

LA /ESSEX PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION WEST AREA

WEDNESDAY 23 JUNE 2021

The meeting was held online as a result of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic

MEETING SUMMARY: ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Agendas and minutes for these meetings available at www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk

Present

Ros Allsop	Clavering Primary	Alison Kerrell	Great Bardfield Primary
George Athanasiou	Great Sampford Primary/ West Vice-Chair	Llewellyn Lawson	Dr Walker's CE Primary Our Lady of Fatima Trust
Debbie Attridge	Ongar Primary	Ian Kendal	Stebbing Primary
Gina Bailey	William Martin Schools	Lucy Mawson	Epping Primary
Dale Bateman	Coopersale & Theydon	Tracy O'Donnell	Limes Farm Juniors
Isobel Barron	Roseacres Primary/ West Chair	Sophia Pardalis	Thomas Willingale School
Anne Marie Black	St Alban's CE Primary	Teresa Phillips	Newport Primary
Linda Chesworth	Milwards Primary	Rebecca Pine	Katherine Semar Junior & Infants
John Clements	CEO LPT	Julie Puxley	Ashdon Primary
Mary Evans	Henry Moore Primary	Simon Rance	Rodings Primary
Lawrence Garside	Felsted Primary	Colin Raraty	High Beech CE Primary
Elizabeth Gelston	Hatfield Heath Primary	Sarah Roffey	Bentfield Primary
Lisa Gibbs	Leverton Primary	David Rogers	St John Fisher Catholic Primary
Kim Hall	Henham and Ugley Primary	Michael Ross	Fawbert & Barnard's Primary
Katie Henson	St Andrew's North Weald	Sue Spearman	Radwinter CE Primary
Sarah Hurwood	Epping Upland CE Primary	Linda Todd	RA Butler Academy
Clare Griffiths	Dunmow St Mary's Primary	Emma Vincent	Great Dunmow Primary
Claire Jackman	Great Easton CE Primary	Kevin Watts	Farnham & Rickling Primaries
Chris Jarman	St Mary's CE Primary	Hannah Wheatcroft	Hillhouse CE Primary
Claire Kearney	William Martin Schools	Joanne Willcox	Fritch Green Academy
		Nikki Willis	

LA Officers

Clare Kershaw	Director of Education
Nicola Woolf	Assistant Director West
Michelle Hayden-Pepper	Local Delivery Director West
Susan Brown	SEP
Jacky Castle	SEP
Maz Norman	Head of Education South
Karen Woolhouse	ECC
Daisy Alexander	Attendance Specialist
Ellie Yallop	ECC Early Years
Jima Folopoulou	ECC Early Years
Derai Lewis-Jones	ECC Attendance Specialist

In Attendance

Pam Langmead	EPHA Professional Officer
Sarah Cowley	Henry Moore Primary
Michael Doughty	Henry Moore Primary
Sarah Manning	Galleywood Infants
Gareth Allen	Millhouse Primary
Maria Brosnan	Pursuit Wellbeing
Andrew Morrish	Headrest

Apologies

Karla Martin	Head of Education West
Christine Peden	Pear Tree Mead Primary

Note: If your attendance or apologies have not been noted please contact the EPHA Professional Officer at pam@langmead.me.uk for amendment.

WEST EPHA AREA MEETING MINUTES 23 JUNE 2021

1. WELCOME

The meeting was held online as a result of the continuing Coronavirus pandemic. Isobel Barron, the West Area Chair welcomed headteachers to the meeting.

Welcome to the following Headteachers:

Jen Pearce Magna Carta Primary

Farewell to the following headteachers:

Linda Chesworth Milwards Primary
John Clements CEO of Learning Partnership Trust
Lawrence Garside Felsted Primary
Jane Harvey Staples Road Primary
Linda Reid Elsenham CE Primary
Mike Ross St John Fisher Catholic Primary
Linda Todd Radwinter Primary

If you are leaving please make use of the EPHA new heads' checklist, and complete it for your successor. This is available on the EPHA website at <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/good-practice/>

2. DELIVERY OF THE EARLY CAREER FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME AND NPQs

Andrew Smith, headteacher at Lyons Hall Primary, sent the following information which outlines support available for the Early Career Framework and NPQs.

In addition to Teaching School Hubs, other organisations can deliver the Early Career Framework and reformed NPQs. In Essex, the Professional Learning Network/Lyons Hall School has chosen to deliver both the ECF programme and the suite of NPQ programmes to give schools more of a choice of provision.

PLN/LH has a long, proven track-record of delivery on these priorities across Essex and its borders, having delivered NPQs for the last 18 years, the Accelerate programme (a precursor to the ECF) and currently delivering the early roll out of the ECF programme.

