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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Education Board

Date: Wednesday, 24th June, 2020

Place: Virtual Meeting - MS Teams

Present: Maurice Sweeting (Chair) – Hinguar Primary School (Governor)
Dr Robin Bevan (Vice-Chair) - Southend Boys (Headteacher)
Julia Jones - Barons Court (Headteacher)
Jim Johnson - Edwards Hall Primary (Headteacher)
Stuart Reynolds - Southchurch High School (Headteacher)
Dr Paul Hayman - Westcliff High School for Girls (Headteacher)
Stephen Tollworthy - Shoeburyness High School (Governor)
Jane Ladner - Southend High School for Girls (Governor)
Jessica Russell - Chase High School (Governor)
Darren Woollard - Blenheim Primary School (Headteacher)
Lisa Clark - Hamstel Infant (Headteacher)
M Jordan -Pupil Referral Unit
Anthony McGarel - South Essex College
Julia Jones - Barons Court (headteacher)
Vicky Wright - Professional Association for Childcare & Early Years
Jackie Mullan - St Christophers (SEN Trust)
Lesley Yelland - Essex Pre-School Learning Alliance (Early Years)
Jerry Glazier – Trade Unions
Bev Williams – CEO MAT Group representative (non-voting)

In Attendance: Councillors A Jones
M Marks, B Martin, C Braun, E Hammans, G Bloom, P Grout and R Harris (Clerk).

Start/End Time: 8.15 - 10.45 am

1 Welcome and Apologies

There were no apologies for absence at this meeting.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 17th December 2019

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th December 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

3 Matters arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

Sub Group Meetings

The Board expressed concerns that there were no minutes or reports from the Board's Sub Groups, except for the Resources Sub Group. The Board was informed that meetings of the Sub Groups have now been arranged and will take place before the summer holidays.

Chair Resignation

Maurice Sweeting informed the Board that as his governor role was coming to an end at Hinguar Primary School he cannot continue in his role as a school governor member of the Board and this would be his last meeting.

The Board extended their significant thanks and appreciation to Maurice for his long service and hard work over the years, especially his instrumental role in establishing the Education Board.

4 Education Board Membership and Vacancies

The Clerk provided a brief update on the current position with the membership of the Board and current vacancies. There was still one vacancy in the maintained primary sector and work was taking place to fill this vacancy.

There is also a vacancy within the primary academy sector as a result of the Chair's departure. The relevant process to appoint to the vacancy will be undertaken.

Resolved:

That the current position regarding membership be noted.

5 Education response to Covid-19 (including implications)

The Board received a verbal update from the Director of Learning on the education response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The update covered:

- DFE working hard with scientists – looking at how can create 'bubbles' at class and subject level;
- Looking carefully at the May 2021 exams with a view to push back to July 2021 to allow for more teaching time with pupils;
- Next phase of support will be around planning for children and young people to return to school in September;

The Board discussed the implications and impact of COVID-19 and the challenges being faced by schools in the Borough. Schools are already planning their timetables for September and bringing children back to school under social distancing measures. There were also concerns about the health and wellbeing of children and school staff, particularly if there is a spike in the pandemic. However, the Board emphasised the importance to get children and young people back into school.

Resolved:

That a letter on behalf of the Board setting out the concerns of schools in the Borough regarding the impact of COVID-19.

6 Final Outturn for Dedicated Schools Grant 2019/20

The Board considered a report of the Senior Finance Business Partner providing an update on the the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) final outturn for the 2019/20 schools budget, high needs, early years and centrally retained.

Resolved:

1. That the final 2019/20 outturn, be noted.
2. That the subsequent DSG reserve balances shown for each funding block be carried forward into 2020/21 (as referenced in 4.17 of the report).

7 High Needs Block detailed budget allocation 2020/21

The Board considered a report from the Senior Finance Business Partner presenting the High Need's Block detailed budget allocations for 2020/21.

The Board commented on the High Needs Block funding commending the work undertaken to restore the DSG high needs funding position to a sustainable financial position.

Resolved:

1. That the flexible place fund allocation be continued. (As referenced in section 7.2 of the report).
2. That the high needs top funding rates awarded to special schools be uplifted by 4% from September 2020. (As referenced in section 7.3 of the report).
3. That the high needs top funding rates awarded to enhanced provisions within mainstream schools be uplifted by 4% from September 2020. (As referenced in section 7.4 of the report).
4. That the EHCP hourly top up funding rate passed over to support pupils within borough mainstream schools be uplifted by 4% from September 2020. (As referenced in section 8.2 of the report).
5. That the detailed High need budget allocations for 2020/21, be approved and adopted.

8 Report back from Sub Groups

The Board received for information the minutes of the Resources Sub Group held on 9th June 2020.

The Board discussed the year end balances held by multi academy trusts, in particular "Learning in Harmony" and "Partnership Learning", and the legal requirement to show individual balances for each school. The recommendation of the RSG was to write to the ESFA to seek clarification regarding the balances.

The Board also noted the deficit year end balances in relation to “Challenger Multi Academy Trust” and “Parallel Learning Trust”, and recommendation of the RSG to write to the ESFA to ensure that these trusts are being worked with and supported to ensure the continuity and quality of provision for our Southend children.

Resolved:

1. That the minutes of the RSG be noted.

2. That the ESFA are written to, to seek clarification with regard to the legal requirement to shown individual year end balances for “Learning in Harmony” and “Partnership Learning”, and to ensure that the trusts “Challenger Multi Academy Trust” and “Parallel Learning Trust” are being worked with and support to ensure continuity and quality of provision for our Southend children.

9 Any other business

There was no other business at the meeting.

10 Exclusion of the Public

In accordance with paragraphs 65 to 67 of the Education Board Constitution, the press and public, were excluded for the items of business set out below in line with relevant legislation on the grounds that the matters contain sensitive information.

11 Place Planning Update

The Board received a verbal update on place planning in the Borough.

The Board discussed the matter and asked a number of questions which were responded to by the officers.

Resolved:

That the update in terms of place planning be noted.

12 Provision of Alternative Provision - Update

The Board considered a report providing an update on the commissioning of alternative provision as financed through the High Needs Block.

The Board noted that the ISOS research work will feed into the commissioning of alternative provision.

Resolved:

That the recommendations set out in the submitted report be noted and agreed.

13 Early Years sustainability

The Board considered a report of the Head of Early Years proposing alternative ways of distributing Early Years DSG for Autumn term 2020 due to the impact of Covid-19.

The Board discussed the report and asked a number of questions which were responded to by officers.

Resolved:

That the recommendations set out in the submitted report be noted and agreed.

Chair: _____

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