

**MINUTES OF THE LA AND EPHA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY 19 JANUARY 2023 starting at 12.45 pm**

The meeting was held at The Lion Inn, Boreham.

In attendance	Representing	email address
Clare Kershaw	Director of Education	Clare.kershaw@essex.gov.uk
Lisa Fergus	Assistant Director, South	Lisa.fergus@essex.gov.uk
Jo Barclay	Head of Education Safeguarding and Wellbeing	Jo.barclay@essex.gov.uk
Alison Fiala AF	Education and EY Lead Mid	Alison.fiala@essex.gov.uk
Dawn Baker	EPHA Chelmsford West	ceo@heraacademy.co.uk
Sue Bardetti	EPHA Tendring South	admin@hollandhaven.essex.sch.uk
Isobel Barron	EPHA West Chair	head@roseacres.essex.sch.uk
Liz Bartholomew	EPHA Harwich and Dovercourt	head@mayflowerprimary.com
Dale Bateman	EPHA Epping Forest Rural	Head@coopersaletheydongarnon.essex.sch.uk
Liz Benjeddi	EPHA Billericay	head@southgreen-jun.essex.sch.uk
Heidi Blakeley	EPHA Wickford	Head@abacus.essex.sch.uk
Amanda Buckland Garnett	EPHA South Woodham Ferrers	abg@collingwood.essex.sch.uk
Luke Bulpett	EPHA South treasurer	
Dida Burrell	EPHA Braintree	Head@whitecourt.essex.sch.uk
Anna Conley	EPHA Witham	head@howbridge-inf.essex.sch.uk
Matt Curzon	EPHA Uttlesford South	ht@st-marys-stansted.essex.sch.uk
Dawn Dack	EPHA Mid Chair/ Maldon	drdack@wentworth.essex.sch.uk
Ceri Daniels	EPHA Tiptree and Stanway	Head@eightashgreen.essex.sch.uk
Paula Derwin	EPHA Colchester East	headteacher@hazelmere-jun.essex.sch.uk
Richard Green	EPHA South Vice-Chair	Head@grovewood.essex.sch.uk
Nick Hutchings NH	EPHA Vice-Chair/NE Chair	head@hamiltonprimary.com
Clare James	EPHA Dengie	cjames@maylandsea.essex.sch.uk
Chris Jarmain	EPHA West Vice-Chair	Head@st-maryscofe.essex.sch.uk
Becky Keitch	EPHA Tendring North	Head@st-georges-pri.essex.sch.uk
Pam Langmead	EPHA Professional Officer	pam@langmead.me.uk
Diana Mason	EPHA Castlepoint and Benfleet	head@montgomerieprimary.essex.sch.uk
Richard McIntosh	EPHA Chelmsford South	head@baddowhall-jun.essex.sch.uk
Matt O'Grady	EPHA Brentwood	Matt@westhorndon.essex.sch.uk
Gary Soars	EPHA Rayleigh	gsoars@edwardfrancis.essex.sch.uk
Nicky Stone-Riley	EPHA South Chair	headteacher@cherrytree-pri.essex.sch.uk
Karen Tucker	EPHA Canvey Island	head@canvey-jun.essex.sch.uk
Joanne Willcox	EPHA Epping Forest South	headteacher@hillhouse.essex.sch.uk

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

Mary Jo Hall	EPHA Uttlesford North
Ian Macdonald	EPHA Tendring Mid
Jinnie Nichols	EPHA Halstead
Hayley O'Dea	EPHA Rochford
Harriet Phelps-Knights	EPHA Chair
Amanda Reid	EPHA Mid Vice-Chair/Chelmsford North

Clare Kershaw, Director for Education, welcomed everyone to the meeting. The EPHA Chair had sent her apologies for the meeting.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE EPHA EXECUTIVE MEETING EARLIER

a) Industrial action

The NEU has balloted members and has announced 7 days of strike action across the country, 4 of which will impact Essex schools. They are: 1st February, 1st, 15th and 16th March. CK noted that the NASUWT is planning to re-ballot members (having failed to reach the threshold) and the NAHT is also considering whether to re-ballot.

Schools should have received the “strike for action” letter from the NEU. CK noted that the DfE stance is that “no one wants further disruption to children’s’ education”, but she acknowledged the strength of feeling among education staff and noted that the purpose a strike is to be disruptive. Headteachers will have to balance the needs of parents and children, and those of striking staff. The response from each school’s staff and parent communities will vary. The DfE will ask schools whether or not they are opening, closing or partially opening, but many headteachers will not know what the staff numbers are until the day of the strike itself.

CK asked schools to bear in mind the safety of particularly vulnerable children, but confirmed that the Education Team will support the decisions of headteachers, based on a risk assessment for their own setting. She **AGREED** to write a letter on behalf of ECC that schools could send to parents, setting out the conditions of the strike and stressing the difficult decision that headteachers are having to make. She stressed that she will advise Councillor Tony Ball of the need to keep the workforce together, as this type of action can prove to be very divisive.

b) ESSET outreach proposal

It was noted that the ESSET Professional Officer has discussed the proposal to develop outreach/in-reach provision from Essex Special Schools in order to support mainstream schools with the challenges they face in relation pupils with complex special educational needs.

CK confirmed that the LA agrees with this approach in principle, and is meeting with the ESSET Executive on 8th February to discuss the proposal further. They are currently trialling an outreach offer with Glenwood School.

c) SEN communication

The Executive noted that schools are concerned that the Fair Access Protocol is taking an increasing amount of time and the communication of progress or decisions is unacceptably long. Often there is no information shared and schools are not told if they are not required to take a pupil, which leaves them unsure of whether to plan for that child's needs. CK noted that over the next 6 months the plan is to increase the workforce to ensure that the system is working well; in the meantime, she asked headteachers to escalate their concerns to the Inclusion Partner or quadrant SEND lead.

