



Local Governing Board to The Learning Alliance

**CHESHIRE STUDIO SCHOOL LGB**

Online Meeting via Microsoft Teams

**MINUTES – Part I**



**Date: 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021at 4pm**

**Present:**

- Mrs C. Millson (Chair)
- Mrs A Sennet (Vice Chair) (AS)
- Mr D Hermitt (DH)
- Mr N Jackson

**Absent:** - None

**In attendance:**

- Mr J Whittaker – Headteacher
- Mrs K Key – Deputy Headteacher
- Mr C Leigh – Assistant Headteacher – (Items 16 and 17)
- Mr C Parr – Assistant Headteacher – (Item 12)
- Mr D Twambley – TLA COO (From 4.17pm)
- Mrs N Phillips– TLA Director of Finance & Governance (NP)

**Clerk:** Mrs C Gritton

**Administration**

1. The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and quoracy was confirmed.
2. There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interest.
3. The **Minutes** of the meeting held on **10<sup>th</sup> March 2021**, were approved.
4. **Composition of LGB**
  - 4.1 It was **reported** that following the expiry of Mrs Padget’s term of office as Governor of CSS, the TLA Governance and Search Committee (G&S Committee) had approved her appointment to the Knutsford Academy (KA) LGB. The G&S Committee had approved the TLA Parent Governor Election process and **Governors agreed** to begin the process of appointing a new Parent Governor to the CSS LGB in the Autumn 2021 term. Governors were asked to inform the Chair or Headteacher know if they knew of anyone suitable for the vacant Appointed Governor post.

It was agreed that items 12, 16, Safeguarding and 17 Student Welfare, would be taken first in the Improving Education and Opportunities section, but are recorded herein in Agenda order.

**Strengthening Leadership, Collaboration and Governance**

5. **Matters for the Trust Board to share with LGB** – NP passed on TLA Trustees’ vote of thanks to CSS staff for their commitment and dedication to the school, during Covid. NP also passed on Trustees’ thanks to Governors for their support to the staff and school.  
The COO joined the meeting at 4.17pm
6. **Monthly Report and Finance Update** – The COO apologised that the Finance paper had not been uploaded to Governor Hub (GH) prior to the meeting and assured Governors that it would be uploaded following the meeting. Governors were invited to email the COO if they had any questions after reading that paper.
  - 6.1 It was **reported** that outturn is strongly favourable with a surplus of £23k to add to the already strong reserves of £51k. The total reserves of £74k represent 11% of GAG. This is 6% above the Trust target of 5%, so reinvestment opportunities are being considered. Whilst site costs have increased due to Covid safety measures, curriculum costs are £16k lower than anticipated due to online lesson provision. A breakeven budget has been set for 2021/2022.
  - 6.2 **Governors asked whether there are any plans for capital spend.** It was **reported** that the school’s previous successful Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bid will be used towards the roof project for which the bid was made. The COO explained the two elements to Capital Spend, being recurring capital grant for general capital investment and School Condition Allocation (SCA). It was explained that SCA, being allocated late in

the year this year, has been split on a pro-rata basis between TLA schools, based on student numbers and this year's allocation to CSS will be considered as a combined capital programme with KA. Future SCA schools' allocations will be based on need, following a detailed survey of the TLA estates in the coming months.

- 6.3 2021/2022 Budget setting has begun; the staffing budget has been reviewed by the finance team, HR team and the Headteacher and once finalised, will go to the TLA Trust Board for ratification. A review of non-pay costs will also be carried out which will be integrated with KA where relevant.
- 6.4 **Governors noted** that the monthly accounts had not been uploaded to Governor Hub as expected and **asked whether they would receive the monthly accounts**. The COO apologised for the delay in providing those accounts and explained that migration of the new financial systems had taken a little longer than anticipated and held up the provision of those accounts. It is anticipated that there will be full line-of-sight financial transparency available to Governors from September 2021. **Governors asked whether financial reporting to the Headteacher would also be improved**. It was **reported** that the Headteacher would receive more detailed reports than Governors and the finance team will be discussing with Headteachers, how that information can be utilised to help manage budgets. The Chair advised that whilst the budget is healthy, there have been challenges around understanding the data and the variances.
7. **Governors' Skills' Audit** – The **Paper 7.0 CSS Skills' Audit June 2021** had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**. It was **reported** that overall, the CSS LGB has a wide range of skills, covering the knowledge and skills' areas required of an LGB. Across the TLA schools, there is a need for some additional SEND and exclusions' panel training which will be offered to all TLA Governors.
8. **LGB Self-Assessment** – An LGB self-assessment health check is available on GH and Governors can look at the questions at any time. NP and the Chair will liaise to agree a suitable date to carry out the self-assessment.
9. **School Risk Register** – The Trust Risk Register has been completed and work has begun on the school level Risk Registers. The Chair **noted** that it had been some time since the LGB had last seen a Risk Register and that it was important that the school one is completed and circulated as soon as possible.
10. **Health and Safety (H&S) Report** – **Paper 10.0 CSS H&S Audit June 2021** had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**. DH **reported** that he had been in to school to carry out a review with the Headteacher, Chair and the TLA Director of Marketing and Operations, Mr Routs (JR). Overall, the review results were very positive and staff were praised for the strong H&S ethos and only 5, minor Actions were recommended. **Governors asked whether other TLA Headteachers would benefit from H&S training if organised**. It was **reported** that H&S training was usually offered by Cheshire East Local Authority and that all Headteachers could be enrolled when the programme resumes. **Governors noted** that CSS and KA were buying in H&S support at a cost of £8k **and asked whether all TLA schools were buying in H&S support and whether that support and those costs could be consolidated across the schools**. It was **reported** that this matter is being considered by JR and the finance team.

