

ESSEX PRIMARY HEADTEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE EPHA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 19 JANUARY 2023 at 9.15 am – 12.00 noon at The Lion Inn, Boreham

Distribution

*Dawn Baker	Chelmsford West/Mid Treasurer
*Sue Bardetti	Tendring South
*Isobel Barron	West Chair
*Liz Bartholomew	Harwich and Dovercourt
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*Paula Derwin	Colchester East
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Mary Jo Hall	West Treasurer/Uttlesford North
Bridget Harris	North East Treasurer
*Nick Hutchings	EPHA Vice-Chair/North East Chair/ Colchester West
*Clare James	Dengie
*Chris Jarmain	West Vice-Chair
*Becky Keitch	Tendring North
*Pam Langmead	EPHA Professional Officer/County Treasurer
Ian MacDonald	Tendring Mid
*Diana Mason	Castle Point and Benfleet
*Richard McIntosh	Chelmsford South
James Newell	Tendring North
Jinnie Nichols	Halstead
Hayley O'Dea	Rochford
*Matt O'Grady	Brentwood
*Richard Potter	North East Vice-Chair
Harriet Phelps-Knights	EPHA Chair
Amanda Reid	Mid Vice-Chair/Chelmsford North
*Gary Soars	Rayleigh
*Nicky Stone-Riley	South Chair/Basildon East & Pitsea
*Karen Tucker	Canvey Island
Jonathan Tye	Harlow
*Joanne Willcox	Epping Forest South
Vacancy	Basildon West

Also in attendance

Emily Welton	ESSET
Carole Herman	ASHE
Nicki Harris	Juniper Education HR

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Action

Nick Hutchings, the EPHA Vice-Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He explained that Harriet Phelps-Knights was unable to attend (the first time she has missed an Executive meeting!) He noted that Chris Jarmain has been elected as Vice-Chair for West and he was welcomed to the meeting. There is currently a vacancy for the representative for Basildon West, following Angela Russell's retirement at the end of the autumn term. The Professional Officer agreed to discuss this with the Basildon headteachers at their termly briefing.

Professional
Officer

Apologies were received from:

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

Nick noted that Jeff Banks, the representative from the NHS, was unable to attend the meeting due to sickness. His input will be deferred to a future meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 29 September 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising.

3. EPHA REPRESENTATION ON GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

i) EPHA Chair's report

In her absence, the EPHA Vice-Chair read a report from Harriet Phelps-Knights, the EPHA Chair.

Firstly, my apologies for not being at the EPHA Executive meeting, I think this is the first one I have missed so please accept my apologies, I have a family funeral to attend. Thank you to Nick for chairing the meeting today.

Secondly, a massive thank you to everyone that has attended meetings and been part of EPHA's support for schools and heads during the Autumn Term. I know the colleague supporter programme continues to go from strength to strength and as always it is important to get the messages out to the LA, as well as other agencies, of what works well and what heads and schools need to focus on or need support with.

At the AGM we agreed that the EPHA priorities would be

- Reading – with a particular focus on children with special educational needs;
- Disadvantaged children, and a particular focus on white British boys;
- Writing;
- Development of SEN outreach support, especially at key transition points

Although the Autumn term continued to be a challenge for us all with absences, yet again headteachers rose to the challenge of Strep A and Covid 19 and still managed to open schools and provide a good education to the pupils across Essex primary schools.

