

ESSEX PRIMARY HEADTEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE EPHA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 19 MAY 2022 at 9.00 am – 11.00 am at The Lion Inn, Boreham

Distribution

*Lois Ashforth	Dengie
George Athanasiou	West Vice-Chair
*Dawn Baker	Chelmsford West/Mid Treasurer
*Sue Bardetti	Tendring South
*Isobel Barron	West Chair
Liz Bartholomew	Harwich and Dovercourt
*Dale Bateman	Epping Forest Rural
*Liz Benjeddi	Billericay
*Heidi Blakeley	Wickford
*Amanda Buckland-Garnett	South Woodham Ferrers
*Dida Burrell	Braintree
*Anna Conley	Witham
*Matt Curzon	Uttlesford South
*Dawn Dack	Mid Chair/Maldon
*Ceri Daniels	Colchester South (Tiptree & Stanway)
Emma Dawson	Castle Point and Benfleet
*Paula Derwin	Colchester East
*Richard Green	South Vice-Chair
*Mary Jo Hall	West Treasurer/Uttlesford North
*Nick Hutchings	EPHA Vice-Chair/North East Chair/ Colchester West
*Becky Keitch	Tendring North
*Pam Langmead	EPHA Professional Officer/County Treasurer
*Ian MacDonald	Tendring Mid
*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
*Angela Russell	Basildon West
Gary Soars	Rayleigh
Nicky Stone-Riley	South Chair/Basildon East & Pitsea
*Karen Tucker	Canvey Island
Jonathan Tye	Harlow
*Joanne Willcox	Epping Forest South

Also in attendance

Mary Evans	Substituting for Jonathan Tye, Harlow
Nicky Patrick	Substituting for Liz Bartholomew, Harwich
Jane Robinson	Hearts Academy Trust

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Harriet Phelps-Knights, the EPHA Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Mary Evans and Nicky Patrick, substituting for Jonathan Tye (Harlow) and Liz Bartholomew (Harwich).

Apologies were received from:

- George Athanasiou West Vice-Chair
- Liz Bartholomew Harwich and Dovercourt
- Emma Dawson Castle Point and Benfleet
- James Newell Tendring North
- Hayley O’Dea Rochford
- Gary Soars Rayleigh
- Nicky Stone-Riley South Chair/Basildon East & Pitsea
- Jonathan Tye Harlow

The Chair noted that Emma Dawson, who represents Castle Point and Benfleet, was unable to attend the meeting, and has advised that she will be stepping down from the Executive, due to conflicting claims on her time. Lois Ashforth (Dengie) is leaving headship at the end of term, and so will also be stepping down. Lois has represented Dengie heads since June 2014. Both headteachers were thanked for their contribution and commitment to EPHA and for representing and supporting their local headteachers. The subsequent vacancies will be addressed at the area AGMs in June.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Executive meetings held on 20 January 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record. It was noted that it had been agreed that representatives from ESSET would be invited to the meeting to discuss outreach from special schools. However, the limited time available on the agenda for this meeting had meant that this was not possible; this item will be included on the agenda for the next meeting on 29th September 2022.

It was noted that all other matters arising had been completed.

3. FINANCE REPORT

Current account income and expenditure 01.01.22 - 27.04.22

	Expenditure	Income	Notes
DSG		£0.00	
Subscriptions		£0.00	
Miscellaneous	£193.84		
Supply	£4,458.00		
Travel & mileage	£2,137.95		<i>Includes EPHA Chair expenses</i>
Professional Officer	£21,126.98		
Meetings	£23,124.72		<i>Venues and presenters</i>
Colleague Supporter	£185.85		
Headteacher wellbeing	£4,470.00		<i>Subsidy for HeartHealth programme</i>

Action

EPHA
Executive
29 September
2022

it was **AGREED** that the Professional Officer would re-distribute the flyer about potential funding support, to all schools.

- governor support for the wellbeing of heads- an e-book has been created for governors
- pupil well being

Year of Reading

The Chair noted that next year the Task Force may move on to maths, but will continue to focus on reading, so that the impact of projects that have been started don't get lost.

The Year of Reading launch in February was an interesting event that had a range of speakers. Links have been sent out around the event to watch and inspire school leaders, in particular the video produced by Frank Cottrell Boyce. The Year of Reading project directory has also been sent out detailing the events and projects that are supporting the focus. It was **AGREED** that the Professional Officer would re-distribute the project directory to all schools.

The Herts for Learning reading training has shown a positive impact on outcomes with 53 schools taking part and demonstrating an average progress of 2 years and 1 month in comprehension and 1 year and 2 months in reading accuracy.

Library cards have been organised for every pupil and have just been distributed to schools. The aim is to increase family engagement with local libraries.

Reading assessment – consideration is being given to a reading assessment that will allow all primary schools to report in the same way, and pass on information to secondary schools to ensure a consistent and unified approach.

