

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Schools Forum held on Wednesday 15 January 2014 at 4.30pm at the in the Civic Offices, Portsmouth.

Present

Mark Mitchell, Governor - Special (Chair)
Clive Good, Governor - Primary
Jayne Pratt, Governor - Nursery
Steve Sheehan, Governor - Primary

Councillor Ken Ferrett, Labour

Jackie Collins, Head Teacher - Primary
David Jeapes, Head Teacher - Secondary
Mike Smith, Head Teacher - Secondary
Karen Stocks, Head Teacher - Nursery
Margaret Dunford, Head Teacher - Special

Councillor Rob Wood, Observer

Officers

Jane Di Dino, Local Democracy Officer
Alison Egerton, Group Accountant
Richard Webb, Finance Manager
Julian Wooster, Strategic Director (arrived at item 5)

1. Apologies for Absence

Tom Blair, Fiona Calderbank, Suzy Horton, Bruce Marr and Councillor Neill Young sent their apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

The Chair informed members that Justeen White is no longer a secondary governor and therefore is no longer a secondary governor representative on the forum. The Forum asked that their thanks be sent to Justeen White for her work on the Forum.

In response to a question, Richard Webb clarified that David Jeapes has been appointed as a secondary representative, and this will remain unchanged when Mayfield becomes an 'all-through' school.

3. Minutes and Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting Held on 18 December 2013.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Schools Forum meeting held on 18 December 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

Action

Richard Webb confirmed that the following reports will be brought to the February meeting:

- An update on the use of the 2 year old funding
- School balances and proposals in respect of the reinstatement of the clawback mechanism.

4. Appointment of Vice Chair

David Jeapes nominated Mike Smith and this was seconded by Clive Good. There were no other nominations.

The Schools Forum appointed Mike Smith as Vice Chair.

5. School Funding Reform 2014/15

Richard Webb explained that late on 13 January the Education Funding Agency notified local authorities that there was a problem with the Authority Proforma Tool. The corrections required to the spread-sheet impacted on any schools that had amalgamated in 2013-14 and resulted in an overall increase in the funding required by £204,294. This change has made the proposals set out in the report issued with this agenda unaffordable.

Members discussed the implications of the three options set out in the paper that was tabled.

David Jeapes proposed a fourth option: that the carry forward be used.

Julian Wooster explained that the £1.5m carry-forward would be better used to support the other financial pressures and unforeseen circumstances that may require additional funding in 2014-15, as there is an opportunity now to re-balance next year's school funding requirement through adjustments to the revenue funding formula.

Action

Mike Smith requested a breakdown of how the de-delegated money for the 'special staff costs - union duties' is used.

In response to a question from the Forum in respect of the Falling Rolls Fund, Richard Webb clarified that academy or maintained schools with a good or outstanding Ofsted rating who meet the criteria in Appendix 3, would be eligible for support from the Fund. Maintained schools who are not rated good or outstanding would be able to apply for support from the de-delegated 'contingency fund', whilst Academies will need to seek support from the Education Funding Agency.

Councillor Rob Wood noted that:

- It was essential that pupils receive a good education
- Having a carry forward is sensible.
- It would be very difficult for schools to budget if they do not know until the end of the year whether they will receive contingency funds.

Members decided that applications to the contingency fund would be considered only at the October and February Schools Forum meetings.

Mark Mitchell noted the following points:

- The amount allocated to schools has increased as more pupils are coming through.
- Although £1.5m is a relatively small amount, it is larger than the contingency fund that the forum used to operate.
- Secondary School pupil numbers are expected to rise from 2016/17. It is essential that there is sufficient capacity in the city to educate them.
- The Governing Bodies of schools that receive contingency funding would be expected to address any deficits.

School Members voted on the following decisions:

- a. Following the discussion that took place during the meeting, recommendation (a) was approved as follows:
 - i. **School Members approved the proposed changes to the mainstream schools revenue funding formula as set out in paragraphs 4.7 to 4.9**
 - ii. **School Members voted on the following two proposals:**
 - to reduce the cap to 1.1% - option 3 as set out in the additional paper; or
 - to retain the cap at 1.5% and to fund the shortfall of £95,063 from the carry-forward.Members voted unanimously to set the financial cap at 1.5%.
- b. **Approved the table at Appendix 1, showing the de-delegated budgets and the unit values to be used in 2014-15.** (Approved unanimously).
- c. **Agreed the growth fund for 2014-15 be set at £300,000 and the continued use of the growth fund criteria as set out in Appendix 2 (subject to clarification that the 'significant & sustained' growth fund would not be available to schools that have received additional funding through a variation in pupil numbers).** (Approved unanimously).
- d. **Agreed the establishment of a falling rolls fund for 2014-15 as set out in section 7, with the criteria set out in Appendix 3 (subject to adjustments to clarify the criteria and time period for claims).** (Approved unanimously).
- e. **Agreed that £10 per pupil be de-delegated from all maintained schools to establish a contingency fund, together with the criteria set out in Appendix 4 (subject to clarification that Schools Forum will only consider claims at the October and February meetings).** (3 members voted for this to be set at £14; 4 members voted for this to be lowered to £10).
- f. **Endorse the school funding pro-forma at Appendix 5 to be submitted to DfE by the 21st January 2014 - subject to the adjustments agreed.** (Approved unanimously)

All Schools Forum Members:

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- g. Approved the proposal to fund the Fair Access Protocol support service directly from the High Needs Budget from 2014-15. (Approved unanimously)**
 - h. Approved the transfer of an amount equivalent to the closing balances of the Arundel Court Infant and Junior schools to the new Arundel Court Primary School in 2014-15. (Approved unanimously)**

The meeting concluded at 6.10 pm.

Mark Mitchell
Chair