During our meeting last week with LA Officers a couple of important things were raised:

- SEND is still under immense pressure with limited EP support which is not improving as recruitment issues are still a problem. The LA is exploring solutions particularly in the West where 60% of the EP positions are currently not filled.
- New EHCPs notifications are indicating the current Band i.e. 3 and then the new band i.e. C. This was raised with Ralph Holloway as no decision has been about the monetary value and this is playing to the view that the re-banding was a money saving exercise. Ralph reiterated that was certainly not the case and he would change this system.
- Attendance
 - Waiting for a national approach to term time holidays from the DfE
 - Schools do not have to wait to do a penalty notice before going for prosecution – you can go straight to prosecution (that has been the case since 2018)
 - Info link has pre-referral expectations, but we have asked for a webcast or training around this

As we all know, there are a number of challenges that schools continue to face as these were reported back to the Schools Forum last week with agreement from all the other phases in attendance:

- Cost of energy and the financial pressures this is putting on school budgets with the uncertainty of support in the long term
- Inflationary pressures adding to the strain on budgets; rising cost of food, consumables and transport
- Recruitment and retention particularly of support staff
- Legacy of the pandemic which included issues around attendance, increase in SEMH support required, anxiety amongst pupils, parents and staff
- And the pressure of supporting SEND pupils and the level of demand in this area that is growing at a considerable rate in mainstream primary schools and the need to support and develop the ESSET outreach proposal in order to build capacity for support in primary schools.

The Executive members discussed the ongoing challenge of SEND and what support might be helpful for mainstream schools. It was argued that outreach support from ESSET will be valuable, but that the Enhanced Provisions can also be better used, with sufficient funding, along with the development of more GROW provision.

There was some concern about lack of communication and response from the LA when asked to follow up on issues. One Headteacher noted that she had asked for a

Statement of Funding for a child in July last year, and had received the response yesterday; the Executive understands the pressures that the SEND Ops teams are under, but this delay is simply unacceptable.

It was agreed that the problems that schools are facing are in two areas:

- Process driven - administration, available places; and
- Relationships – communication, integrity of decisions, an understanding of how schools work (e.g. heads receive communications and demands during the school holiday periods).

It was noted that Ralph Holloway has asked for primary headteachers to be involved with the process to determine the value of the new EHCP bands, but no one has yet been approached to be on this panel.

Schools forum recognised the impact that all these things have on the budget. The Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG) will offer limited additional financial support for schools next year:

- £119 per pupil
- £4,510 lump sum
- £104 FSM6

There is also an increase of the Pupil Premium Grant from £1385 in 22/23 to £1455 in 23/24

- Mainstream budget allocations should be notified by 28/2/23
- Academies by the 31/3/23

And just for schools to note that the DfE purchase National licences for all schools for the following:

- *CLA - Copyright Licencing Agency*
- *SPML – School Printed Music Licence*
- *NLA – Newspaper Licencing Agency*
- *ERA – Education Recording Agency*
- *PVSL – Public Video Screening Licence*
- *MPLC – Motion Picture Licencing Company*
- *PPL – Phonographic Performance Limited*
- *PRS – Performing Rights Society*
- *MCPS – Mechanical Copyright Protection Society*
- *CCLI – Christian Copyright Licencing International*

Education Task Force

Some improved uptake on outdoor education was reported by the voluntary sector – subsidised residential trips will be advertised for schools to apply and take advantage of. Special schools have been running Sensory Stories which have been very successful, and it was suggested that this should be put out to the wider audience of mainstream schools.

The Year of Reading continues to be a success with Think Reading in secondary and the Herts for Learning in Primary. There has been a discussion around following the Year of Reading with The Year of Numbers and how should this be taken forward; the Council is focused on Multiply project along with financial wellbeing which fits well into the year of numbers.

The Executive had a discussion about the focus, and how the Year of Numbers could be most helpful. There were a number of suggestions including the rollout of several tried and tested programmes, such as the Jigsaw Maths pilot, and White Rose.

There was a feeling among some that the next focus should be on writing, rather than maths. Alternatively, focusing on enriching the curriculum, such as a Year of Arts. It was suggested that this could be linked with the maths focus, putting numbers across in a more creative way. It was argued that any offer needs to be more accessible across the county, much of the training for the Year of Reading was based in Mid and training courses were often full.