There was a discussion about the continuing challenge of the fair distribution of the SEN pupils; some time ago the LA said that it would undertake a mapping exercise to determine whether some schools were taking a disproportionate number of pupils with SEN and EHCPs. Lisa Fergus stressed that she and her colleagues did challenge schools when they were presented with evidence and have reported this to the ESFA.

3. FUNDING AND SCHOOL BUDGETS

a) Energy Efficiency formula capital funding

Each school will receive an additional formula capital allocation of £10,000 plus 20.04 p per pupil to be used to improve the energy efficiency of their school. The LA will passport this funding directly to FC allocations, with guidance and benchmarking information. The funding can be spent up until March 2025, in line with formula capital guidelines. The LA will ask community, voluntary controlled and foundation schools to compete a simple annual return in the next two years to account for the use of the additional funding. CK reminded the headteachers to contact the School Energy Advice Team for support, if required.

b) Energy Discount Scheme

There will continue to be a government funded energy discount scheme for schools until 31 March 2024, although this will benefit fewer schools than the current scheme.

c) Household Support Fund

The Local Authority has been given funding from the Essential Living Fund to support families in need. ECC has decided to make some of this funding available to schools. There was some concern from headteachers that they were being asked to determine which families needed the funding, and CK was asked if schools could use the funding to support food banks or a hardship support funding. She **AGREED** to find out if this would be possible.

d) School budgets

Essex LA is now aligned with the National Funding Formula.

The November Autumn Statement confirmed that an additional £2 billion will be allocated to the core school budgets in each of the next two funding years, starting April 2023.

This funding equates to an increase in Essex of £74.1 million, split between the

- Schools Block - £32.4 million;
- and a new grant, the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant - £37.1 million

CK

4. EDUCATION UPDATES

a) School improvement offer

Alison Fiala explained that the current core entitlement for school improvement, offered to all schools including academies, will change in the new school year. All schools will have a named SEP, and a core offer of support will continue to be provided for maintained schools. Additional support will be offered through a traded service, and schools/academies will be able to buy support days and indicate which adviser they wish to work with (subject to their capacity). The offer will be explained at the termly headteacher meetings in March.

The allocated core offer for maintained schools is still being developed.

b) Partnership support in the spring term

Early Years and phonics training is being offered, funded by the Education Taskforce. Around 26 specialist teachers have been trained and they are contacting Partnership Lead headteachers who are being invited to organise partnership training.

AF noted that the LA is working with subject leaders to develop maths CPD next term.

5. SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

Jo Barclay, Head of Education Safeguarding and Wellbeing, gave the following updates:

a) Updated materials, model policies and presentations are available on the safeguarding page of the Essex Schools Infolink.

<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Safeguarding/Pages/Safeguarding.aspx>

Presentations include updates on the Ofsted inspection safeguarding expectations, and governor training.

b) Harmful Sexual Guidance

A suite of resources, including a primary model HSB Policy, has been developed and is available on the infolink.

[https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Safeguarding/Sexualised Behaviour/Pages/default.aspx](https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Safeguarding/Sexualised_Behaviour/Pages/default.aspx)

Guidance documents

[https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Safeguarding/Templates for Reporting and Recording Child Protection Concerns/Pages/default.aspx](https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Safeguarding/Templates_for_Reporting_and_Recording_Child_Protection_Concerns/Pages/default.aspx)

JB noted that pupil voice is an important aspect of understanding harmful sexual behaviour.

c) Brook Traffic Light training

This is being rolled out to schools across Essex. Currently there is one licence available for each primary school but there may be additional places available if requested. JB noted that she recently trained Essex police around HSB.

d) It could happen here – allegations about the workforce

JB will send a “hold the date” in relation to this training.

e) Information sharing

There will be training on 7th February for practitioners.

f) JB confirmed that her team will be available to support DSLs with any concerns or queries on days when industrial action is taking place.

g) Support for refugees

Information has been developed and will be shared with schools about support for refugees and the best practice that has been developed.

There are a number of different funding schemes available:

- Ukraine funding from the Home Office;
- The Afghan relocation scheme;
- Possible funding through the Growth Fund.

6. SPRING TERM PRIMARY HEADTEACHER MEETINGS

It was noted that the West headteacher meeting falls on the 1st March and so coincides with a day of industrial action; the LA and EPHA will consider holding the meetings online that day.

It was agreed that the focus for the LA meetings should include a Director's update, and then some key information and messages about attendance compliance and advice.

7. CLOSE

CK closed the meeting by acknowledging, once again, the stresses and pressures that are on schools are the moment, and thanked headteachers for their amazing work.

8. DATES AND TIMES OF MEETINGS FOR THE 2022/23 SCHOOL YEAR

Executive meetings (The Lion Inn, Boreham)

Thursday 19 January 2023

Wednesday 24 May 2023

Area Heads Meetings

Spring term 2023

WEST	Wednesday 1 March	online
SOUTH	Thursday 2 March	Greenwoods Hotel, Stock
N-EAST	Wednesday 8 March	Colchester Community Stadium
MID	Thursday 9 March	The Lion Inn, Boreham

Summer term 2023

WEST	Wednesday 14 June	Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth
SOUTH	Thursday 15 June	Greenwoods Hotel, Stock
N-EAST	Wednesday 21 June	Colchester Community Stadium
MID	Thursday 22 June	The Lion Inn, Boreham

The meeting ended at 3.00 pm
Pam Langmead, EPHA Professional Officer