

ESSEX PRIMARY HEADTEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE EPHA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2022 at 11.00 am – 12.30 pm at The Lion Inn, Boreham

Distribution

*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
*Luke Bulpett	South treasurer
Dida Burrell	Braintree
*Anna Conley	Witham
*Matt Curzon	Uttlesford South
*Dawn Dack	Mid Chair/Maldon
*Ceri Daniels	Colchester South (Tiptree & Stanway)
*Paula Derwin	Colchester East
Richard Green	South Vice-Chair
*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
*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
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

Emily Welton	ESSET
Debbie Hanson	Clarity Independent School

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Harriet Phelps-Knights, the EPHA Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting. New colleagues on the EPHA Executive include:

- Clare James representing headteachers in Dengie
- Diana Mason representing headteachers in Castle Point and Benfleet
- James Newell representing headteachers in Tendring North

Richard McIntosh has been elected as the new representative for Chelmsford South (but was unable to attend this meeting).

Apologies were received from:

- Amanda Buckland-Garnett South Woodham Ferrers
- Dida Burrell Braintree
- Richard Green South Vice-Chair
- Nick Hutchings EPHA Vice-Chair/North East Chair/ Colchester West
- Richard Potter North East Vice-Chair
- Angela Russell Basildon West
- Karen Tucker Canvey Island

2. BUSINESS INTERESTS REGISTER

All Executive members in attendance completed a business interests' form. It was **AGREED** that Executive members who were not at the meeting should be asked to complete a form at the earliest opportunity.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 19 May 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record. The EPHA Chair noted that the following matters had been followed up:

Chartered College membership

It was noted that the Chartered College was unwilling to offer a discounted membership rate for EPHA headteachers, and EPHA did not wish to take on the cost and administration of paying for and registering heads (who might not wish to take up membership). It has been agreed that EPHA will encourage and promote membership, but will not fund this for heads.

4. EPHA REPRESENTATION ON GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

i) Small School Support Group

Jinnie Nichols, Chair of the Small Schools Support Group, reported that the group held a third meeting in July, and one of the items on the agenda focused on FundEd, a fund raising information organisation. EPHA has funded membership for small schools. It was **AGREED** that the CEO, Richard Manville, should be invited to attend the four area meetings to talk about the values of membership for all schools.

EPHA is running a conference for small school headteachers on Wednesday 19th October.

Action

Executive members not in attendance

Professional Officer

EPHA Chair's report

The EPHA Chair noted the Professional Officer attends a lot of meetings so that she and Area Chairs don't have to. The meetings she regularly attends are:

- Essex Education Taskforce
- Meeting with the LA – Clare Kershaw and the Assistant Directors
- Schools Forum – and associated working groups
- Other meetings that I substitute for Pam when needed or attend as requested by those organising i.e. SEND funding group

ii) "Super Exec" meeting

At the meeting with Clare Kershaw and Assistant Directors on 8th September, we discussed how EPHA could work most effectively with the LA and had a long discussion exploring this. We felt that EPHA's role should be strategic and looking at the bigger picture rather than sharing individual anecdotes, and being solution-focused to the issues that the different partnerships across the county face. The EPHA Chair stressed that anecdotal stories have their place but when we are so passionate about the issues our young people are facing we can lose sight of the bigger picture, the strategic view and being solution-focused to get the right support for schools. Harriet suggested that the part of the Exec where we meet with the LA is a bit like parent governors – we are not there with our own agenda but are giving a considered view with solutions in mind. She stressed that Executive members need to be representing their areas and giving that global view to LA of what support/ resources/ time needs to be considered by them.

iii) Schools Forum report

Schools Forum predominantly looks at the financial aspect of the local authority funding to schools and funding for LA roles. Richard Green, Jinnie Nichols, Luke Bulpett, Sue Bardetti, and myself are the primary voices on the forum and the Professional Officer acts as a substitute when required. A lot of the conversations are around the current financial crisis for schools, the National Funding Formula, schools balances, Early Years (nursery funding) and SEND funding through the High Needs Block. Due to the DfE updating funding for Early Years block Early Years funding for 2 year olds and 3 and 4 year olds will increase.

There is a consultation coming out during October to schools; this is a statutory consultation but, in reality, it won't change the outcome; the proposals are:

- to reduce the KS3 /KS4 weighting for secondary schools by no more than the amount required to achieve the minimum / maximum values requirement; and
- to fund all primary and secondary schools at the NFF values for 2023/24 increased by the Essex non-fringe area cost adjustment.

