

**PART I MINUTES**

**TRUST BOARD MEETING**

OF

**THE LEARNING ALLIANCE (TLA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES (The Board):**

HELD ON MONDAY 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 9am.

**Present:**

Mr D. Wootton (DW) (Chair)  
 Mr A. Pear (AP) (Vice Chair)  
 Mr R. Armstrong (RA)  
 Mrs S. Dempsey (SD)  
 Mr R. McCluney (RM)  
 Mr M. Ashcroft (MA)  
 Mrs C Thomson (CT)  
 Mrs J Millward (JM)

**In Attendance:**

Mr M. Cladingbowl, CEO (MC)  
 Mr D. Twambley – COO (DT)

**Clerk:** Mrs C. Gritton

**Absent:**

Dr A. Greenstein (AG)

Part 1	
Administration	Action
<p>1. The Chair <u>welcomed</u> everybody to the meeting. No <u>Apologies</u> were received and the meeting was <u>quorate</u>.</p> <p>2. It was <b>noted</b> that there were no additional <u>declarations of interest</u> for items of this agenda.</p> <p>3. The <u>Minutes</u> of the Board meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021 were <b>approved</b> and will be <b>signed by the Chair</b> on Governor Hub. <u>Matters Arising</u> <b>It was reported that</b> Mrs Phillips has accepted a new role as Director of Operations and Finance at Knutsford Academy and the role of Director of Governance will be discussed at item 5.5.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>A Trustee, noting the delay in providing papers for the meeting, asked whether the CEO and COO had capacity for their workloads. It was reported that</i></b> this matter would be discussed at item 5.5.</li> </ul> <p>3.1 <u>Action Log</u> The Action Log was discussed and the updates noted thereon.</p> <p>3.2 <u>Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair</u> By unanimous vote, Mr D. Wootton was appointed Chair and Mr A. pear appointed Vice Chair of the TLA Trust Board for the year 2021/2022. The Board requested that future elections be notified in writing prior to the meeting.</p>	
Reports (exception) from Committees	
<p>4.1 <u>Finance and Staffing Committee</u> <b>Paper 4.1 Finance and Staffing</b> had been uploaded to Governor Hub (GH) prior to the meeting and was <b>received and its contents noted as recommended. The Chair of the Finance and Staffing Committee confirmed that</b> the Committee would have time to consider outturns, prior to reporting to the Board at the December Board meeting.</p>	



<p>5.2 <u>School Updates</u> <b>Paper 5.2a Update on Schools 1 – General, Paper 5.2b Update on Schools 2 – Primary Results, Paper 5.2c Update on Schools 3 – Secondary Results and Paper 5.2d Update on Schools 4 – Improvement Plans 2021</b> had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and were <b>received</b>. <b>Trustees noted</b> the contents of Paper 5.1a as recommended therein. The COO confirmed that the ‘Confidential’ watermark on Papers had been an administrative error and that no Part 2 Confidential matters had been shared under Part 1 papers on GH. <b>It was reported that</b>, in the main, TLA schools had developed positively in difficult circumstances. Knutsford Academy (KA)’s long-term site improvements continue and The Oaks Academy’s Open Evening was a great success, attracting more attendees than ever and the school is making positive improvements in teaching. <b>ACTION a:</b> The Chair will write to the outgoing Chair of the Castle Primary School LGB, to thank them for their hard work and support for the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Trustees asked whether the CEO and COO need anything else from the Board to assist with their workload. It was reported that</b>, as detailed at paragraphs 11 and 12 of Paper 5.2a, School Improvement Leads and a Director of Learning and Development are being appointed. Other roles are being kept under review.</li> <li>• <b>Trustees asked how schools’ results might compare next year. It was reported that</b> the Executive will work with all schools to deliver the improvement plans in Paper 5.2d. It is believed that results will be broadly in-line with this year’s teacher assessments. Nationally, it is believed that results may take until Summer 2023 to reach pre-pandemic standards. <b>Trustees asked</b> if combined and greater depth measures can be included for primary schools once these are available. <b>ACTION b:</b> The data pack for subsequent meetings (following the next ‘data grab’ will include an indication of projected results for next year). Trustees are keen to see data dashboards developed and support the Improvement Plans listed in Paper 5.2d. <b>A Trustee advised that</b> as the Trust grows, in order to ensure Trustees remain focused on strategic oversight, rather than on the minutiae of each school, the CEO might wish to develop further criteria by which the schools are categorised as the initial point of reference for information provided at Board meetings.</li> </ul>	<p>Chair</p>
<p>5.3 <u>Trust Self-Assessment (SEF)</u> <b>Paper 5.3 Trust Self-Assessment</b> had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was <b>received</b>. <b>ACTION:</b> Future iterations of the SEF will include a risk=assessed preamble summarising the key areas of focus for Trustees to feed into risk management arrangements.</p>	<p>CEO</p>
<p>5.4 <u>Trust Growth</u> <b>Paper 5.4 TLA Growth 2021</b> had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was <b>received</b>.</p> <p><b>Trustees agreed the recommendation in paper 5.4</b> that Trustees endorse the growth strategy set out in that paper.</p>	<p>CEO</p>
<p>5.5 <u>Capacity</u> <b>Paper 5.5 Capacity – TLA Organisation chart 2021</b> had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was <b>received</b>. <b>It was reported that</b> the Director of Primary School Improvement role had not been filled, but capacity had been sourced from the Shaw Education Trust on a part-time basis and another outstanding school in the Crewe area will offer additional support.</p>	
<p>5.5.1 Headteachers support the staffing changes detailed in Paper 5.5.</p>	
<p>5.5.2 The Chair and Vice Chair assured Trustees that they are mindful of the wellbeing of the CEO and COO with regard to capacity and the good work they have done over the last year and the Trust cannot enter a growth agenda without the right capacity in place to support it. <b>Trustees advised</b> that the CEO and COO plan how staff in senior roles will be developed with regard to succession planning and whether that will include any exposure of governance. <b>The COO reported that</b> opportunities for development are being considered and Directors already have input into providing papers for and attending, LGB and Board meetings.</p>	
<p>5.5.3 <b>A Trustee advised that</b> the CEO and COO remain mindful that funding for staffing structures, which do not need to be huge at this level, do not deplete funds needed by TLA schools. Trust officers set out the arrangements for top-slice, which have not altered since 1 September 2020.</p>	

