

GOVERNING BODY MINUTES EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING

THE GOVERNING BODY OF HEXHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL AND QUEEN ELIZABETH HIGH SCHOOL HARD FEDERATION

Meeting held on Thursday 30 April 2009 at 6.00pm at QEHS

PRESENT Mr Adrian Woolley (Chair)
Mrs Sandra Thompson
Mrs Kate Gessey
Mrs Rosemary Theobalds
Mrs Sarah Buchan
Mr David Edwick
Mrs Alison Killen
Mr Alan Lynch
Ms Helen Gray
Mr Roland Beevor
Mr David Watson (Headteacher, HMS)
Mr Neil Morrison (Headteacher, QEHS)
Mr Robin Hodnett
Mr Andrew Hedley
Mrs Sue Boath
Mr Simon Kitchman
Councillor J B Jonas
Mrs Angela Mole
Mrs Annette Bedson
Mrs Jane Wrigley
Mr Bill Wilson (Observer)
Mr Andy Byers (Observer)
Ms Helen Bailey (Observer - left at 7.20pm)
Mrs Di Harris (Observer)
Mrs B Shevlin (Clerk)

The items discussed on this agenda will not be classified as confidential: consequently the minutes and supporting documents should be made available to any person wishing to inspect them.

1. Apologies for Absence and their acceptance or otherwise

Apologies were received and consent granted for the absences of Peter Oliver, Peter Maxwell, Christine Carruthers and Rebecca Alderson.

2. Consideration of Budgets set for the Federation Schools

The Finance and Premises Committee met at 5.00pm on 30/4/09 to look at the school budgets set for 2009-2010. Governors were informed that information needed to finalise budgets had only arrived with the schools at the start of the week and therefore F&P Committee could not bring firm proposals to submit to governors at this time.

Governors then received a verbal briefing from both Hexham Middle School and Queen Elizabeth High School on their individual budget situations.

The Chair of Governors expressed concern that HMS was minimising support for staff training and that this should be addressed if possible. Governors also heard that the Finance and Premises Committee had agreed to accept budget figures presented by both schools at their earlier meeting but reserved the right to question any figures once it was possible to look at them in more detail.

In response to a query from his budget summary, Mr Morrison outlined to governors the reasoning behind QEHS's decision to reduce teaching time in the sixth form, strategies being put in place to help students study independently and how this situation will be monitored and evaluated.

3. Changes to Timing of the School Day – reinstatement of lesson 5 on alternate Tuesdays

Prior to discussion the Chair circulated to governors a copy of a letter received from Robin Casson, Director of Learning, Skills and Family Support, supporting the proposed change to the timing of the school day. A further letter received from a parent re both this issue and proposed changes to the school uniform was also circulated at the meeting. The Chair also referred governors to the pack of information that had been circulated prior to the meeting comprising written correspondence from parents and others relating to both this item and item 4. He also noted that a statutory meeting to discuss the proposed change to the timing of the school day had been held at the school on 22 April 2009 and around 20 parents had attended.

Following brief discussion, governors were unanimous in supporting the decision to implement this change to the timing of the school day from September 2009.

4. Review of School Uniform

The Chair outlined that letters had been posted out to approximately 1,200 families of students in school regarding proposed changes and that 26 written responses had been received. Governors were also in receipt of feedback from the School Council and heard from Mrs Harris of the important role the council plays within the school.

Mr Morrison stated that the proposed change had been agreed at the Curriculum and Pupil Development Committee and by the full Governing Body at their meeting in March 2009 and that the consultation process had then started. Mr Morrison acknowledged that issues raised about the timing and wording of the letter were valid points and could have been more carefully considered. The governing body should perhaps have looked harder at timing of informing students but Mr Morrison was not sure that students would have reacted any differently as protest was primarily about changes to the uniform rather than timing of the information.

Mr Morrison commented that the parent response was small and there were strong views for and against the proposal. He also noted that the majority of parents of students who had been involved in the protest whom he had met with were supportive of what the school were doing. Student Council minutes were not particularly supportive. Corbridge, HMS and St Joseph's middle schools were supportive of the proposals. Mr Morrison explained that QEHS's continuing success is interlinked with middle schools and community perception of our students. The role of the governing body was to review responses received and decide if anything should be changed in current proposal after all factors have been listened to and considered.

It was agreed that the two uniform items that needed further discussion were the proposed requirements for black shoes and polo shirts to be worn.

Footwear – after lengthy discussion it was suggested that the statement regarding footwear would read: “**students must wear plain black footwear for school and must bring a change of footwear for PE**”.

The majority of governors voted in favour of this proposal and thus was agreed.

Polo Shirts – again after lengthy discussion it was suggested that the requirement for students to wear a polo shirt remain within the policy.

The majority of governors voted in favour of this proposal and thus was agreed.

It was also agreed at the meeting that Mr Morrison would write to parents again outlining decisions taken and reasoning for them. **(ACTION: Neil Morrison)**

5. **Agenda for Governors' Informal Meeting – 17 June 2009 at 7.00pm**

The following items were agreed for the agenda:

- School Improvement Partners from both HMS and QEHS will attend the meeting and present their annual reports. There will also be an opportunity for governors to ask questions. Reports to be circulated to governors prior to the meeting. **(ACTION: Neil Morrison & David Watson)**
- Formation of new committee – Community Liaison Group
- Link Governors
- Federation Objectives

The Chair confirmed that agendas and papers will be circulated in due course for the above meeting **(ACTION: Adrian Woolley)**

6. Any Other Business

Mr Byers asked that the governing body give thought to the way it conducts its business particularly in the use of email. The Chair asked that, in future, emails be kept for disseminating information only as governing body meetings were the more appropriate place for discussion. Mr Morrison added that he was always happy to meet with any governor who had an issue they wished to raise with him.

Mr Beevor asked that 'Communication Policy' be added to the agenda for 17 June.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.15pm.

_____ **Chair**

_____ **Date**