The Pupil Wellbeing survey has some interesting findings around more affluent areas perhaps not being as resilient to the effects of the pandemic, reporting a greater percentage of low wellbeing; for example Year 11 Brentwood reported 37% low wellbeing, Uttlesford 13%, Basildon 20%. Primary wellbeing scored better than secondary, although Year 6 boys' and girls' low wellbeing was equal at 8% of those responding. Future surveys will be opened out to gain more responses and to track cohorts throughout a number of years, probably using a similar system to the SHU survey.

There was a brief discussion about pupil wellbeing, with one headteacher noting that his staff had not been prepared for the level of anxiety among Year 6 pupils during SATs week; this was echoed by other headteachers.

Inclusion Headteacher Roundtable

An online Inclusion conference will be held on Tuesday 5th July from 9.00 am – 12 noon. The key note speaker will be Margaret Mulholland (who was due to speak last year), and other speakers will include a representative from the Multi-Schools Council who have been running a project with pupils looking at SEND provision in schools. The intention is also to launch the Ordinarily Available framework, and the Inclusion Framework, as these are being rolled out in September.

**Professional
Officer**

**Professional
Officer**

The Roundtable continues to focus on the Inclusion Statement and whether this achieves the purpose of holding schools to account that are not offering inclusive provision and admissions practice; it was felt that a number of schools, academies and MATs that are not demonstrably inclusive have signed up to the Statement, and therefore there is little useful purpose to the document. One Headteacher noted that her schools is definitely inclusive, with a significant number of pupils with complex needs, but they had been reluctant to sign the Inclusion Statement as she and the governors felt that some of the commitments were unrealistic. It was noted that one of the requirements of the Ordinarily Available framework, which her school is piloting, is to sign up to the Statement.

Many of the EPHA Executive members said they were unfamiliar with the Ordinarily Available framework, as its rollout has been limited to pilot schools. Headteachers expressed real concern that if the LA expects this to be introduced in schools, alongside the expansion of the Inclusion Framework and the changes to SEN top-up funding, headteachers are going to be overwhelmed with the expected changes and responsibilities.

SEND funding working group

The EPHA Chair explained that she has been part of the SEN funding working group, and they have been looking at the current banding system, trialling new ways of working, developing new banding descriptors and processes. She noted some concerns that have been raised by headteachers that need to be addressed at the start of the training for mainstream settings:

- Is this simply a money saving exercise, and will mainstream schools be worse off?
- Will EHCPS be harder to come by?
- How will the SEND Operations team cope with two systems running in parallel for a time (given that they are already stretched to breaking point)?

There was a great deal of confusion among the Schools Forum representatives about the timing and implementation of the rollout, including training, re-banding of existing EHCPS, moderation and eventual “go live” in different settings. Following the meeting, the following timeframe was confirmed by Ralph Holloway:

Implementation timeline: transition will take place across a two-year period (academic years 2022/23 and 2023/24)		
	Timescales: Year 1 Special schools, post-16 colleges	Timescales: Year 2 Mainstream schools (including Enhanced Provisions, early years settings
Initial financial modelling – agree the quantum of SEN top-up funding for each sector in advance	Spring term 2022	
Banding exercise – initial training for all settings on the new methodology. All settings to band their young people.	Training: May – September 2022 Banding exercise: June – November 2022	

Further financial modelling – use the banding exercise to set top-up values, check affordability, benchmark sectors/settings	November – December 2022	
Moderation exercise – in parallel, moderation of a sample of bandings for each setting. Discussions to ensure consistency	November 2022 – early 2023	November 2023
Final financial modelling – use the outcomes of the moderation exercise to set final top-ups, transitional protection	December 2022/ early 2023	December 2023 – early 2024
Roll-out – communications of top-ups to settings, including any transitional protection. Advice in lead-up to implementation	March 2023 Go live September 2023	March 2024 Go live September 2024
New assessments allocated top-up under existing system, plus band under the new system		

One Headteacher suggested that the meeting at the beginning of the autumn term with the school’s Inclusion Partner might be used as an opportunity to jointly consider the re-banding of EHCPs, which would be of practical support to the school. Another Headteacher noted that his school had a SEN Review earlier in the week, but there had been no mention of the Ordinarily Available Framework; he questioned whether the SEND quadrant teams had received training about this framework.

ii) Schools Forum

The Chair of EPHA is a representative on the School Forum; other EPHA Executive members on the Forum include Richard Green, Sue Bardetti, Jinnie Nicholls and the EPHA Professional Officer. At a recent meeting information was shared about school and academy balances. A number of schools have huge balances, but there is a marked difference between rural and urban schools, and small schools have significantly smaller balances.

The increase in fuel costs is becoming a real challenge for schools, and many will have to use any carry forward or contingency funding to meet these additional costs; there is no indication that school funding will be increased to meet fuel cost rises.