Early Career Framework

PLN is a Delivery partner for Ambition Institute providing the DfE funded Full-Induction Programme at no cost to your school. The two-year programme is delivered by a team of facilitators who are experienced practising teachers. It includes:

- Training for Early Career teachers (ECTs) and mentors
- Materials can be adapted to respond to the context of our schools.
- Mainly online content and video conferencing

PLN has chosen Ambition as their programme is completely flexible. If school has a different priority one week (e.g. parents evening, assessment) or if the Early Career Teacher or mentor is absent, they miss that week and start again the next week - they don't have to 'catch up' with the missed week.

The Department for Education is funding all training, at no cost to schools.

All state funded schools offering statutory induction will receive additional funding to deliver the Early Career Framework reforms.

The funding will cover:

- 5% off timetable in the second year of induction for all early career teachers to undertake

induction activities including training and mentoring - **£1200**

- Funding for mentors to spend with early career teachers in the second year of induction - this is based on 20 hours of mentoring across the academic year - **£900**

For those on the Full Induction Programme, there will be a payment to schools for the time that mentors of ECTs spend on DfE mentor training (ie training from a funded programme provider) which will consist of 36 hours of backfill time over two years per mentor.

Mentor's Unit Cost (years 1 & 2) Time off timetable for training	England (excluding the London Area)	Inner London Area	Outer London Area	Fringe Area
36h cost (2 years of training)	£1576.10	£1929.24	£1737.14	£1623.24

NB

Funding for training and support in year 1 is funded directly to schools as now through the National Funding Formula.

Reformed NPQs:

PLN/LH will continue to deliver the whole suite of reformed NPQs across all phases and settings. Working in partnership with Teach First, alongside Surrey Teaching Schools Network with whom we have a long standing relationship.

Some NPQs will be funded and for some schools in more difficult circumstances there will be full scholarship funding – the DfE has not released this information yet.

3. WEST EPHA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

a) CHAIR'S REPORT

Isobel Barron, Chair of West EPHA, gave the following report.

Before I get started on my review of the year I would like to thank Pam for being everything to everyone. She has been working for EPHA for more years than anyone can remember and she is the rock that we all rely on. When you need to check a piece of information, have a shoulder to cry on, have a joke or have a moan, she is there at the end of the phone, email or a zoom call. Without her EPHA would just not work. You are brilliant Pam. You continue to work for the betterment of education and Headteacher well-being. I am sure my colleagues will join me in sending you a round of applause and many congratulations via email and text message - some might even switch a camera on and un mute to whoop and cheer!!!!

Review of the year

Last year I spoke to you all about the challenges we had all faced from Lockdown 1.0. How we had all coped and closed schools within 2 days. I hoped that it would never happen again! I talked about how we had been thinking about the new Ofsted inspections the previous October and how that had gone out of the window fairly quickly. I then talked about a possible second peak. Who knew that we would have a small respite over the summer holiday, before Lockdown 2.0. The Autumn Term tumbled out of control within weeks. We had schools closing bubbles multiple times, we had a hybrid approach to learning online and in school, we had staff isolating and then coming back, we had Ofsted virtual visits and we were trying our best with the ever changing guidelines being issued by the government. Managing schools through an increasing R-Value and viral load became almost impossible. This was then followed by the new tier system, which didn't allow for parity across the county. We had the ridiculous notion that you might live or work in an area where restrictions meant a school couldn't open, but 100m down the road, it was possible.

After one of the weirdest Christmas's possible we were preparing to open schools again, until a brave decision was made by our Director of Education to close the schools that were still open. I don't

think I will ever forget having taken a call over Sunday lunch the day before schools were to open, and then having to work out how to close my school within 16 hours and gather the information on who our key worker families were before reopening on the Monday, only to find out on the Monday night we were into national lockdown number 3!!!

Since then the pressure has just continued to rise. We are now all masters of the LFT, we know what a PCR is and now understand which is more important - or not!!! We collate results twice a week in our own time and still aren't allowed time off as we are checking for positive COVID results within our parent community over the weekends and holidays via email. We have managed a million updates to our risk assessments, dealt with shielding and then not shielding staff. We have written individual risk assessments, upped the amount of online learning being offered and managed the transition between online and in person learning. Some of us have become YouTube stars in our own right and we have ensured all our policies and procedures are up to date. We have taken a massive load of safeguarding cases and been asked to make instant, and often life changing decisions for our communities. We have ensured we have kept in touch with children who may not even be in the same time zone. We have been a pillar of strength for our staff and community and at no point have we been able to make a mistake or show fatigue. We have been a front-line service of unsung heroes.

