

Schools Forum

October 20th 2011

Minutes

PRESENT:	
Diana Turner	Governors Steering Group
Larry Granelly	Governors Steering Group
Chris Smart	Governors Steering Group
Norman Large	Governors Steering Group
Philip Johnson	Governors Steering Group
Karen Howell	Nursery Headteacher
Cathy Clarke	Primary Headteacher (Central)
Stella Saje	Primary Headteacher (Nun & Bed)
Beverly Dandy	Primary Headteacher (North Warks)
Peter Kent	Secondary Headteacher (East)
Tony Wilmot	Secondary Headteacher (North Warks)
Tim Sara	Secondary Headteacher (South)
Sheila Cowen	Special School Headteacher
Sybil Hanson	Diocesan Board of Education
Cllr Carolyn Robbins	Elected Member
Cllr June Tandy	Elected Member
Ian Froggett	County Secretary NAS/UWT
David Hazeldine	County Secretary SHA
Mark Gore	Head of Service, East – Learning & Achievement
Simon Smith	Strategic Finance Manager
Sara Haslam	Schools Funding & Strategy Manager,

1. Apologies – Apologies were received from the following:

Latika Davis,	Governors Steering Group
Larry Granelly	Governors Steering Group
Richard Selwyn	Governors Steering Group
Ramesh Srivastava	Governors Steering Group
Richard Powell	Primary Headteacher (East)
Margaret Buck	Diocesan School Commission
Carolann Grewcock	PVI Sector
Marion Plant	14-19
Cllr John Ross	Elected Member
Cllr Clive Rickhards	Elected Member
Cllr Heather Timms	Elected Member
Max Hyde	County Secretary NUT
John Collins	County Secretary ATL
Mick Haynes	Branch Secretary UNISON
Adrian Ross	District Officer TGWU
Paul Hamilton	GMB Union
Wendy Fabbro	Director, People Group
John Betts	Head of Corporate Finances

2. Minutes from Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

2.1 The minutes were agreed as accurate

2.2 There were matters arising regarding an email from Max Hyde who noted that he is not against fair representation of academies but think it should be made explicit that by participating they will need to "play by the same rules" of transparency & subject to scrutiny as LA schools. He also raised concerns that the LA secondary sector is fairly represented.

3. Review of the Local Schools Funding Formula

3.1 The Schools Forum had previously agreed in September that the Project Team should incorporate a range of principles to model options for updating the schools funding formula. Further consultation with Head Teachers and Governors has been undertaken and the results were included in the report. The Project Team and Project Board have met to reconsider the principles and the financial models put forward.

3.2 The Schools Forum were recommended to agree to propose Option Three for approval by Cabinet in December. The following elements of Option 3 were discussed and voted upon:

3.3 Recommendation 1 - Agree to the reduction of headings within the Main Schools Funding Formula to those shown below.

	Description	Change under review
1	Average Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU)	Yes – Increasing
2	Deprivation	Yes – change basis
3	Special Educational Needs (SEN)	No
4	Premises	No
5	EMAG/EAL	Yes
6	Base Allocation/small school adjustment	Yes
7	Rates	No
8	Special Schools Matrix	No
9	Site Specific	No
10	Specialist Schools	Yes – with transition protection
11	Minimum Funding Guarantee	No – retain -1.5%

3.4 Decision: Agreed

3.5 Recommendation 2 - Lump Sums be transferred to the Age Weighted Pupil Unit.

3.6 It was confirmed that any previous lump sum funding now to be distributed through the AWPU would remain within the appropriate sectors.

3.7 Special Schools AWPU would continue to be smaller than other sectors due to significant funding distributed through the Special Needs Resource Unit which is determined by the specific needs of Special School pupils.

3.8 Decision: Agreed

3.9 Recommendation 3 – A Free School Meal (FSM) indicator is used for the allocation of all deprivation funding and that FSM Ever 3 years is the specific FSM indicator to be used.

3.10 The government is suggesting that they will use a FSM ever 3 or FSM ever 6 indicator to allocate out the Pupil Premium. Therefore, if Warwickshire moves to a FSM ever 6 indicator and the Government decide on a FSM ever 3 indicator we may need to back track.