The Finance Review Group is a sub-group of Schools Forum. At a recent meeting it was noted that the introduction of the National Funding Formula has an impact on schools notional SEN budget – the DfE funds high needs on a place plus approach, which for mainstream schools is split into 3 elements:

- Element 1 – Basic Entitlement per pupil
- Element 2 – Notional SEN budget
- Element 3 – Top-up funding from the High Needs Block

Elements 1 and 2 equate to the £10,000 place funding for special schools and PRUs and the DfE has set Element 1 as £4,000 and Element 2 as £6,000 for mainstream schools. This therefore led to schools being required to fund the first £6,000 for every EHCP from

the Notional SEN budget. The Authority also provides additional protection to ensure schools have a minimum of £105 per pupil in its notional SEN budget once the contribution to EHCPs has been deducted. The LA has undertaken research looking at statistical neighbours and has found Essex to be broadly in line, therefore no change to the above has been proposed.

The High Needs Review Group is a sub-group of Schools Forum. The EPHA Chair reported that in future, where a PRU pupil is dual-registered, EHCP top up funding will be removed from the school, thereby ensuring that there is no double funding from the High Needs Block. She noted that how schools who take a pupil from the PRU can therefore be supported is a conversation that is continuing.

iii) **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, including in response to the Covid-19 pandemic;
- 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;
- Writing 7 minute staff meetings, including managing complaints;
- Updating support materials for schools, including statutory policy lists, website checklists, and the Support Directory;
- Organisation and management of the area meetings in the spring and summer terms;
- Organising and running webcasts with Clare Kershaw, Mike Gogarty, Lucy Wightman, Wesleyan Finance, Dot Com, Pursuit wellbeing;
- Writing and delivering key note presentation at the Clerks' conference;
- Organising Managing Complaints training, writing the presentation, updating policy and leaflets, updating the Complaints Toolkit;
- Setting up the mid-year admissions webcasts with Shamsun Noor;
- 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.

iv) **Small schools support group**

Following discussion at the last meeting, a Small Schools Support group has been established. The first meeting, held on 17th March, was chaired by the EPHA Chair. At the meeting Jinnie Nichols was appointed Chair for the group going forward, and Ceri Daniels as Vice-Chair. Jinnie reported that the inaugural meeting had been welcomed by Small School Headteachers. The group had considered terms of reference and membership, and had gone on to discuss the many challenges faced by small schools. In particular these include managing and maintaining the school premises (often with no caretaker and limited funding), managing the budget and staffing, the challenge of Ofsted (in particular, deep dives), headteacher and staff wellbeing, given their multiple roles, and the challenges of providing for pupils with SEND. There are often a disproportionate number of children with special educational needs as parents believe that a smaller school environment will be safer and more nurturing for their child.

The Professional Officer noted that the next meeting of the Small Schools Support Group will be held on 24th May, and the agenda will include discussions about how EPHA might organise additional support and capacity for small school heads, on a time limited basis, by encouraging larger schools to lend key staff members, such as deputies or SENCos. This could be partly funded by the Colleague Support programme. The intention is not to pay for staffing in schools, but to encourage a collegiate approach to support small school headteachers.

Alison Fiala is attending the next meeting, and will hopefully give some clarity about the impact of the DfE White Paper and Schools Bill on small schools.

4. LOCAL AUTHORITY INPUT TO AREA MEETINGS IN THE SUMMER TERM

It was **AGREED** that the Local Authority needs to offer information and clarity on a range of issues that are of concern to headteachers and schools. The input at the summer term meetings needs to include the following:

- Expectations about the Inclusion Framework, the Ordinarily Available framework, and the roll out of SEND funding and re-banding.
- Feedback on the SEND re-inspection of the Local Authority
- The implications for the Local Authority and Essex schools, following the publication of the White Paper and Schools Bill factsheets. In particular, the factsheet about Local Authority Academisation Powers which, in principle, gives LAs the option of ceasing to maintain schools (from September 2023) raises huge concerns and questions for schools in the county. Dawn Baker noted that she had attended an Eastern England headteacher roundtable, where Jonathan Duff (the new Regional Director, formerly Regional Schools Commissioner) had set out the expectation that smaller MATs (of around 10 schools; 7500 pupils) will lead school improvement. This aim has implication for all schools; not only maintained schools, but also small MATs and Single Academy Trusts, along with academies that are not within strong MATs.

The EPHA Vice-Chair suggested that Nicki Harris (Juniper HR) should be invited to the meeting to explain how schools can meet the uplift in starting salaries for teachers.

5. CHARTERED COLLEGE OF TEACHING

The Professional Officer explained that Dame Alison Peacock had presented at the Mid headteachers' meeting in March, and had shared information about the Chartered College of Teaching and the benefits of membership. It was agreed that we would ask a number of Essex headteachers to share their experience, before deciding if this was something that EPHA should promote or subsidise.