<p>5.5.4 <b>Trustees noted that</b> whilst Mr Kingdom has been leading on Safeguarding for the Trust, and has done a very good job, it is not prudent for him to continue to do so in the medium-term, given his Headteacher responsibilities.</p> <p>5.5.5 <b>A Trustee recommended that</b> Trust SEND coordination is required and external reviews for SEND may be beneficial, which Trust officers are co-ordinating.</p>	
<p><b>Operational Matters</b></p>	
<p>6.1 <u>Finance</u> <b>Paper 6.1 Finance Update, Paper 6.1a 2020/2021 Draft Result and Paper 6.1b Period 1 Consolidated Result</b> had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and were <b>received. It was agreed that</b> clear, reasonable objectives must be evidenced for reserves held over a time frame, particularly if reserves are above the 5% of GAG Trust target. Whilst future site improvement planning is important, monies must be spent for the education of the students in the schools at the time of receipt of funds, for the reasons given, whilst retaining prudent funds. <b>A Trustee recommended that</b> the COO consider the projected forecast with regard to the Reserves Policy in the context of a 3-year financial plan. The COO should consider what the spend <i>needs</i> to be, not limited by percentages, from which proposals can be made which then enables an impact on reserves assessment. The COO assured Trustees that plans are contextualised in financial reports and narrative is provided regarding both medium and long-term planning.</p> <p>6.2 <u>Risk Register</u> <b>Paper 6.2 Risk Register</b> had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was <b>received. It was reported that</b> there had been no significant shift in key areas, but that SEF and Away Day outcomes can be woven in as appropriate. <b>ACTION:</b> The COO will prepare a list of the top 3-5 priority risks for the December Board meeting.</p> <p>6.3 <u>Health and Safety</u> <b>It was reported that</b> all schools have suitable processes and systems in place. Reviews are carried out with LGB support and external support is sought where appropriate.</p>	<p><b>COO</b></p>
<p><b>Feedback from Chairs' Forum</b></p>	
<p>7. <b>It was reported that</b> the Chairs' Forum had been an extremely positive meeting and that the LGBs are very supportive of the Trust. LGBs look forward to the receipt of regular Management Accounts and collaborative training in governance can be facilitated. Schools appreciate the cross-school collaborative work and look forward to working with UTC.</p>	
<p><b>Feedback from Trust Board to LGBs</b></p>	
<p>8. <b>The Board noted</b> the Matters to Share from the LGB to the Board and confirmed that their support will continue as requested therein. <b>ACTION:</b> Schools will be informed that the Board approved the proposal that LGBs form individual in-year admission panels as referred to in paper 4.2, as above.</p>	<p><b>COO</b></p>
<p><b>AOB</b></p>	
<p>9. Nothing to report.</p>	
<p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting: Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at 9am</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Meeting closed at 11.30am</b></span></p>	

## ACTIONS

AGENDA ITEM AND ACTION	By When	By Whom	Confirmed Complete
<b>From 18<sup>th</sup> October Meeting</b>			
<b>4.1</b> The Trust Board will seek to appoint a Trustees with extensive financial knowledge and experience to support oversight and challenge in this area.	21/3/21	Trust board	
<b>4.3.2</b> Trustees and the CEO will consider when and how to carry out an external review of governance.	21/3/21	Board/ CEO	
<b>5.1</b> The CEO and COO will arrange a Trustee Strategic Development Away day prior to the December Board meeting. (Link to items 5.3 and 7)	Before 13/12/21	CEO/ COO	
<b>5.2a</b> The Chair will write to the outgoing Chair of the Castle Primary School LGB, to thank them for their hard work and support for the school.	ASAP	Chair	
<b>5.2b</b> The next data pack will contain projected results for next year and primary combined and greater depth measures as they become available.	31/1/21	CEO	
<b>5.3</b> Future iterations of the SEF will include a preamble detailing the key areas of focus for Trustees, to feed into risk management arrangements.	21/3/21	CEO	
<b>6.2</b> The COO will prepare a list of the top 3-5 priority risks for the December Board meeting.	13/12/21	COO	
<b>8.</b> The COO will inform schools that the Board approved the proposal that LGBs form individual in-year admission panels as referred to in paper 4.2.	13/12/21	COO	
<b>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021</b>			