



Minutes

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING OF PEGASUS ACADEMY TRUST

Friday, 17th of July 2020 at 1:30 pm

Virtual meeting (Google Meet)

Directors		
Richard Hill	Director	Present
Ian Patterson	Director	Present
Gary Griffin	Director	Present
Nina Pogossova	Director	Present
Fiona Fearon	Director	Present
Shelley Davies	Director	Present
Emma Whapham	Director	Present
Jolyon Roberts	Executive Principal	Present
Lynne Sampson	Executive Principal	Present
Trust Staff		
Jo Ridge	Chief Financial Officer	Present

Clerked by:	Ciara Carroll
Supporting documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exec Principals' report to directors summer 2020 final• BoD minutes 18.05.20• PAT Capex minutes 08.06.20• PAT MACs meeting minutes 28.05.20• BoD Action Log Summer 2020
Meeting closed at:	15:30 pm

1. Apologies for absence and confirmation of quorum

No apologies for absence were received.

2. Declaration of conflict of interest and changes to register of interests

There were no conflicts of interest declared and no changes made to the register of interests.

3. Strategy and future development of Trust

This item is covered under item 04 below.

4. Executive Principals report

It was highlighted that there have been no confirmed cases of Covid-19 within the Trust since lockdown began. The plan for reconnection next year has been published on the Trust's website and was also circulated to the directors in advance of publication.

MACs meetings were held online and proceeded smoothly, with similar questions from most schools.

13:53 SD joined the meeting.

LS expressed her thanks to SD for the support that the Trust has received from Croydon during this time and SD added that she felt the work that Croydon has done with Pegasus over the past few months has really cemented the partnership.

The Trust are looking to appoint a substantive Head for the Upper School at Cypress for the new school year. There have been three expansion projects considered for the Trust since Christmas but none were appropriate.

Following a question from a director, it was confirmed that the Trust would be adapting its existing Risk Assessment for the full reopening in September with changes including the cleaning programme for playground equipment.

A director asked what the Trust's top three priorities will be once school returns in September. The three priorities consist of: the reconnection plan for children, guarding against 'COVID complacency' and getting back into routines.

A director wondered what measures are being put in place to enable staff to socially distance. It was explained that the staff rooms will not be open to sit in, but staff will be able to get coffee and so on. Staff will eat lunch and have coffee breaks in their classrooms and will have the opportunity to go outside when not in class. Provisions will be kept under review and informed by experience.

A director wanted to know what challenge had been received from parents with regard to arrangements for June and July and it was confirmed that where issues had arisen they were mainly around which year groups would be open. Some parents wanted all classes to be opened with particular focus on Reception classes but the Exec Heads felt the reasoning for the choice of year groups starting had been fully explained. By the middle of July, the Trust was offering more places in more year groups than any other schools locally.

A director requested details of the Trust's planning for online education and it was explained that these could be found in the reconnection plan. The Trust is in a more informed position than before lockdown. All laptops in the Trust are currently being converted to Chromebooks in order to make loaning them out to children easier in the event of another lockdown. During the lockdown, the Trust lent out more than 70 laptops plus wifi dongles to children who needed them to do their remote learning. Thanks to further investment authorised by the directors, more than 400 laptops will now be offered if there is another big lockdown. The learning from the first lockdown has enabled a more robust home learning process to be designed and the Trust are more confident in insisting work be done and submitted. Following a director's question, it was confirmed that the children would not be in online classes for the same length of time as their school day but that they would be given access to and work from a number of sources such as Mathletics, Bug Club, and other creative projects.

Directors wondered if it was possible to quantify the percentage of lost learning in each school but this will not be possible until children return to school and can be seen by their teachers. Anecdotally, teachers report being surprised by the level of skill retention in their children. Planning had initially considered trying to redo the missed topic work but ultimately it had been decided that this was not necessary and that the focus should be on skills.

Following on from the previous question, *a director challenged the Trust to show how it would be measuring the effectiveness of the online learning provision*. This is difficult to measure without evaluating the children; Google Analytics can show how many page visits there are to the Trust's website but not what is done with the learning once downloaded. It is clear that, in some cases, children had done nothing during lockdown. In other cases, parents found it hard to establish routines when they themselves had been working from home. The Trust's plan is to take the time to carefully evaluate the situation in September and then move forward with the reconnection plan.

Directors discussed the issue of some families not engaging in learning at all; it was estimated that the numbers were four in a sample class of 26 but it could be higher in other classes. Every effort will be made to engage children where necessary; laptops are being provided with appropriate monitoring software and children will be taught how to use the internet and Google Classroom to enable their participation.

Attendance is another of directors' concerns; the Trust believes numbers are likely to increase once children are back in school and encourage their friends to return.

A director asked what parental feedback had been received; there was challenge from a number of parents across the Trust and this was addressed in the statement that the Trust released on this date. The Trust is confident that it can justify its reopening decisions and address any challenges brought to them.