A second consultation – for maintained schools only, will take place around redundancy costs and a change to the language in the scheme for financing schools from

- Where the school has an excess surplus balance and no plans to use it.
to
- Where the school has a surplus balance or can afford to fund the redundancy costs through a deficit loan over a maximum of 5 years, in accordance with the terms in section 4.9 of the Scheme for Financing Schools.

Basically, if a school can afford to fund redundancy through surplus balances or a deficit loan then they will be required to do so. It was noted that, at the Area meetings, there will be the opportunity to discuss and collate the financial challenges faced by schools, in particular asking what schools are having to cut back on because of funding constraints.

The SEND funding working group have worked with the Local Authority and ISOS (consultancy group) to conduct a review of the SEN top up funding. It has been a long process but a range of schools across phases have been part of the review. Training has now concluded, and I believe that 55% of mainstream primary schools attended the sessions. Special schools are concluding their re-banding exercise now and primary need to have completed by November 2022, moderation will then take place and special schools will use the new bands (and funding allocations) from September 2023 and mainstream September 2024.

SEND is on the agenda for this afternoon when meeting with the LA, and whilst I hear and live what the problems are within SEND at the moment we need to consider what the realistic solutions are while the new system is being implemented over the next year. Emily Welton from ESSET is joining us later on this morning to explore what outreach might look like and how we can support each other to improve the provision in both settings; many mainstream schools do things really well as do Special schools and it would be good to share good practice across both settings.

The Education Task force has had a focus on transition – Primary have always questioned the level of detail that secondary ask for and also the time frame – particularly with GDPR and what happens if a pupil doesn't end up at a particular secondary school. The EPHA Chair circulated a transition information template, received from the ASHE Executive Director. This is a relatively simple form, unlike some from secondaries (and one Trust in Mid and West, in particular) that asks for a huge amount of data and detail. Although it was agreed that the circulated form was much more reasonable than some, there were still concerns about some of the questions being asked, particularly about mental health and wellbeing. Pupils will display different behaviours in different settings, and there have been occasions when parents have been unhappy about the information shared with secondaries. It was **AGREED** that the ASHE Executive Director, Carole Herman, should be invited to the next Executive meeting on Thursday 19th January to discuss this further, along with concerns about transition days and open mornings, which can disrupt the education of primary pupils.

**Executive
meeting
January
2023**

iv) 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, guidance 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 – 27 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;

- Writing 7 minute staff meetings, including updating all KCSiE presentations, and bringing all in line with 2022 guidance;
- Updating support materials for schools, including statutory policy lists, website checklists, and the Support Directory;
- Organisation and management of the area termly headteacher meetings;
- Organising and running webcasts;
- Managing the EPHA finances: paying claims and invoices (including from Colleague Supporters), producing reports, paying in cheques;
- Managing the bookings, organising the Deputy, Headteacher and Small School conferences, future planning for conferences;
- Updating EPHA records and managing the website;
- Other tasks as required.

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

v) EPHA priorities

George Athanasiou suggested that the investigating and management of complaints, many of which are SEN related, is a continuing challenge for headteachers, and can make them very vulnerable.

Matt O’Grady noted that enhanced provisions are still not funded properly and often have vacancies in their provisions, because of a lack of funding and organisation.

5. PRIORITIES FOR EPHA FOR THE 2021/21 YEAR

The EPHA priorities were considered at the annual general meeting, held prior to the Executive meeting.

6. FINANCIAL PRESSURES IN SCHOOLS

Briefly mentioned earlier in the meeting, but not discussed at length due to lack of time.

7. OUTREACH FROM SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Emily Welton, the Professional Officer for ESSET, was welcomed to the meeting. She explained that, prior to working for ESSET (for just over a year) she was an SEN lawyer, worked in child protection, and was part of a SEN tribunal team. She worked as the Mid quadrant SEN Operations Manager for 11 years. Whilst she is not a teacher herself, she many of her family are teachers and she recognises the incredible and challenging job that teachers and headteachers so.

She explained that 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.

She needs to understand what mainstream schools need from ESSET, to support the introduction of a formal outreach offer for every school.

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 is 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. She asked headteachers to consider:

- Training needs
- Gaps of knowledge
- Long-term whole school development and school to school support.

Emily stressed that this is not a shortcut into special schools, but will raise the understanding and awareness of those children with the greatest and most complex needs in mainstream schools.

Emily agreed that enhanced provision should be part of the solution and that there needs to be financial support for both mainstream and special schools.

Emily was asked to attend the four area meetings in November to discuss the ESSET proposal further. Her input and focus on practical support and solutions was warmly welcomed by the Executive.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business discussed.

9. 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

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

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