



Communitas Education Trust

Trustee Meeting

12th January 2017

Minutes

In Attendance: Tim Higginson
Adrian Sparks
Chloe McCulloch
Eileen O'Mahony
Fleur Nieboer
Paul Bridge (by phone)
Evelyn Holdsworth (CEO)

Observing: Nick Tildesley
Kevin Rose
Paul Marray
Jo Rooney

Apologies: Liz Robinson

- Welcome*
Tim welcomed the Trustees to the meeting and introductions were made.
- Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of Trustees*
Agreed Tim Higginson will be chair of trustees and Eileen O'Mahony will be vice-chair of trustees
- Minutes of inaugural meeting 13th October 2016*
Agreed the minutes are a clear reflection of the meeting
- Matters arising from the minutes*
Agenda item 2: **Agreed** that the mission statement should be non-specific around provision and should mention neither primary nor secondary provision
- CEO's report on the progress of the Trust development, updates on the Free School, scheme of delegation and plans for future growth*

Future growth

There was a wide-ranging discussion on the future development of the MAT and a recognition that growing the MAT was key to its sustainability in the future.

Action Evelyn to work with Nick to further develop our offer for recruiting other schools in to the MAT and what capacity is available at John Donne to be able to support this

Action The Trust to look at the benefits and challenges of growing and to focus on how to remain financially viable when extending support

Action The trustees committed to playing their part in the future expansion of the trust by using their broad range of experiences to broker contacts and make personal representation in meetings with potential partners

Updates on the Free School

There was a discussion around the closure of Southwark Free School and how their new site has been offered, and accepted by, the Communitas Education Trust with a view to opening John Keats on that site in September 2018. It was noted that the Borough site will no longer be available for John Keats school.

Trust development

Action Evelyn and Nick to look at how the key targets for the Trust development can be made more specific and achievable

6. *Threats and opportunities*

Threats	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expanding too quickly - insufficient capacity• Expanding too slowly – missing opportunities to extend our capacity• Financial changes which mean that school budgets will reduce• Loss of key staff from middle and senior leadership roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes in local climate and attitudes to joining a MAT• Strong recruitment of trainee teachers to provide capacity• Wide-ranging school network to promote good relationships• Free School definitely opening locally in September 2018• Opportunities to bid for funding through MAT routes when the MAT is at an appropriate size

These threats and opportunities had already been discussed in agenda item 5 (the growth plan of the trust).

7. *Letter from Lord Nash on governance in Academy Trusts*

Evelyn presented the key points of the letter and drew the trustee’s attention to the 21 questions every Multi-academy Trust Board should ask itself.

8. *Trust self-review*

Action The questions from the all parliamentary group regarding effective governance and leadership of MATs will be considered by the three trust sub-committees. Evelyn

Holdsworth committed to dividing the twenty-one questions between the groups for consideration. These questions will be brought back to a whole trust group to be shared.

9. *Establishment of committees for a) Finance, b) Standards and Achievement and c) Overall Trust Performance and Development*

Action Evelyn will contact trustees to allocate them to an appropriate sub-committee

10. *AOB*

The following points were raised:

- a) A question was raised around the response to Baxters & Co. dated 14th October – **Action** Evelyn to check with Steve Fontaine that this has been sent
- b) The role of the Chief Accounting Officer cannot be rotated and should be linked to a position – **Action** Evelyn will look at the key positions in the trust
- c) A question around the application for an all-through free school was raised. The trustees were informed that there is a slight pause in the application process but the trust has registered an interest in applying. We have support from the Director of Children’s Services Southwark, David Quirke-Thornton.
- d) A point was raised that approval should be sought from the trust for contracts over £100,000 but the contract would be entered in to by the individual organisation

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 28th February at 6pm for both trustees and members.