5. Finance update

The Board was informed that the Trust is in a strong financial position this year. This is giving senior management in the Trust an opportunity to explore spending options that previously have not been available, such as new playground equipment and new provision for mental health with the schools.

A report was provided in relation to overtime / casual staff in order to get a look at costs that are additional to payroll each month.

A director queried how teaching overtime is managed on a routine basis and it was explained that this expense was not traditional overtime but was used to pay certain people on a per hour basis. This explained why there was OT work in the accounts in April/May when the school was closed. These figures are accounted for in the budget but cannot be shown in the software used.

Directors discussed how teachers are paid in relation to their duties and whether they receive extra payments for various additional work that they do and agreed that the role of a teacher has become much more demanding over the last few months, along with the additional mental stress and potentially having their own children at home.

The CFO explained that the 3 Year Forecast is now due on the 30th of September following an extension of the deadline but that next year's budget will be completed on time and will be submitted as usual.

The main points to be considered were described as:

- GAG funding increase by £552K over last year;
- Expenses are down, with the drop in pension contributions (over 2%) a significant impact;
- Support staff pay rise still unknown. It will need to be back dated to April 2020 and has been estimated to be 3%;
- Teachers' pay rise for next year has been budgeted for 2.75% next year

A director queried why it appeared that staffing costs were not increasing significantly month on month, even with pay rises and so on. He was informed that the reduction in pension costs has been significant along with the ending of a number of fixed term contracts related to EHCPs.

Directors discussed whether the Trust should be setting a surplus budget this year and what factors should be taken into account when considering this budget. It was agreed that the Trust should commence its plans to set a yearly capex budget; this year the proposed figure is £200K. Directors asked for spending options in relation to capital projects at the schools: options suggested included tarmacking playground and IT resources.

RESOLUTION: Directors agreed the 2020-21 budget with the changes agreed above to be included.

6. Staffing update

It was confirmed that currently there are two staff members on long-term sick leave and one formal process is taking place regarding an absence issue.

7. Governance update

It was noted that some boards are short of members and that recruitment remains a struggle.

8. Facilities update

Cypress

In order to make the school more secure in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, staff and children have been using as many external doors as possible. In order to facilitate this usage, it has been decided that a pathway and patio, along with the necessary security, will be installed close to the Year 4 classrooms at the rear of the school.

The cost of this project will be between £10-12K.

RESOLUTION: The Board agreed that the footpath work at CYP Upper can go ahead.

The cloakrooms for the Year 3 classrooms are also being moved.

The central team's office move has been planned for the summer holiday and the CYP Upper office work will start in September 2020. It was confirmed that the Board will now meet in the community room on the Lower site.

9. Board membership changes

It was acknowledged that the Board requires two more directors. The Chair will be leading the recruitment for these two positions.

10. Minutes of the previous meeting (28th of May 2020), Capex meeting (8th of June 2020) and minutes of MACs information meeting (28th of May 2020)

RESOLUTION: It was agreed that the minutes as presented above represented a true and accurate picture of the meeting. They will be signed by the Chair when social distancing makes this possible.

ACTION: Copies of minutes to be printed and signed by the Chair when possible (Item 098).

11. Matters arising not discussed elsewhere and Action Log

Items 094-096: Completed and closed.

Item 097: to be completed.

Item 001 AGM: One PI form outstanding.

Item 002 AGM: Complete

Item 003 AGM: Benchmarking information would have been presented at the Finance meeting at the start of July but that meeting did not take place.

12. Correspondence to the Chair

The Chair confirmed that he had a lengthy correspondence with a parent at CYP. The issues raised were discussed between the Executive Principals and the Chair, along with the parent who is happy that his questions have been answered.

13. Confidential items

There were no confidential items discussed.

14. Any other business (notified to Chair/Clerk in advance)

GG wished for his thanks and congratulations to be recorded and expressed to all members of staff at the Trust. From his own experience he knows how difficult it is to keep education going on in this environment and feels that the Trust has done an excellent job.

SD wished to comment on the wide and unstinting provision of food for families at the school and beyond and to say that this had inspired other local schools to the same. She asked that her thanks to the Trust also be recorded.

15. Dates for 2020-21

Proposed dates:

9-Oct	Fri	13:30	Board of Directors
11-Dec	Fri	13:30	Board of Directors & AGM
23-Apr	Fri	13:30	Board of Directors
16-Jul	Fri	13:30	Board of Directors

The proposed dates have all been agreed.

Directors discussed the need to add more meetings to the roster, feeling that six meetings a year would be an appropriate amount. That number would provide more opportunity for detailed discussions, in particular about the future direction of the Trust.

ACTION: Date to be agreed for a strategic business meeting (Spring 2021?) (Item 099).

The Chair expressed his thanks to everyone for attending the meeting and wished them a restful summer holiday.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting	
Chair's signature	
Chair's name	
Date	