#### **Improving Education and Opportunities**

11. **Covid Recovery Strategy** – It was **reported** that each faculty had developed and refined their own recovery strategy, according to their subject area student need. That need had been assessed using low stakes testing, homework and quizzing. The largest gaps are in the lower attaining groups and the differently formulated approaches to filling gaps, for different groups are working well. The recovery strategy will continue throughout this and next year and to this end, three new members of temporary staff have been employed on one-year contracts, solely to support intervention strategies. **Governors asked how the school is supporting students' social skills and pastoral care**. It was **reported** that Mrs Weigh's role will cover this and that a form time programme is being put in place as well as these matters being covered in the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PHSE) curriculum. It has been recognised that there is a need for increased teaching and learning in debate, oracy and vocabulary and a member of SLT has been tasked with looking into how to address that. The school is keen to resume extra-curricular activities as soon as it is safe to do so. It was **noted** that recent DfE guidance has highlighted the issues that children coming out of lockdown, are facing and the school has a working party of staff looking at mental health need and

considering what training and upskilling is needed for the new-in-post Mental Health First Aiders and for all staff looking to support students with issues never seen before. **The Chair noted** that the school appears to be a calm environment and **asked whether there are any behaviour issues**. It was **reported** that whilst there have been a few, minor behavioural incidents, the number of incidents has reduced over the last few weeks. Governors praised staff for the school's calm environment.

12. **Curriculum Planning – Paper 12.0 Curriculum Structures June 2021** had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**. **Governors asked whether the curriculum offering of CSS could be opened to students from other TLA schools**. It was **reported** that this had been discussed previously and is something that continues to be of potential interest within the Trust. It was **reported** that CSS had received more Y12 external applications than ever for 2021.
13. **Staffing Update – Paper 13a - CSS Academy and Studio leadership team responsibilities June 2021** had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**. It was **reported** that in terms of gender, the SLT is balanced. Division of responsibilities is a work-in-progress and once the new Assistant Headteacher is in post, the team will be in a strong position to build on this. The Headteacher and Governors were pleased to **note** that a number of KA and CSS staff had been promoted within the TLA Trust schools.
14. **Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs)** – All TAGs have been submitted and staff are confident in the process by which the grades were decided. Every grade was sense checked and moderation took place between Trust schools so that the grades are believed to be representative of results similar to those which would have been achieved had the students sat examinations Evidence has been gathered so that the school is prepared for the DfE evidence request. Teachers and staff in the examinations' office were praised for their hard work in this matter.
15. **Strategic Vision**
  - 15.1 **School Review - Paper 15.1 CSS Curriculum Review May 2021** had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**. The review was very positive, everybody involved was keen to make constructive suggestions for further improvement and an Action Plan has been circulated.
  - 15.2/3 **Review Improvement Priorities 2020/2021 and Draft 2021/2022 Action Plan – Paper 15.2/3 CSS Studio Development Plan** had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**. It was **reported** that priorities include core academic subjects' improvement, enhanced quality of education through the curriculum and partnership, (including local businesses, community and other Trust schools) and a focus on rounded skills and attitudes, for which there are high expectations. There appears to be positive progress, but Governors were advised that TAGs make year-on-year results' comparisons difficult.
  - 15.2/3a **Governors asked how the needs of high needs' students are being addressed**. It was **reported** that roles within the behaviour support team have been reshaped with a refreshed way of working with those students through better support. Developing expected behaviours and skills includes improved rewards systems.
  - 15.2/3b **Governors asked where the Headteacher thought the school might be this time next year, regarding the implementation of the plan**. It was **reported** that there is confidence in the positive progress in core subjects and that progress will be monitored. It is thought that certificating skills enhancing well-rounded students' achievements overall would be motivational for staff and students. The Headteacher was confident that good progress can be made on what is generally good behaviour and that opportunities available across the Trust will be pursued to improve CSS.
  - 15.2/3c **Governors asked what examination preparation is envisaged for those who have not sat external examinations due to Covid**. It was **reported** that the Delta variant was currently posing a large question mark over examinations' plans, but that the school is monitoring the situation.
  - 15.4 **School Performance – Paper 15.4 CSS School Performance** had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**. Clear, sustained improvement was **reported** with a caveat regarding the comparative nature of TAGs. The Chair **noted** that the performance reported was a credit to staff, evidencing the effectiveness of the school's remote delivery. **Governors asked about the nature of the cohort**. It was **reported** that it is broadly comparable with previous years' cohorts, but that Covid has affected CSS'

performance more than it has KA's. However, staff are aware of where support is needed and it will be carefully monitored.