The **Wellbeing Survey** will continue with a focus on expanding the survey to get a fuller view across the county of the challenges that pupils face. This is likely to replace the SHEU survey that schools used to complete.

The Chair's report concluded by saying "Thank you again to everyone for your commitment to EPHA and I look forward to seeing you all at various events across the term."

ii) Professional Officer report

The report gave details of the meetings attended by Pam Langmead on behalf of EPHA. In addition to the attendance at meetings (and writing follow up reports), her work for EPHA has included:

- Information, emails and communications with all headteachers;
- Responding to queries and actions from the Executive, ECC, other association officers, interested companies;
- Individual support for headteachers when issues arise;
- Identifying and supporting new headteachers;
- Managing the Colleague Supporter programme;
- Briefings to headteacher groups – 28 partnerships/clusters are now holding termly briefings – researching and writing briefing notes and presentations –and keeping them up to date as new directives, guidance and documents are introduced;
- Helping establish the Small Schools Support Group, setting up a database, planning October conference;
- Planning and organising Deputy headteacher conference and WEPHA conference;
- Planning Headteacher conference;
- Writing 7 minute staff meetings, including screening, searching and confiscation;
- Recording a training video: safeguarding for governors;
- Updating support materials for schools, including statutory policy lists, website

- checklists, and the Support Directory;
- Organisation and management of the area meetings in the autumn and spring terms;
- Managing requests for headteacher wellbeing support;
- Managing the EPHA finances: paying claims and invoices (including from Colleague Supporters), supporting area treasurers, producing reports, paying in cheques;
- Managing the bookings, organising the Headteacher conference, future planning for Deputy Heads' conference;
- Updating EPHA records and website;
- Other tasks as required.

The EPHA Professional Officer was thanked for the amount of work that she does for the Association.

iii) Small School Support Group

The Professional Officer noted that the Small Schools Support Group, had held a meeting the day before. The Chair, Jinnie Nichols, was unable to attend the Executive meeting and had sent her apologies. The agenda included input from the Chair of the National Schools Association, which offers support and advice for small school headteachers, and is involved with consultation and research. The meeting also had input from Yannick Stupples-Whyley, ECC Senior Finance Manager, about schools budgets and the new criteria for the Falling Rolls fund. The group also discussed a proposal from the Essex Education Taskforce about funding wellbeing support.

The minutes of the meeting are available on the EPHA website at <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/epha-small-schools-group-minutes-18-01-23.pdf>

4. FINANCE REPORT

a) Current account income and expenditure 23.09.22 – 30.12.22

	Expenditure	Income
Miscellaneous	£20,337.52	£0.00
DSG		£0.00
Subscriptions		£320.00 (subs St Philomena's)
Supply	£3,798.00	
Travel & mileage	£4,260.85	
Professional Officer	£26,786.32	
Meetings	£14,644.06	
Colleague Support	£5,187.96	<i>(Includes capacity support)</i>
Headteacher wellbeing	£2,678.40	
Totals	£77,693.11	£320.00

The Professional Officer expenditure for September – December 2022 is broken down into

- *professional fees* £24,078.50
- *mileage* £736.20
- *expenses paid on behalf of EPHA* £1,971.20
- £26,786.32**

Part of the PO expenses paid on behalf of EPHA is a monthly Zoom subscription of

£100.79 which supports the online meetings, briefings, conferences and webcasts run by the Association. Miscellaneous includes a £20,000 transfer to the conference account in November 2022.

Bank statements for account 00795978

16.09.21	£321,863.41
16.12.22	£255,758.57

Conference account Income and Expenditure 01.08.22– 28.12.22

	Expenditure	Income
Deputy conference 2022	£19,673.56	£9,800.00
Headteacher conference 2023	£1,128.87	£0.00
WEPHA conference September 2022	£2,430.00	£1,350.00
Training events and miscellaneous	£2,250.00	£20,840.00
Totals	£25,482.42	£31,990.00

Please note that the income and expenditure relates to this 4 month period, and therefore doesn't record the overall income and expenditure for each event. Income includes a £20 k contribution from the current account.

