

Schools Forum

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 31st January, 2012 at 4.00 p.m. in the Large Hall, Education Development Centre (EDC), Pelsall Lane, Rushall, Walsall

Present:-

- Mr. S. Flynn (Chairman)
- Mr. M. Vlahakis (Vice-Chairman)
- Mrs. M. Sheehy
- Mr. D. Brownsword
- Mr. R.C. Yeomans
- Mr. G. Crowther
- Dame M. Brennan
- Mr. J.P. Clarke
- Mrs. J. Ward
- Ms. M. Yates
- Mrs. M. Woodcock
- Mr. F. Hodgkinson
- Mrs. M. Robinson
- Mr. D. Clough
- Ms. R. Davies

In Attendance:-

- Lynn Hall, Head of Benefits (Walsall MBC)
- Mr. D. Mortiboys, Finance (Walsall MBC)
- Ms. J. Taylor (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)
- Dawn Morris (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)

		Action
<p>1. 31.1.12</p>	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Ms. C. Draper, Mrs. P. Hunt and Mrs. M. Sharratt.</p>	
<p>2. 31.1.12</p>	<p>Minutes - 6th December, 2011</p> <p>2011-12 Per Pupil Funding Analysis</p> <p>The Chairman circulated the paper that had been forwarded to the local MPs and Secretary of State for Education, together with responses and correspondence with the Education Minister. He encouraged all Members of the Forum to continue to lobby against the inequality and unjust funding.</p> <p>Ms. Taylor informed the Forum that a consultation document on school funding was expected in the Spring and comments could be re-iterated at that</p>	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 6th December, 2011 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.</p> <p>Julie Taylor to circulate "The role of the Forum" spreadsheet.</p>

	<p>stage. She confirmed that there was nothing in the formula to disadvantage single phased schools. Figures varied according to the size of the school and the level of deprivation. The analysis circulated with the correspondence to MPs focused on deprivation only, but the formula was applied equitably to all schools, and it was the larger schools in more affluent areas that would generally lose out on a funding per pupil basis.</p> <p>In order to clarify the role of the Forum, Ms. Taylor undertook to circulate a copy of the governance arrangements to the next meeting. She confirmed that the formula was applied equitably to every school but there would be differences as no two schools are identical. The figures had also become distorted as a result of the minimum funding guarantee (MFG). MFG must be honoured. It was necessary to run two budgets per school, one for MFG and one for the formula budget, and schools received the highest of the two.</p>	
<p>3. 31.1.12</p>	<p>Matters arising from the minutes</p> <p>There were no matters arising from the minutes.</p>	
<p>4. 31.1.12</p>	<p>Late items to be introduced by the Chairman</p> <p>The Chairman agreed to take a late item relating to Governor training.</p>	
<p>5. 31.1.12</p>	<p>Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)</p> <p>There were no items for consideration in the private session.</p>	
<p>6. 31.1.12</p>	<p>Free School Meals Eligibility</p> <p>Lynn Hall outlined the work that had been undertaken by the Free School Meals Team in conjunction with schools and Serco on free school meals take-up. The overall take-up was more than 1,000 higher than a year ago and the increase in numbers would impact on pupil premium going forward next year. This could be in the region of</p>	

	<p>£1½ million. The work would continue and training for all school staff in the use of the online free school meal form would take place in the near future. This would enable information to be checked online with the education hub and schools would be informed promptly so that the pupil could receive a free school meal. A campaign was due to commence with nursery children in order to include those figures at the appropriate time.</p> <p>Members were concerned that sufficient staffing of the system was in place at peak times to cope with demand.</p> <p>In response to points raised, Ms. Taylor confirmed that the data for “ever six” had not yet been received. This would be used as a methodology for pupil premium delivery; more information from the DfE was awaited.</p> <p>After discussion, the Chairman thanked Lynn Hall for attending the meeting and providing information.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the information submitted be noted.</p>	
<p>7. 31.1.12</p>	<p>Education Funding Announcement 2012-13</p> <p>A report was submitted and Julie Taylor outlined the contents therein.</p> <p>In response to points raised, the Chairman undertook to request Jane Bonner to provide information to all schools on the advanced skills teacher programme.</p> <p>After consideration it was,</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That the Forum note the 2012-13 funding announcements which, for DSG, represents a cash freeze of the guaranteed unit of funding, and in turn this may create financial pressure on the Local Authority schools budget and individual school budget shares;</p>	

