

**South Gloucestershire Schools Forum**  
**Minutes of Meeting held on**  
**Thursday 03<sup>rd</sup> March 2022**  
**Microsoft Teams**

**PRESENT:**

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Sarah Lovell (Chair)    | Finance Director, Cabot Learning Federation      |
| Dave Baker (Vice Chair) | CEO, Olympus Academy Trust                       |
| Julia Anwar             | Olympus Academy Trust Representative             |
| Stuart Evans            | <i>South Gloucestershire and Stroud College</i>  |
| Kim Garland             | Headteacher, Brimsham Green School               |
| Clare Haughton          | Page Park Pre-School                             |
| Claire Hill             | Headteacher, Raysfield Primary School            |
| David Jenkins           | Governor, Crossways Schools                      |
| Nicola Jones            | Representative Special Academies                 |
| Louise Leader           | Headteacher, Pathways Learning Centre            |
| Kirby Littlewood        | Headteacher, Stanbridge Primary School           |
| Steve Moir              | Headteacher, Bradley Stoke School                |
| Ross Newman             | Early Years Schools Forum Representative         |
| Pippa Osborne           | Headteacher Christ Church Junior School          |
| Diane Owen              | Chair, King's Oak Academy                        |
| Lisa Parker             | Headteacher, Warmley Park School                 |
| Will Roberts            | CEO, Castle School Education Trust (CSET)        |
| Fr. Malcolm Strange     | Diocese of Bristol Representative                |
| Susie Weaver            | Executive Headteacher, Cabot Learning Federation |
| Bernice Webber          | Headteacher, Old Sodbury CE Primary School       |

**Executive Members:**

Erica Williams, Cabinet Member - Schools, Skills & Employment

**Officers:**

Mustafa Salih, Head of Financial Management and Business Support  
Hilary Smith, Head of Education, Learning and Skills  
Caroline Warren, Finance Business Partner  
Deb Luter, Schools Finance Officer

**Others:**

Tamsin Moreton, Director of Finance & Operations, Enable Trust (Observer)

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Attendees were welcomed by the Chair.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Trevor Jones, Erica Williams, Chris Sivers, Bernice Webber, Louisa Wilson, David Williams; Jo Dent not sent Teams link so unable to join - links forwarded for the May and July meetings.

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – Julia Anwar is a permanent member and no longer a sub.**

## **4. SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP (Ali Davies)**

Two Primary governor vacancies with one expression of interest. Nominations closed on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Not currently advertised in the newsletter which might be something to consider in the next two weeks.

## **5. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIR DECIDES ARE URGENT (Sarah Lovell)**

None

## **6. MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

### **ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIR DECIDES ARE URGENT (Sarah Lovell)**

Sarah has a new role and will be standing down as Chair of the Forum at the end of the academic year and again asked if anyone is interested in putting themselves forward to act as Chair, please contact either Sarah, Dave Baker or Mustafa Salih.

### **Schools Funding Arrangement 2022/23**

**Action: Mustafa to circulate amended Slide 8 following this meeting. Completed.**

Remainder of the Minutes recorded as accurate.

## **7. Banding Proposals – (Mustafa Salih)**

MS presented a PowerPoint presentation.

This presentation covers changes relating to Theme 2 of our Transformation Plan and are one element of system wide change and improvement.

Theme 1 is improving inclusion through extra cluster funding.

Theme 3 provides new investment in early years and early help.

Themes 4 and 5 work with our special schools to get the most out of each school sector.

Case for change: Move to one comprehensive and transparent process.  
Extra funding for early years and transition from early years to school.

Building on the principles approved by the Forum.  
Aimed at enabling us to stay within our funding allocation and benefit from our important work with the DfE on a Safety Valve agreement.  
This is also more funding going into schools and our schools are in a much better place to start making these shifts in how we allocate resources across the system.

Key principle is taking manageable steps of change e.g. a 25% movement in top-ups rather than 40% through a phased reduction.

Key changes: New early years funding streams. New methods of allocation to EHCP so early years will be able to access without any EHCP going through the operational guide to access funding based on description band A, B or C and the new funding for primary schools to help with that transition from early years to primary.

### **New Top Up Funding Rates**

1. Top up level changes will be as follows:

- Prim/Sec: 25% reduction rather than 40%/43%
- Spec: 14% reduction rather than 20%
- Ind/Priv: 10% reduction rather than 21%

2. Taking manageable steps will also be achieved by transitional protection, which will operate in two ways:

(i). The target to achieve in top up reductions is a much lower target than the data would suggest, and we are also doing it in a phased way over 3 years e.g. for primary and secondary schools:

|         | Mainstream and Resource Bases | Special Schools |
|---------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2022/23 | 7%                            | 5%              |
| 2023/24 | 10%                           | 5%              |
| 2024/25 | 8%                            | 4%              |

(ii) Individual school level: for schools affected by a greater percentage reduction than the percentages shown above they will be protected at the percentages shown above.

