

SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 15 January 2019 **at 1.00 pm at Whitmore High School**

Members Present: Sue Hammond – Headteacher, Whitmore High School (CHAIR)
Pam Virdee – Headteacher, Longfield School (VICE CHAIR)
Patrick O'Dwyer – Div. Director Education Services (Special Needs Services)
Paul Gamble – Headteacher, Harrow High School
Claudia Calogero – Governor, Hillview Nursery School
Ian Nutch – Academy High School Finance Manager
Louise Browning – Headteacher, Norbury Primary School
Anna Smakowska – Headteacher, Woodlands School
Christine Robson – Portfolio Holder, Young People & Schools
Sue Maguire – Headteacher, Hatch End High School
Anne Monahan – Headteacher, St Anselm's Primary School
Geraldine Higgins – Headteacher, Sacred Heart Language College
Mike Baumring - Headteacher, Kenmore Park Junior School
David O'Farrell – Headteacher, St Bernadette's Primary School
Rebecca Hastings – Headteacher, Cedars Manor School
PK Maselino – Headteacher, The Helix Centre
Nigel Hewitt – Association of Harrow Governing Bodies

Officers in Attendance: Jo Frost - Finance Business Partner

SH opened the meeting.

1. Apologies and Order of the Agenda

Apologies were received and accepted from:

Rutinder Mahil-Pooni – Headteacher, Kenmore Park Infant School

The order of the agenda was agreed.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 15 January 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2019 were agreed as an accurate record

3. Matters Arising

None

4. 2018-19 DSG Budget Monitoring Setting 2019-20

JF introduced the report which set out the latest position on the DSG budget setting for 2019-20.

Schools Block

Schools Forum noted the 2019-20 DSG allocation. With regards to the Growth Fund, Schools Forum noted the allocation and agreed the commitments against the Growth Fund for 2019-20. As in previous years it was agreed that any unspent funding in respect of the Growth Fund, in particular in relation to bulge classes and expansion funding, should be returned to the contingency at the end of the year if it is not required.

Schools Forum noted the changes to the Low Prior Attainment Factor.

Schools Forum discussed the mobility factor. There has been an increase of children eligible for this factor by approx. 40%. It was agreed that factor rate should remain the same and the overall schools block bear the extra £441k cost.

Schools Forum noted the reduction to the lump sum and that the first 2x £6000s for mainstream EHCPs will no longer be funded from any block. This had been agreed through a consultation and by Schools Forum in November 2018.

Schools Forum noted the indicative formula derived budgets for 2019-20. JF talked through one schools' budget changes as set out at Appendix A so that the explanation of movements between years could be understood and members could apply this logic to their own budgets.

Schools Forum noted the additional funding for 2019-20. There was a discussion about how this funding might be distributed to schools in 2019-20. Increasing the MFG from -1.5% to +0.5% was discussed and SH stated that it had been agreed through consultation and at the previous Schools Forum that the principle should be not to artificially inflate MFG to create problems in future years. The principle should be to ensure schools get as close as possible to the NFF to prevent cliff edges if the MFG no longer applies in future years. Schools Forum agreed that the MFG should remain at -1.5% and this should not be the methodology for distributing additional funding.

JF provided a table at Appendix B that showed the impact to schools if the funding is distributed through AWPU. The LA can then make a technical adjustment to ensure that MFG is not impacted for future years.

PG queried whether the funding could be distributed across the whole funding formula so that all factors were taken into account. JF explained that it would mean that two formulas would have to be run in parallel because there needs to be a technical adjustment to ensure that MFG is not impacted. JF explained that this would prove complicated and would be open to errors.

It was agreed that AWPU would be the method of distribution.

LB queried whether there should be a flat rate per pupil rather than a differential rate for Primary, KS3 and KS4. JF explained that this followed the same principle as the AWPU in the NFF.

IN queried the justification to distort the primary and secondary funding ratios to give more to primary than secondary.

PG requested that if it is not possible to distribute the funding through the whole formula, the primary/secondary funding ratios should at least be kept the same.

Schools Forum broke into smaller groups for discussion. The Chair asked for members to vote. Option A is to distribute the funding as per Appendix B, maintaining the primary and secondary AWPU funding ratios. Option B is to distribute the same amount per pupil across all key stages.

Option A – 10

Option B – 4

It was agreed to implement Option A.

High Needs Block

Schools Forum noted the High Needs Block allocation for 2019-20. The LA requested that in light of additional funding in the Schools Block in 2019-20, Schools Forum might reconsider its decision not to transfer 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.

There was a discussion about whether this was a favourable option given that through consultation and at the previous Schools Forum there had been a vote not in favour of this.

DOF queried whether the additional windfall funding in the Schools Block was known about when Schools Forum voted. JF confirmed that it was not known about.

PG queried the impact on Appendices A and B if Schools Forum agreed to any transfer. JF clarified that there would be no impact on Appendix A since this is NFF driven but that there would be a reduction in the funding available to distribute on Appendix B.

SH queried whether Schools Forum would reconsider agreeing to any transfer from the windfall funding in the Schools Block.

IN commented that conversations at his various governing bodies about transfers to the HNB might have been different if they knew about the windfall.

SH suggested that instead of agreeing to the full 0.5% Schools Forum might consider a transfer of 0.25%. A vote took place on this basis

Yes – 11

No – 3

JF thanked Schools Forum for this decision.

Early Years Block

Schools Forum noted the indicative position on Early Years funding for 2019-20 and noted that the outcome of the consultation and final EY funding formula will be reported in March.

Other Funding

Schools Forum noted the other sources of funding available in 2019-20.

Any Other Business

None

Next Meeting and Agenda Items

The next meeting will take place on 5 March 2019 at 1pm at Whitmore High School.

The meeting closed at 2.45pm

Future Dates

5 March 2019

7 May 2019

2 July 2019