Without your leadership and the commitment of your staff, our NHS workers and other Key Workers would not have been able to save lives or keep the country going. We have been the only places in the UK where it has been legally possible to have more than 30 people gathering since the start of COVID. We have been expected to put ourselves at risk and we have done this because of the commitment we have to the children and families we work with. It is appalling that the government has now rewarded school staff with a pay freeze to 'thank' them for their role in ensuring the country continued to function.

As restrictions ease we are now faced with further impossible decisions. Should we be booking the residential trip, should we have a sports day or Year 6 leavers' party? Decisions on these events alone are enough to make quiver when you think of the risks associated with them. In addition to this we now have the teams of people that have been able to work from home wanting to poke about in schools again as life is 'getting back to normal'.

Well I say that it isn't!

The last 18 months have been brutal for Heads. We have used every last ounce of energy to keep every plate spinning and many overflowing with stress or sheer exhaustion. The mere mention of Ofsted instigates a shiver- it remains a threatening black cloud. Head teachers and leaders need time to recover, before coping with yet another challenge in times that are still not 'normal!' We make it look easy! We have all done our utmost to keep our schools open and be as 'normal' as possible for the children – however, it is not and it will still be quite some time before it is. We have become experts at emergency planning, fire-fighting, social work, marriage guidance and counselling- oh and education! What we do not need is being told what we have not done- more congratulated on what we have, in exceptionally challenging times. We have had to find the inner strength and resource to 'keep calm and carry on' without rest or respite, and of course this takes it's toll both mentally, physically and upon our relationships and families. There needs to be recognition by the Government and Local Authority that just because the restrictions are being lifted, it doesn't mean that schools and Heads are now ready for 'business as usual'. We need the LA to support us on this. EPHA is here and is with you as ONE VOICE on this. WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER!

What is to come?

Who knows? That is anyone's guess... who could have foreseen the last eighteen months and predicted what we would have to cope with in an instant and reimaged Education as we know it! I do, as always, still look forward with optimism, that next year will be better and we will eventually

settle down to a better 'normal' than we had before. We have all grown and learnt a lot in this time about ourselves, our teams and each other. We know who we can rely on for support and know that in times of desperate need we will have colleagues who will understand, empathise and offer a non-judgemental shoulder to cry on.

In West, I am privileged to be Chair to represent our area and I am immensely proud of all the heads and heads of school in our locality. You ARE brilliant at your jobs.

I'm still standing – but barely; I am sure you must feel the same. I not only have lots of hats but I now have lots of masks! One by one I am sure they will peel off as the summer holiday begins but will it be enough to rest and fully recuperate? Most likely not... as we remain apprehensive about what the autumn term will bring. As hard as it maybe we must try to rest up, have fun and 'find ourselves again' for our sake, and the sake of our own families.

Headteacher wellbeing has been at the top of the Local Authority's priorities – after the eighteen months we have been through, I am not sure what that even looks like any more.

Does anyone know? I believe we have moved further away from this than ever. How do we go about reclaiming our leadership space?

EPHA will help us on this journey but first and foremost, the first step has to be taken by us.

To our dear friends and colleagues who leave us for pastures new.... Especially those retiring or venturing into new careers.... Good bye, good luck and thank you for all that you have done for your school communities and staff.

Moving on:

Linda Chesworth, currently at Milwards Primary, previously at RA Butler, is relocating to pastures new and Mike Ross at St John Fisher. Linda Todd who is leaving Radwinter, to take on the headship at Elsenham.

Those retiring at the end of the summer term include:

Jane Harvey, who joined Staples Road in September 2018;

Linda Reid, head teacher at Elsenham Primary since 2003! WOW!

And, Lawrence Garside, co- head at Felsted Primary, who has been a head teacher in Essex for 20 years!

A special mention to John Clements who has decided to step down as CEO of The Learning Partnership Trust and as Uttlesford South EPHA representative, a role he has held for 32 years! (and in education for 45- a Double WOW!!!). His passion for education, unwavering dedication for 'getting it right for the pupils' and ability to challenge others holding them to account in his unique way, will be sadly missed. John said at his last EPHA meeting, that he has valued his time as part of EPHA and acknowledged the strength and support of his colleagues, who are amazing people and many of whom he counts as trusted friends.

Witnessing so much change in their own localities and in Essex LA over that time.....what an achievement! Well done to you all!!

So for us all, in taking that first step...use the summer to reconnect with yourself, with your friends and family and with nature.