Bank statements for account 00795978

24.09.22	£31,518.67
28.12.22	£19,911.04

b) Claim for EPHA Executive expenses

It was noted that the amount that headteachers can claim for expenses and supply cover has not increased since 2011. The following increases were **AGREED**:

- Day - £200
- Morning - £120
- Afternoon - £85

The amount for mileage will remain at 45p a mile, in line with local government guidelines.

It was **AGREED** that the Professional Officer will update the claim form and will circulate it to Executive members, who can then claim for their time out of school attending meetings on behalf of EPHA.

Professional
Officer

5. OUTREACH FROM SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Emily Welton, the Professional Officer for ESSET, was welcomed to the meeting. The Executive was reminded that she had attended the termly headteacher meetings in November and had explained the proposal that ESSET will take to the Local Authority, following helpful feedback from headteachers in mainstream schools. Common themes highlighted by the feedback included:

- Recruitment and retention of high quality staff;
- Staff wellbeing and the impact of dealing with really complex and challenging children;
- LA support systems – ESSET doesn't want to duplicate work already being done; how can the system work together effectively and collaboratively;
- The significant amount of time that SEN management takes in mainstream schools;

- Pressure from parents and sometimes unreasonable expectations;
- A lack of understanding or acceptance by parents of the complexity of need.

ESSET's vision is to be part of the SEN solution. Mainstream schools are at breaking point, and there are (and always will be) insufficient places in Special Schools. However, ESSET realises that they have a role to play, particularly supporting schools with those children who should really be in specialist settings. She noted that, at the last Schools Forum meeting, it was reported that there is an £8.7 million underspend on the High Needs Block this year, and it has been argued that this needs to be spent on improving the whole system. Emily stressed that ESSET wants to work with Early Years settings, primary schools and secondary, particularly focusing on transition.

The support could include:

- Informal consultation – for example where a school is struggling with a complex child (almost fulfilling the Specialist Teacher role!). She noted that some of those former Specialist Teachers are now headteachers in special schools and so have a great deal of expertise and experience.
- Special school staff coming into mainstream schools to undertake observations, share strategies and offer training to ECTs and a Whole School Approach.
- Outreach/in-reach – mainstream staff visiting special schools and vice versa.

Emily has been tasked with putting together a costed plan for the Local Authority to consider, setting out what ESSET could deliver to support and enable mainstream schools to be more confident, thereby increasing parental confidence and alleviating some of the pressures on the system. The ESSET Executive has scheduled a meeting with Clare Kershaw, Ralph Holloway, Nicola Woolf and Philippa Holliday on 8th February 2023 to discuss this further, and then a meeting on 20th February to further develop and discuss the outreach offer with the LA, Enhanced Provision, and PRUs leaders.

Emily also plans to map the current Enhanced Provision and Special School provision in each quadrant.

A key part of the proposal will be to agree a Service Level Agreement with Special Schools, and potentially employ a Link Outreach Officer in each quadrant.

One headteacher noted that it is sometimes difficult to get the LA to understand that SEN is often at the root of many challenges faced by schools, including wellbeing, outcomes, complaints, funding and Ofsted inspections.

A headteacher in the North East quadrant noted that she has received helpful support from Market Fields School, but stressed that the outreach support should focus on children who are not aiming to go to special schools, but are expected to stay and be supported in mainstream schools.

Emily was thanked for her continuing work on this project, and was asked to attend future Executive meetings to report on progress.

6. MEETING WITH HEALTH COLLEAGUES

As Jeff Banks was unable to attend the meeting, it was **AGREED** that this discussion should be deferred to the summer term Executive meeting. Headteachers were asked for any experiences or concerns that should be shared with Health.

An immediate concern reported was that of locum paediatricians or GPs making unsupported diagnoses of ASD and ADHD and suggesting that schools should offer one to one support and an EHCP for a child.