3.11 Decision: Agreed

3.12 Recommendation 4 - Agree to add the Extended Schools Cluster Funding to the AWPU.

3.13 Decision: Agreed

3.14 Recommendation 5 – Specialist School Funding be allocated out on a per pupil basis but the funding is retained with the existing sector.

3.15 The following comments were made against this proposal:

- This will cause considerable turbulence especially for schools with a second or third specialism. Based on this funding schools have appointed senior staff with allowances including in some cases Advance Skilled Teachers. Some schools will become winners at the expense of other schools who have worked hard to achieve a specialism and the requirement to continue the work has not gone away.
- Schools have worked hard to achieve a second specialism and money would not be coming to Warwickshire if not for these schools hard work.
- There has been a huge investment, which will need to be unmanaged when funding is lost.
- There may be an increased level of redundancies of senior staff.

3.16 The following comments were made in favour of this proposal:

- The current principle of funding is unfair and this is what is important not the individual affects some schools.

- More schools will gain so more pupils will gain from the proposal. It is unreasonable to continue the current distribution especially as the scheme has now ended.
- Comparisons were made to TVEI funding. When this ceased schools found ways of continuing aspects of the good work the funding had initiated.

3.17 Decision: Agreed

3.18 Recommendation 6 – The move to allocating Specialist School funds out on a per pupil basis is managed over a 3-year transition period on an equal basis.

3.19 The impact of this change is significant on some schools and so a 3-year transition period in addition to the floors and ceiling recommendations will assist the management of the loss of funding.

3.20 It was noted that some head teachers would prefer not to implement this change now, even if this will mean a greater loss later if implemented through a national formula with no transitional arrangements.

3.21 A further comment was passed on from a head teacher with the opinion that a 3-year transition period was too long and that a 2 years should be considered.

3.22 Decision: Agreed

3.23 Recommendation 7 – A base allocation of £95,000 be allocated to all primary schools and the current base allocation levels are retained with in the secondary and special schools (subject to review in the future) but the small school adjustment to secondary schools is removed.

3.24 The following comments were made:

- The move would be detrimental to small schools. The current Base Allocation is £87,700 for Infant and Primary schools, £95,213 for junior schools and in addition small schools receive £11,553. Small secondary schools currently receive an additional base allocation of £19,061.
- The base allocation proposals for Primary schools are in line with the national consultation of how the government would like a local formula to be constructed. However, for secondary and special schools the national consultation paper indicates there will not be a base allocation.
- Warwickshire does not have to make this move now just because this may be the way forward with the future national formula. However if

we do not move towards the national indications then schools may face a 'cliff edge' in due course when the national formula is introduced.

3.25 Decision: Agreed

3.26 Recommendation 8 – Agree to improve the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) allocation process with an updated proposal brought back to the Forum in the new year.

3.27 Decision: Agreed

3.28 Recommendation 9 – Recycle EMAG funding currently delegated out to schools to a centrally held English as a Additional Language (EAL) budget.

3.29 Decision: Agreed

3.30 Recommendation 10 – Consider introducing a one-year capping arrangement to minimise losses arising from the changes in formula.

3.31 Decision: Agreed

3.32 Recommendation 11 – Consider capping increases to schools with large gains arising from the changes to the formula to ensure these changes are affordable within the total DSG allocation.

3.33 A table showing the impact on schools if a floor limit of 1.5% and a ceiling limit of 4% or £90,000 maximum was discussed.

3.34 It was suggested and agreed that some alternative options for capping levels should be produced for cabinet to review (these have been included at 0.5% and 1%).

3.35 Decision: Agreed

3.36 Recommendation 12 – Retain the Early Years funding formula with no amendments and maintain the current hourly rate in 2012/13.

3.37 Decision: Agreed

3.38 All of the recommendations above received 11 or more votes in favour. Therefore, they will now be formulated into a formal recommendation to Cabinet.

3.39 Simon and Sara were thanked for their clear and concise briefings. Sara was thanked for her work for the Project Board. Mark Gore gave thanks on behalf of the LA to the members of Schools Forum and it was recognised that the Forum members and LA officers had all taken part in orderly and useful discussion regarding the review of the funding formula.

4.0 Unallocated Dedicated School Grant – Allocation Update

4.1 Simon presented a report outlining proposals for use of the remaining £0.653 m unallocated DSG. The proposals were initiatives that are in line with strategic priorities, a number of which have been developed for agreement through the Forum.

