

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a Governing Body Workshop held at the School at 6.00pm on Tuesday 24th April 2018

Present:	Steve Miles Peter Cook Mike Worboys Nicole Chapman Mary Argent, Sarah Clements, Ros Cornish, Ruth Neave, Jason Oster, Lee Palmer, Mark Rowell, Lauren Smith, Duncan Stevens, Richard Vass, Yvonne Wickers.	Chair of Governors Vice Chair of Governors Training Link Governor Headteacher
In Attendance:	Stephen Lawlor Maria French Michael Palmer Susan Hoefling Wendy Newton	Deputy Head (Curriculum) Deputy Head (Pastoral) Asst Head (Head of Sixth Form) – from 6.20pm Business Manager Clerk to Governors
Apologies:	Richard Brown	

ITEM 1 - INTRODUCTION & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. The Chair opened by thanking Governors for their attendance and outlined the objectives of the workshop. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Richard Brown.

ITEM 2 – GOVERNOR QUESTIONNAIRE

2. As agreed at the CCHS Governor Conference held in January 2018, all Governors had completed an electronic questionnaire in which they had self-assessed their knowledge in relation to the categories outlined in the DfE Competency Framework for Governance 2017. The results of the questionnaires had been compiled by Lee Palmer and was presented in an anonymous format for general discussion. It was stated that the overall results of the questionnaire suggested that the GB deemed itself competent and that no great weaknesses had been identified. The coding and breakdown of the figures were explained to the meeting. Of the 113 competencies and with a score range of 1 to 5, 84 (74%) had been rated in the top score range of over 4.25; 28 (25%) in the middle score range of 3.5 – 4.25, and only one competency had an average score of less than 3.5. An understandable difference in knowledge between staff and non-staff Governors was noted as was the difference relating to sub-committee membership. The meeting reviewed the results and discussed the variations in competency figures. It was suggested that whilst the evaluation did not highlight any major concerns, individuals could use the data to pinpoint areas for self-development and additional training needs. The meeting recognised that the Competency Framework related to the GB as a whole and that individual Governors were not expected to be experts in every field.

6.20pm – Michael Palmer (Head of Sixth Form) joined the meeting.

3. **Decisions.** It was agreed that:
- The Clerk would return the individual questionnaire responses back to Governors.
 - All Governors would undertake a self-review in order to assess which competency areas may benefit from additional training or revision of knowledge.
 - A review of Full GB effectiveness should be undertaken within the next 12 months.
4. The Chair summarised the findings of the evaluation and stressed the possible need for individuals to undertake refresher training or investigate specific areas which may not be covered by their own sub-committees. It was noted that all the competencies had good coverage by at least a small number of governors. 'The Key' website was stated as being a good reference tool for Governors as was the Head's termly Report to Governors.

ACTION

Clerk
All

ITEMS 3 to 6 – STRATEGIC PLAN

ACTION

5. Governors had been asked to identify and report their own individual top three strategic priorities. The results had been collated by Mike Worboys and the method of sorting and ranking the data was explained to the meeting. From the results the top five priorities, listed in priority order, were:

(1) Financial Viability, (2) Campus Development, (3) Breadth of Curriculum & Rounded Education, (4) Sixth Form Results, Size & Retention, and (5) Admissions Policy. The School staff had been requested to rank the top nine priorities put forward by Governors and a summary of how they had ranked the priorities was tabled along with some related comments. The meeting discussed the staff priorities and comments. The content of the staff summary was deemed a useful analysis and the consistency between staff and Governor thinking was noted. School staff were thanked for their input.

6. The meeting discussed the options put forward as the proposed top five priorities. All the priorities except one were financed-related. It was noted that the Strategic Plan had to reflect the current situation and that the financial situation dictated what could be done by the School. The duty of the GB to deliver a balanced budget was stressed and the effect on all the priorities noted. The link between Government funding, which the GB had no power to affect, and the financial viability of the School was re-iterated.

7. **Decision**. It was agreed that the five priorities listed in Paragraph 5 above would be used as the basis for the next School Strategic Plan.

Head

ITEM 7 – SCHOOL VISION

8. The current School Vision statement was read out and it was suggested that the content remained valid. The meeting discussed the wording of the Vision statement and the need to include some more exciting phraseology was put forward. It was hoped that the energy and excitement of the pupils and the message which was evident at Open Evenings could be transferred into the Vision wording.

9. **Decision**. The Head agreed to review the School Vision wording.

Head

10. The links and alignment between the School Vision, Strategic Plan and School Development Plan was debated. The problem of financial viability and campus development was raised in light of a recent letter concerning funding from the Secretary of State; the only additional money available to grammar schools was if their admissions policy gave direct preference to under-privileged children. The School had already made some changes but further changes would be required to attract additional Government money. The GB noted the risks associated with making changes without any guarantee that money would be forthcoming. The meeting debated the continuing lack of expansion funding from ECC, a topic which had not been addressed in the Secretary of State's response. Governors agreed that the School had to work on the basis that no additional funding was going to be forthcoming and that both a long-term and short-term strategy was required. The issue of multi-academy trusts and their expected economies of scale was raised and debated.

11. The Head confirmed to the meeting that the current expansion to five forms of entry could be accommodated within the current School buildings although problems were acknowledged with the size of the School Hall, the lack of a Sports Hall and with student circulation in some corridor areas. It was also confirmed that a cohort of 160 students in Year 12 could be accommodated with the current buildings. The possibility of undertaking small campus development projects to solve minor rooming problems and to encourage students was suggested. The meeting was advised that averse comments had been received from parents concerning the lack of progress in relation to previous capital funding requests, it was suggested that feedback was required to explain the overall funding situation.

ITEM 8 – FORMATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN

ACTION

12. Information was received from the Deputy Head (Pastoral) on how other schools had expanded their Key Stage 4 GCSE cohorts by admitting additional students into Years 10 and 11 as the size of subject groups at this Key Stage were often smaller and had room for additional students; this concept provided an additional funding stream for their schools. The meeting debated the general concept and noted the possible benefits and problems.

13. **Decision.** It was agreed that SLT would produce a formal cost-benefit paper for Governors on the concept of additional expansion at Key Stage 4 for GB consideration in July.

Head

14. The concept of generating extra income by having six forms of entry was raised and discussed including the possible use of Portacabin-type accommodation as an interim measure before formal accommodation was built. The meeting discussed how the top five priorities could best be addressed and expanded, including a dedicated Strategic Plan sub-committee or by discussion by the current GB sub-committees. It was suggested that the Strategic Plan should have a three-year timescale as financial prediction beyond that was unrealistic. It was also noted that the Plan needed smart, achievable objectives.

15. **Decision.** It was agreed that the top five Strategic Plan priorities would initially be discussed by each relevant individual GB sub-committee and broad over-arching bullet points prepared for each priority. The sub-committee outcomes would be fed back to SLT, and the two Staff Governors, who would collate a draft Strategic Plan for consideration by the Full GB at their next meeting on Friday 6th July 2018.

**Committee
Chairs
Head**

16. The Chair closed the meeting by thanking Governors for their attendance.

8.15pm - The workshop concluded.

Agreed as a true record.

S Miles, Chair of Governors 6th July 2018