	<p>(2) That the Forum note the changes to the pupil premium grant in terms of both the extended eligibility criteria and the increase in cash values;</p> <p>(3) That approval be given to the exception to the minimum funding guarantee in respect of the advanced skills teacher factor for 2012-13.</p>	
<p>8. 31.1.12</p>	<p>Prior Year Adjustments for Individual Assigned Resource</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Dawn Morris referred to drop-in sessions that had been held for head teachers, with particular reference to in-year changes to the provision.</p> <p>With regard to Paragraph 1.6 of the annexed report, Ms. Morris indicated that the year end calculations should be made in March rather than April in order that the changes are contained within the current financial year.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That Schools Forum agree that, in order to improve the YPLA's understanding of the Walsall local funding formula by completing the SEN prior year budget adjustment in-year, that is, during March. As a result of this timing change, the 2011-12 in-year SEN statemented budget adjustment for each school will be included in schools' final budget share payments due in March, 2012;</p> <p>(2) That the Forum note that, as the Schools Finance Team had not yet received the data required to calculate the SEN prior year adjustments for 2011-12, however, this information would be available by February half term. All schools be notified at the earliest opportunity of their SEN prior year budget adjustment. Where this funding change impacts negatively on a school's planned balances to be carried forward (that is increased balances) under the balance control mechanism, allowances will be made, if brought to the attention of the School</p>	

	Finance Team.	
9. 31.1.12	<p>Spending of contingency money 2011-12 update (School to School Support) - Standing Item)</p> <p>The Forum was reminded that at its last meeting, the proposal to delegate funding to schools through the AWPU factor or hourly rate for maintained nursery schools with effect from 1st April, 2012 had been deferred to enable the Primary Forum to consider this matter further at its January meeting and to refer it back to Schools Forum for further consideration. Mr. Brownsword informed the Forum that the Primary Forum had agreed that the money held in the contingency for 2011-12 school to school support be returned to schools.</p> <p>Ms. Taylor confirmed that the money would be mainstreamed with the remaining grants and would be allocated through the formula.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the Forum agree that the school to school support contingency money be allocated through the 2012-13 primary strategy money and allocated fully through the delegated funding formula to primary schools.</p>	
10. 31.1.12	<p>Forward Plan</p> <p>The Forward Plan was submitted.</p> <p>It was agreed that “Spending of school to school support contingency money - 2011-12 update“ be removed as this had now been dealt with. It was also agreed that the following items be included for the agenda for the next meeting:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National figures on school balances Schools Forum governance Scheme for financing schools - potential changes around insurance and premature retirements to bring in line with DfE guidance 	

<p>11. 31.1.12</p>	<p>Late Item</p> <p>Mr. Hodgkinson raised an item relating to Governor training in Walsall. He was concerned about the level of support to Governors as one employee had left the Authority and the other was on long term sick and asked what contingency arrangements were in place to support Governors.</p> <p>Members referred to contacts received from Wolverhampton Council to provide Governor support.</p> <p>The Forum noted the comments.</p>	<p>Julie Taylor to look into this</p>
<p>12. 31.1.12</p>	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>None received.</p>	
<p>13. 31.1.12</p>	<p>Date and time of next meeting</p> <p>It was NOTED that the next meeting of Schools Forum would be held on Tuesday, 28th February, 2012 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall.</p>	

The meeting terminated at 5.00 p.m.