4.2 The total in 2012/13 exceeds the balance of available funding but these will be revisited as part of the budget setting exercise for the new years DSG allocation.

4.3 Decision: The proposed allocations were agreed in principle although exactly how the funding will be utilised may be amended, particularly in relation to the Emotional Well Being and Mental Health Services.

4.4 The following comments were made by members of the Forum in connection with the Emotional Well Being and Mental Health service proposal:

- Emotional well being and mental health issues affect every school and this is not just a FSM issue. Therefore, it should be considered whether to spread funding across the county rather than just allocate to schools with high FSM.
- Earlier intervention should also be considered. The report covers support for Primary schools but there are also issues in Nursery schools where early intervention could be of benefit.
- There is no reference to Secondary Schools or Special Schools.
- Bereavement is not linked to FSM entitlement and pupils across the county could benefit from funding.

Action: Simon would report to the commissioning team to revisit the proposal in light of the comments made. A revised proposal of specific spending will be brought to a further next meeting.

4.5 A comment was also made regarding the proposal for a Reading Advisor to support the implementation of reading tests for 6 year olds and provide training and support to schools. It is important to target as many schools as possible through training rather than an advisor post. It was suggested the funding be spread across all schools to access training.

5.0 Pupil Reintegration Unit

5.1 At the last Schools Forum meeting, a report was brought on the options for allocating the Area Behaviour Partnership (ABP) funding. At the last

minute, a fifth option for allocation was included in the report that not all interested parties had the chance to comment on in advance.

5.2 It was recognised that this was not a process that the Schools Forum would usually follow and that because of it, an adjustment was made to the funding allocated to the Northern ABP to offset the loss due the fifth option. The general feeling was that members of Schools Forum would be uncomfortable if this happened on a regular basis however, this instance had very specific circumstances

5.3 Agreed: Members endorsed the change in methodology of allocating funding to Area Behaviour Partnerships. However, it was recognised this was because of specific circumstances relating to the process within this specific project.

5.4 It was agreed in principle at the May meeting that the existing budget historically earmarked for the primary element of the PRU would continue to be allocated to alternative provision for primary aged children.

5.5 Partnerships between six pilot clusters and the Early Intervention Service are working to implement alternative provision solutions across super output areas and it was proposed that the original budget for the Primary PRU be reallocated to support these initiatives.

5.6 It was confirmed that the Early Intervention Service will be working with schools not in the pilot clusters who may have a pupil who would have previously been excluded.

5.7 Agreed: This proposal was agreed for a 2-year pilot with full evaluation to come to Schools Forum in due course.

6.0 Balances Control Mechanism

6.1 The overall total balances have increased compared to the previous year, as has the number of schools exceeding the threshold. Specific details are shown in the report.

6.2 Sara confirmed that the clawback policy does not apply to schools that have already become an Academy as the YPLA has their own clawback policy.

6.3 Members of the forum expressed concern that the increased surpluses and number of schools with balances in excess of the permitted threshold continues to make it difficult to justify the case for a lack of funding.

6.4 Schools Forum was requested to provide a panel of representatives to consider cases of individual schools potentially eligible for clawback. The following volunteers were received:

- S Sage – Primary headteacher
- T Wilmot - Secondary headteacher
- S Cowen – Special headteacher
- L Grannelly - School governor
- D Turner - School governor

6.5 It is not possible to confirm that the panel will be required to meet as information from schools is still being considered. The panel above may be required to meet during mid November subject to confirmation at a later date, should it be necessary.

6.6 A report will be issued for the December Forum meeting on the outcome of the panel and

7.0 Forward Plan

7.1 Simon provided a Forward Plan containing a provisional programme of possible reports/issues for Schools Forum to consider over the next year.

7.2 It was requested that a paper on Post 16 funding be added to the items for information/consideration. Post 16 funding is received from the YPLA and as such is out of the Local Authority's and Schools' control however, it was felt important that Schools Forum are aware of the position and the impact on schools.

8.0 Academies Update

8.1 An updated sheet showing Warwickshire Academies was issued. An update on Federations was also requested and is also enclosed with these minutes.

9.0 Chairs Business

9.1 None

10. Dates of Future Meetings

10.1 December 8th 2011, 2pm Conference Room, Northgate House, Warwick