**16. Safeguarding – Paper 16.0 CSS SCiES Safeguarding Audit** had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**. Three Safeguarding Children in Education Settings (SCiES) inspections have now been carried out at CSS and KA and the recent report is one of overwhelming praise, positive feedback and improvement. The small number of previous Recommendations have all been completed or are being worked on and the final report will be available to Governors at the next meeting. Governors thanked all staff involved for their hard work and great results.

**17. Student Welfare – Paper 17.0 CSS Student Welfare -Safeguarding June 2021** had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**.

**17.1 *Governors asked the reason for the word 'still' with regard to the Assistant Headteacher acting as DTLAC.*** It was **reported** that it was envisaged that there would soon be opportunity for another member of staff to be the designated lead for Looked After Children. Governors passed on their thanks to Mrs Weigh for her work as DTLAC.

**17.2 *Governors asked how work placements are currently being managed.*** Students are not going out for work placements, but the school has offered a classroom-based delivery over the last year. Depending on numbers, a hybrid version may be offered next year and students will be going out again as soon as it is Covid-safe to do so.

**17.3 *Governors asked whether and how the curriculum is being reformed to include up-to-date topics and viewpoints on matters such as racism and decolonisation.*** It was **reported** that the school undertook a large-scale curriculum review a couple of years ago, in terms of what is taught and personal development. Schemes of work have clarity as to how learning builds to create composite knowledge. The new Assistant Headteacher will be auditing key issues and will look to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and reflects a contemporary view of the world.

**17.4 *Governors asked how the school ensures equality with regard to all students accessing all areas of the curriculum, whether all students feel the school is inclusive with regard to matters such as dress code.*** It was **reported** that the student voice at the school is strong and the pastoral team and tutors work together; these questions raised by the Governors are questions the school asks of itself at all times.

## **Fostering Identity and Ethos**

### **18. LGB Roles**

**18.1 Training Update** – Thanks were proffered to those who had attended the recent online Safeguarding training and it was confirmed that Governors' training records had been updated on GH. Governors remarked that the training had been very good.

### **19. Local Matters**

**19.1 Site Update – *Governors asked to what extent the planning approach with architects will be centralised across the Trust.*** It was **reported** that a CSS integrated approach with KA would most likely be taken regarding current SCA and reserves. Work will begin on the roof shortly. Going forward, across the Trust there will be a two-fold strategy; 1, to understand the estates and their risks and 2, to decide long-term aspirations and vision. To this aim, a Trust wide 10-year plan will be drawn up, to assess immediate and lower priority needs. There will be a standard format as to how those needs are relayed to the Trust to advise how resources will be deployed over time. Thus, risk management will be pre-empted and coordinated across the Trust.

KK and AS made apologies and left at 6.27pm

**19.2 Bus Service** – It was **reported** that an increasing number of students coming to the school from the Wincham area had led to consideration of an additional bus service for that area. **Governors were informed** that, whilst there would be a small shortfall in cost, putting on a bus service for students in the Wincham

area could be beneficial in the long-term, as it may help attract potential future students to the school. The service will be contracted for one year and reviewed as to future costs' risks.

**20. Policy Review** – Most CSS Policies are now compliant. Development of centralised TLA Policies will continue next year for roll-out across the Trust as soon as possible. **The TLA Complaints Policy has been approved by the Trust** and has been implemented across the TLA schools. A Governor **advised** that School Uniform policies' changes will be introduced as of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

**21. Matters to Share with the Trust Board** – Governors asked that the following suggestions be shared with the Trust Board:

- To have all TLA Headteachers receive H&S training.
- To collaborate across the Trust, the buying back of H&S support.

#### **AOB**

22.1 **A Governor asked whether there would be a Yr7 residential trip next year.** There are currently no plans for a residential trip and there will definitely not be one before Christmas 2021.

22.2 **Governors enquired after staff wellbeing.** It was **reported** that a small number of teachers had found remote working isolating, but that everybody was feeling more positive more recently. Team work across the school is strong and it is good to be working together again on the curriculum. Another staff survey will be carried out at the end of term and the new Assistant Headteacher will have a responsibility for staff wellbeing oversight.

22.3 Planning is underway for 2021/2022 LGB meeting dates and will be notified to Governors as soon as possible.

**Next Meeting:** TBC Autumn Term 2021

**Meeting Closed 6.35pm**

Minutes approved: .....

Date:.....