

## SCHOOL FORUM

## Item 9(a)

Members of the School Forum are requested to consider and make a decision on proposals of this report

### **HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY GRANT**

At the January Schools Forum meeting, Education Walsall presented proposed plans for the use of Harnessing Technology ICT standards fund grant.

Following discussion, the Education Walsall representatives were asked to review and re-present the proposals for retaining additional funding over and above the 25% retention amount centrally to allow the following projects to be undertaken:

Self Review Framework - £40k

SIF (Schools Interoperability Framework)- £10k

Community Wireless - £22k

Further detail based on the questions raised at the last forum is outlined below:

#### **Self Review Framework**

ICT is now an important part of any school, underpinning much of the everyday management activity as well as a teaching and learning tool and much funding has been directed in this area in recent years at school, regional and national levels.

With the constant change of technology and the increasing review of ICT by Ofsted, it is important that leadership teams have an awareness of the current state of ICT maturity in their schools. In the light of the recent report from Ofsted on the use of ICT, a clear recommendation is made that the potential for ICT within school needs to be recognised and built into school improvement planning - the SRF will assist schools in working through this and developing their plans for ICT.

The Self Review Framework process and the online tool enable a school to assess the current state of its ICT development. This can then be compared to an average of schools using a nationally agreed set of descriptors and standards and these can also be compared to the level of an ICT mark school. It provides guidance and action plans to enable a school to determine not only where it wants to go in its ICT development but also how it can get there. Actions can be decided, prioritised and formed into areas for development and the framework will also assist schools in celebrating success.

Whilst completing the online tool, schools will understand where they fit against the requirements for the ICT Mark – the national standard for ICT effectiveness and once the tool has been completed and the appropriate levels met, can apply to be assessed for the ICT mark accreditation.

## **Who developed the self-review framework?**

The self-review framework is the result of a Becta-led collaboration involving the following national organisations:

- DCSF
- Naace
- National College for School Leadership (NCSL)
- The National Strategies
- Ofsted
- Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)
- Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT)
- Training and Development Agency (TDA)

## **How will it help my school?**

Using the Self Review Framework will help you to;

- **Assess** the current state of your ICT development
- **Compare** how well you are doing compared to others
- **Identify** what 'good' looks like and how you can achieve it
- **Decide** where you want to go – vision and aspiration
- **Indicate** what actions to prioritise
- **Consider** where you may need support

This will help to feed into the SEF, produce an ICT development plan and better plan any spending and financial commitments.

## **What do we intend to do in Walsall?**

Based on feedback from schools, other local authorities and Becta, we intend to support schools to work through the framework in a number of methods, as well as work with a small number to achieve the ICT Mark, both to celebrate their own success and provide the guidance for the good to great strategies requested by headteachers.

If possible, we would like to use some of this funding to provide cover for schools that have already completed the SRF and the ICT Mark so that they can feed back their experiences to other Walsall schools.

Initially, we will run a number of introduction sessions at venues across Walsall where we will ensure schools are aware of the reasons for the framework and how it can help them, as well as work with them through the initial parts of the online tool.

Following this session, schools will then be encouraged to complete the framework from within their schools with telephone support available, and this will then be followed up with individual consultation sessions with schools within their own environment, where we can work with them through any questions and provide advice, support and guidance to creating their ICT development plans, and feed into the SEF.

## **SiF**

As it is believed that SiF forms part of a bid for the education contract, we wish to withdraw this project for 2008/2009 and it is proposed that this amount will form part of that allocated to schools.

## **Community Wireless**

Following the last forum meeting, we have met with the Education representative from New Deal and we are currently putting together a joint proposal with them for a pilot phase across the New Deal area and we are hoping to put this to the next funding board.

In addition, we are currently in negotiations with Walsall Council, Walsall Teaching Primary Care Trust, Walsall Regeneration Company and Walsall Housing Group around a joint programme of public sector connectivity and the community wireless project will form part of that.

As these negotiations are not yet complete, the proposal is to move forward with this project with proviso that funding is not released if appropriate contributions are not made available by other local stakeholders.

The funding will be used to carry out feasibility studies and identify geographical areas where it may be difficult to provide community wireless, as well as provide a small-scale pilot, based on an area identified by work carried out for the recent Computers for Pupils initiative in conjunction with our secondary schools, as this will also help to potentially prolong the usage of the laptops within this project.

## **Recommendation**

It is currently anticipated that the grant in year 2 and 3 will be allocated to schools using the same basis as for 2008/2009 and the centrally retained element will continue to be 25% plus additional for specific projects. These projects will enable us to respond to initiatives as they develop.

Forum members are asked to consider the proposals and make their recommendation.