

SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 9 March 2021 **at 1.00 pm via Zoom**

Members Present: Sue Hammond – Headteacher, Whitmore High School (CHAIR)
Louise Browning – Headteacher, Norbury School (VICE CHAIR)
Rebecca Hastings – Headteacher, Cedars Manor School
Patrick O'Dwyer – Divisional Director Education Services
Geraldine Higgins – Headteacher, Sacred Heart Language College
David O'Farrell – Headteacher, St Bernadette's Primary School
Mike Baumring – Headteacher, Kenmore Park Junior School
Sue Maguire – Headteacher, Hatch End High School
Steven Deanus – Headteacher, Roxeth Primary School
Chris Briggs – Headteacher, St Joseph's Primary School
Councillor Christine Robson – Portfolio Holder Young People & Schools
Clare Tarling – Finance Director, Pinner High School
PK Maselino – Headteacher, The Helix Education Centre
Lee Helyer – Headteacher, Kingsley High School
Rashid Benserghin – Headteacher, Roxbourne Primary School
Lisa Michael – AHGB

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:

Nick Waldron – Headteacher, Pinner Park Primary School

The order of the agenda was agreed.

2 The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2021 were agreed.

3 Matters Arising

Growth Funding – general

In response to a number of schools expressing concern that NOR had increased significantly since the October 2020 census it was agreed that there would be a fund to support schools whose NOR has increased between October 2020 and May 2021 census. A diminimus will be applied so that schools will only be funded per pupil over a certain percentage increase which will be agreed after reviewing the overall census NOR changes. This will be brought back to a later schools forum.

4 DSG Budget Setting 2021-22

JF introduced the report which set out the latest 2021-22 settlement and the 2021-22 final school budgets approved by the DfE on 16 February 2021

Schools Block

JF explained that the proposed budgets brought to Schools Forum in January had remained unchanged.

High Needs Block

JF set out the movements in HNB funding for 2021-22. Despite a net funding increase there is still an expected in year deficit of approx. £1.4m which would result in a cumulative deficit of over £6m by March 2022.

JF set out the principles and questions in the DfE's HN National Funding Formula consultation and potential implications for Harrow.

Meeting outcomes

Schools Forum

- Noted the 2021-22 DSG allocation in Table 1
- Noted the 2021-22 DSG budget in Table 2
- Noted the projected HNB deficits in Table 4
- Noted the update on the HNNFF consultation
- Noted the Early Years Single Funding Formula in Table 5

5 DSG Budget Monitoring Q3 2020-21

JF set out the budget monitoring position for 2020-21. There is a projected overspend on the HNB of £1.755m and a projected underspend on the growth fund of £155k.

Early Years

JF explained that is likely to be a significant underspend on the EYB this financial year due to reduced participation due to Covid. In particular take up in the Spring Term has been low and there were approx. 500 pupils fewer on the January census than in the previous year. JF explained that not only will this impact on future funding but will likely lead to a claw back of funding. It could also mean that as more children start to attend nursery after lockdown the LA will be required to fund children who were not on the census. JF explained that any underspend would need to be earmarked for either clawback or funding additional children in 2021-22.

High Needs Block

JF explained that there is anticipated in year overspend on the HNB of £1.755m. This has reduced significantly since reported at Q2 due to all of the FE contracts now being finalised.

SH suggested that there had been a reduction in participation in FE due to COVID. This would explain why this year's spend is approx. £400k lower than in the previous financial year.

Meeting outcomes

Schools Forum:

- Noted the position on the overall DSG
- Noted the position on the HNB
- Noted the position on the growth fund

6 Any Other Business

None

Next Meeting

The meeting closed at 1.50pm

The next meeting will take place on 4 May 2021.