No. of 'Yes'	No. of 'No'
Contingency	5	0	2	0
Administration of FSM	5	0	2	0
Jury Service and Union Business	5	0	2	0
Behaviour Support Services	4	1	1	1
Head Teacher Partnership	5	0	2	0

For the Behaviour Support Services (Secondary Phase), the result was one "Yes" vote and one "No" vote meaning the decision reverts to the previous year's decision. The outcome being that the Secondary Phase did not agree to de-delegate Behaviour Support Services.

5. Agenda Item 5: HNB Response to demands 24/25

5.1 Recommendations:

This paper follows on from discussions that took place in the spring and summer of last academic year where the potential for an impact on schools' budget was raised, due to the overspend of high needs block. This is predominantly as a result of the large number of pupils in ES in special schools and the need to use high-cost placements in the Independent and Non-Maintained Special (INMS) sector as an overflow for state-run provision.

Work has continued over the summer with providers and partners to develop our work around ensuring a fair and affordable funding system.

The total pressure forecast pressure on the High Needs Block for 24/25 is £2.83m. East Sussex is in a minority of Local Authorities who have not experienced an overspend in the HNB and has already undertaken a lot of work to mitigate this. This means that an interblock transfer of funding from the Schools' Block to the HNB is very likely to be required. Should this be the case, proposals will be brought to the Schools' Forum meeting on 15 November.

In order to offset the potential impact on individual school budgets of an interblock transfer, the proposal is to retain the balance of the central school reserve and transfer this to the HNB to reduce the overspend. This reserve currently sits at £1.049m.

5.2 Comments:

A query was raised as to whether Schools' Forum has an underpinning reference which says how much we are allowed to move from the DSG to the High Needs Block.

It was highlighted that a maximum of 0.5% of the total school's block can be moved across to High needs Block. Further details of this will be set out in the November meeting.

Further details were requested on what are we doing to negotiate prices with the independent sector.

Every above inflation price rise is challenged and we make every effort to get INMS providers to sign contracts with us. However, this is not always possible and the legislation does not allow for us to enforce this. We are one of the 40 lowest funded local authorities in the country, and we continue to lobby national government to address the issue. Details of the comparative funding in of the HNB in East Sussex were det out in previous papers.

It was further confirmed that the projected overspend of £15.8 million in 25/26 is based on an increase in demand at the current rate and the same settlement for the HNB as this year.

Members were requested to vote and approve the HNB response to demands 24/25. Results as below:

	Number voting 'Yes'	Number voting 'No'	Number of Abstentions
HNB Response to demands 24/25	8	0	6

6. Agenda Item 6: Core schools budget Grant

6.1 This item provided information, to Forum members, on some new grant funding the DfE are providing for mainstream and Special Schools / academies.

The funding rates have been published and there is a calculator online where schools can see the estimate available for 24/25.

The estimated Maintained school funding ranges from £9,000, for smaller schools, to £160,000 for larger schools.

Comments:

No comments

7. Agenda Item 7: Oracle Implementation update

7.1 Oracle is the system that will replace the current system SAP, we have no choice about replacing SAP as it will be out of support in 2027. The presentation covered the benefits of the new system across HR and payroll services.

7.2 Training for the new system will be provided and a launch for engagement will be held in the autumn.

Comments:

What is the timeline for the implementation?

Implementation will be set out in phases, with the aim for phase to go out in April 2025

And then an estimate of 10-12 months to implement payroll.

ACTION - Please recommend any nominations of people or teams to meet with for engagement.

8. Agenda Item 8: Any Other Business

Meeting concluded at 09:33am

Next meeting - To be held Friday 15th November 2024

Helen Key will be absent for the next meeting in November and will arrange for cover or will send the vote prior to the meeting.

DRAFT