EPHA
Executive
18 May 2023

7. HR MATTERS

Nicki Harris, Senior Manager for Juniper Education HR, was welcomed to the meeting. She explained that she sits on the National Employers Association for Teachers. The Secretary of State will consider the Schools Teachers' Review Body's recommendation for teachers' pay, but the report is not due until May. There are no hints yet about the likely increase; last year the recommendation was 3% and this increased to 5%. However, the starting salary for teachers will increase to £30,000 from September, and so there will be an automatic increase at the bottom point of the pay spine, and increases in pay points to maintain a differential.

In relation to support staff, the National Living Wage is increasing and there is a commitment from the National Joint Council to be an employer that meets or exceeds the minimum wage. Nicki explained that there may be more information about the proposed increases by the end of February.

Nicki summarised the current situation in relation to industrial action; the NEU has reached the ballot threshold and has announced strike action on 4 days over February and March. She advised that employers should take the stance that this is a "breach of contract" but they can't take any additional action. All staff should receive a letter warning them of the breach of contract and loss of pay if they strike. If a school has to close, non-striking staff should attend the work place or may be directed to work from home. Support staff are entitled to refuse to cover a class unless their contract specifically includes this responsibility, for example as cover supervisor or HLTA.

The DfE guidance encourages schools to remain open, and to consider prioritising vulnerable children and those whose parents are critical workers.

One Headteacher noted that she had been given conflicting advice by HR consultants around restructuring and redundancy. Nicki advised that headteachers should get in touch with Kara Oldman or Lily Brown, who are senior advisers, if they have concerns.

8. YEAR 6 – 7 TRANSITION

Carole Herman, Executive Director for ASHE, was welcomed to the meeting. She noted that, historically, there has been some tension between secondary and primary schools about transition arrangements and the transfer of information about Year 6 pupils. Information has been requested in different formats, and at different times of the year. The Executive was reminded that ASHE and EPHA have considered a universal form for transition information and a final version was agreed at the meeting.

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The following was **AGREED**:

The Professional Officer would update the draft form following discussion at the meeting;

- Carole will share the final version with secondary schools;
- Primary/junior schools will not be asked for information before 1st March (when secondaries are informed which pupils will be transferring to their school);
- The transition form will be completed by primary/junior schools by summer half term;
- The transition events will be held in the week commencing 26th June (notified to primary schools in March 2022) and secondaries will plan to hold these in the last week of June in future years.

Carole was asked to ensure that headteachers/principals in secondary schools shared this agreed information with their Year 7 transition leads, so that primary schools do not continue to receive conflicting documents or requests.

It was noted that the Harlow Education Consortium has agreed different arrangements for Harlow schools. In addition, other authorities will have different requirements, though ASHE can publicise the transition form that has been agreed; however, it has no jurisdiction over schools in other authorities.

A Headteacher noted that many secondary schools are offering day-time visits to Year 6 (and sometimes Year 5) pupils during September, and these are proving extremely disruptive at the beginning of the school year. Carole was asked to discuss this issue with secondary headteachers and to ask them to reconsider any arrangements that have an impact on the attendance of Year 6 pupils. She **AGREED** to take this issue back to ASHE colleagues.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business discussed.

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

Executive meetings (The Lion Inn, Boreham)

Wednesday 24 May 2023

Thursday 5 October 2023

Thursday 18 January 2024

Thursday 9 May 2024

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
MID

Wednesday 21 June
Thursday 22 June

Colchester Community Stadium
The Lion Inn, Boreham

Conferences

Headteachers' Conference

Friday 24 March 2023 Stock Brook Country Club, Nr. Billericay

Deputy Headteachers' Conference

Friday 13 October 2023 Weston Community Homes Stadium

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Harriet Phelps-Knights
Chair of EPHA

Pam Langmead
EPHA Professional Officer