**Sarah Lovell** – Have parents/carers been consulted and involved in the operational guidance? Schools will need assistance with comms messages to reduce anxiety from parents.

**HS** – Communications will be through the schools to clarify the picture for parents/carers and we are working with the parent/carer forum directly.

**SL** – Special Schools and Alternative Provisions have written to the forum and officers about a potential challenge with this implementation. Does their point regarding the disapplication of the Minimum Funding Guarantee stand?

**MS** – We would of course comply with the requirements of the Special Schools MFG. We don't think the MFG will affect the funding changes for special schools, because the DfE guidance states that when you are changing bandings across the whole system, you first place all existing pupils into new bands and then compare that with the next year's funding using those same new bands. We are confirming that position with the DfE but, if it did apply, we could still seek a disapplication request and in the unlikely event that wasn't agreed we would still want to move to the new Bandings as part of our comprehensive banding system and the MFG may then just slow down the movement to those new bandings. The Special Schools MFG wouldn't change what we did. It could just change the way we moved (and the timelines) to that end position.

**SL** – As we have received a letter from a special schools – are you content to decide on that or delay implementing for Special Schools?

**HS** – There are valid points in relation to the timing of some of the changes of the deficit recovery plan and what capacity do we need in our special schools until the end of the year, in terms of the planning of places and that being aligned with these changes.

**Action: HS to consider the points raised in the Special School letter and bring back a response to forum. Aligned with Theme 5 with an aim to implementation from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 rather than September 2022 for Special Schools.**

**SL** – Year 6 to year 7 protection – issue was raised about the need for a new EHCP for secondary school and pupils transferring from Year 6 to Year 7 may mean they do not get the protection.

**Action: Officers to provide a proposed approach to transitional protection for pupil transferring from Year 6 to Year 7.**

**Agreed:**

**Schools Forum approved implementing the proposals for Mainstream Schools and Resource bases with the following conditions:**

- **added protection for pupils transferring from Year 6 to Year 7**
- **delay implementation for special schools so that the proposals are considered jointly with the Theme 5 developments and covered in**

**future reports coming to Schools Forum as part of plans to implement from 1 April 2023 for Special Schools.**

- **Officers provide regular updates to forum on the implementation and impact**
- **Each year, the transitional protection rates would be approved by forum before implementing**

## **8. Schools Funding 2022/23 Update**

All schools have received a communication regarding their budget shares based on the total schools budget less the £2.2m transfer to the High Needs Block.

Hoping to update on the Safety Valve Agreement with the DfE but this is taking longer to finalise than expected. Further updates in due course.

## **9. SEND Clusters Update**

Hugh Disley represented Ali Ford who was unable to attend.

Needs assessment – we are seeing school assessments going up. 82% of the assessments coming through are Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), Autism and Speech and Language communication and that has an impact in terms of our capacity. The SEND clusters will have a major part to play in getting us to appropriate levels.

Permanent Exclusions – the proportion of suspensions for children at SEND Support will continue to be monitored on a termly basis at a local authority level and the clusters. This includes looking at how we are making decisions and how we can make better-informed decisions.

In the absence of educational outcomes data due to the pandemic, case studies will be included within the end of year evaluation that will be presented to Schools Forum in June 2022.

The clusters are now working with special schools as well and special schools will be part of the cluster boards.

SL – Thanked Hugh for covering.

## **10. HNWG Update – Susie Weaver**

Additional meeting in February to examine the updated reports.

Further detail to be added to the report with rationale for the decision on the specific South Glos banding rate values.

Commentary on the spreadsheet to support analysis and keep the principles at the centre.

Information required to confirm arrangements for additional provision e.g., equipment/therapy.

Update with latest data to show progress made – e.g., 2021 EHCP figures far more in line with all England average – 34.4/34.0.

Consider adding a column to the spreadsheet to show total % of funding via top-up for transparency. In addition – add a column to indicate change to support effective financial planning.

Guidance and support offered to schools to plan for changes.

Clear communication for banding in line with transition for Y7s is essential for the next phase.

Range of options for communication and support as different pathways and outcomes across the LA.

## 11. Small Schools Rent Disapplication (Caroline Warren)

In accordance with the Schools Operational Guidance, local authorities can apply to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to use exceptional circumstances relating to school premises and a disapplication has gone through for next year but needs Schools Forum approval. We only have one school, and this relates to a lease agreement of property and land for Schools Forum to note the proposal to the APT tool for next year. It will continue to be paid and it will be added into the APT and will be funded through the schools block, which is part of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

**Agreed: Schools Forum gave approval.**

## 12. SCHOOLS FORUM FORWARD PLAN

| May | 12th |  |                |                 |
|-----|------|--|----------------|-----------------|
|     |      |  | Place Planning | Hilary Smith    |
|     |      |  | Q3 Update      | Caroline Warren |
|     |      |  |                |                 |
|     |      |  |                |                 |
|     |      |  |                |                 |

### 13. Any Other Business

None.

Meeting closed