Jane Robinson, Head of School at Wickford Academy, was welcomed to the meeting. She is a Fellow of the Chartered College, and explained that her membership fee is around £8 a month. She outlined some of the benefits of membership including access to the monthly Impact magazine, which includes a wide range of well written research articles, focus on the curriculum, pedagogy, leadership, SEND, equality and diversity and so on. She explained that she finds it particularly useful to have access to a national network and finds the membership extremely value.

Richard Potter explained that he is also a Fellow, and just over a year ago he started a "Chartership", which he described as the most challenging academic programme he has ever taken part in. He described in detail the research and evidence he has undertaken to meet the demands of the Chartership.

Mary Evans noted that she is also a Fellow, and one aspect she finds interesting are the frequent request to take part in research surveys, so there are plenty of opportunities to input views and experience of leadership. She also noted that members are able to attend all-parliamentary group meetings, so having direct access to policy makers.

The Chartered College runs a headteacher roundtable, and it was suggested that a representative from the EPHA Executive could become part of this.

In advance of the meeting the EPHA Chair and Professional Officer met with a representative from the Chartered College to discuss the various ways in which membership could be promoted. They had been advised that paying for membership for every primary headteacher would cost in the region of £19,000 per annum (based on an annual membership subscription of £47.50 per person). A discount would be available if 400+ schools signed up, reducing this to around £14,000, but it was felt that this was too great a financial commitment for EPHA, particularly as not all headteachers would be likely to take it up.

However, it was agreed that EPHA would liaise with the College to negotiate a group discount, and would promote membership of the organisation, including running a webinar to explain the benefits and scope of membership.

6. HEADTEACHER WELLBEING AND SUPPORT FROM EPHA

The Professional Officer noted that she had met with Linda Robinson, the governor representative on the Essex Education Task Force, who is managing the distribution of the headteacher/senior leadership wellbeing fund. EPHA has been offered the following funding to support a number of programmes to benefit small schools:

**Professional
Officer**

Proposal 1. Heart Health Programme

Total cost £600.00 per programme

Taskforce contribute 75% = £450.00 per headteacher participating

Small schools to contribute 25% of the cost as EPHA have previously arranged

Taskforce Budget allocation £450.00 per person for approximately 25 Headteachers from small schools

Total allocation = £11,250 (assuming 50% of small school heads take up the offer)

KPIs- leadership and management

Retention and Recruitment

Building a culture of wellbeing across the school

Management of stress and anxiety to reduce staff absence

Proposal 2 Colleague Support Programme

Cost £180.00 per day

Assume 6 days support across an academic year = £1,080 per school

Taskforce Budget allocation £200.00 per school for approximately 25 small schools

Total allocation £5,000

(The allocation is based upon 50% of small schools taking up this offer)

KPIs - leadership and management

Partnership working through peer to peer support

Developing leadership capacity and CPD opportunities

Raise the profile of small schools

The Task Force will ask for case studies and/or a survey conducted by EPHA from those accessing the above programmes to feedback to the Board.

It was agreed that this support funding was welcomed and can be used effectively by EPHA, but that coaching/counselling support should not be limited to the Heart Health project.

The Executive members discussed at length the numerous and onerous pressures that primary headteachers are under at the moment, exacerbated by the number of changes at both local and national level, the lack of funding to support new initiatives, and the short timescales for significant change. The group was reminded that some years ago the LA had a "gatekeeper" who monitored and, to some extent, controlled the number of initiatives that were directed at schools. It was argued that this role would be helpful, in order to manage and rationalise the changes and demands that are being made of schools.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no additional business discussed at the meeting.

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

Executive meetings (The Lion Inn, Boreham)

Thursday 29 September 2022

Thursday 19 January 2023

Thursday 18 May 2023

Area Heads Meetings

Summer term 2022

N-EAST	Wednesday 15 June	Colchester Community Stadium
MID	Thursday 16 June	The Lion Inn, Boreham
WEST	Wednesday 22 June	Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth
SOUTH	Thursday 23 June	Greenwoods Hotel, Stock

Autumn term 2022

WEST	Wednesday 9 November	Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth
MID	Thursday 10 November	The Lion Inn, Boreham
N-EAST	Wednesday 16 November	Colchester Community Stadium
SOUTH	Thursday 17 November	Greenwoods Hotel, Stock

Spring term 2023

WEST	Wednesday 1 March	Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth
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

Conferences

Deputy Headteachers' Conference

Friday 7 October 2022

Colchester Community Stadium

Headteachers' Conference

Friday 24 March 2023

Chelmsford City Race Course

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Harriet Phelps-Knights
Chair of EPHA

Pam Langmead
EPHA Professional Officer