I have learnt from this meeting and from Dale Bateman talking about the coaching experience in his locality. Dale spoke of keeping it 'simple' and of three key steps:

1. Notice; 2. Slow down; 3. choose and act

Making that conscious decision to make a choice- stick by it, even though it will lead to sacrifice- upset- emotional triggers again!

So for me in taking the first step: it's TIME- take time to invest in myself!
Then to slow down, notice, make a conscious choice and then act.

So back to you colleagues- **DO** more of the things you enjoy.

The key thing lockdown has taught me.... us..... is to value the small things, the kind gesture, the smile, the friendly word made in passing, local walks, and dear family and friends – human contact, a HUG that means so much!

So from me to you I'm off mute.....
WELL DONE TO YOU ALL!
YOU ARE FABULOUS!
A HUGE AIR HUG FROM ME TO YOU!
I look forward to seeing you face to face next year!

b) ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND LOCAL DELIVERY GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

Chair	Isobel Barron (Roseacres Primary)
Vice-Chair	George Athanasiou (Great Sampford Primary)
Treasurer	Mary Jo Hall (St Thomas More Catholic Primary)
Harlow	Jonathan Tye (Churchgate CE Primary)
Uttlesford North	Mary Jo Hall (St Thomas More Catholic Primary)
Uttlesford South	Matt Curzon (St Mary's CE Primary, Stansted)
Epping Forest South	Joanne Willcox (Hillhouse CE Primary)
Epping Forest Rural	Julie Lorkins (St Andrew's, N Weald)

The officers and Local Delivery Group representatives were thanked for the hard work that they do on behalf of headteachers in the West Area and for agreeing to continue in their roles or taking on new positions.

- c) The Summer term EPHA newsletter**, including dates for the 2021/22 school year, was circulated to headteachers in advance of the meeting -these can also be found on the EPHA website www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk.

d) EPHA Annual Subscription

Funding for EPHA will be continue to be top-sliced from the Delegated Schools Grant. Area meetings will continue to be "free" to all primary headteachers, as will the website, headteacher briefings and advice and support from the Professional Officer.

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/what-headteachers-get-in-return-for-their-epha-contribution-2020-21.pdf>

e) EPHA County Annual General Meeting

The EPHA county AGM will be held on Thursday 30th September at the Lion Inn, Boreham.

f) Conferences

Headteachers were reminded that the Deputy Headteachers' conference will be held on Friday 8 October 2021, once again in person at the Colchester Football Stadium (key note speakers Mick Waters and Mary Myatt) and next year's annual Headteachers' conference will be held on Friday 18 March 2022 at Stock Brook Country Club.

The programme and booking form for the Deputy Conference will be emailed to schools at the end of June.

4. HEADREST

Headrest was co-founded in October 2020 by Ros McMullen and Andrew Morrish, two former headteachers and Multi-Academy Trust CEOs.

Headrest is a confidential, free telephone support service for headteachers. The free service means that a group of experienced headteachers, who coach and mentor serving heads and senior executive leaders, are offering 'a listening ear' free of charge for those who are exhausted and needing to chat with someone who understands. In this session, Andrew Morrish introduced and explained how the helpline works and why it was set up to support heads at this critical time.

More information at <https://www.headrestuk.co.uk/>

Why now?

- Headteacher wellbeing a priority
- Increase in workload/anxiety levels
- Operational and not strategic
- Lack of support for headteachers
- Sodden sponges
- The need for rapid response
- We've sat in your chair
- Safe, non-judgmental, anonymous

Key issues being brought to the helpline

- Bubbles/safety
- Ill health (self and family)
- Feeling overwhelmed/stress
- Parental demands
- Facebook/Social Media
- Lack of governance support
- Lack of LA/MAT support inc HR
- Suspension, disciplinary etc.
- Ofsted, monitoring etc.

How it works

DM on Twitter @Headrest_UK

Phone for free on 0800 862 0110

Website: www.HeadrestUK.co.uk

Email Hello@HeadrestUK.co.uk

Headrest will always get back to you.

More information at <https://www.headrestuk.co.uk/>

5. THE PURSUIT OF WELLBEING

Maria Brosnan is an experienced leadership and wellbeing trainer, mentor and coach, who works with senior leaders and teachers in schools. She works with the Heartmath Institute, which employs biofeedback technology that tracks the function of the heart, and enables participants to manage and control their physiology.

Many believe that disruption necessitates grit - we just have to "push through" until the storm passes. However, evidence shows that "gritting through" challenge ultimately impedes performance, wasting time and resources, and impacts our health.

In this presentation, Maria explained the physiology of stress and the impact it has on performance and effectiveness, and gave a simple but effective strategy to make immediate improvements.

Maria explained the impact of stress on performance:

Zone A – healthy pressure, improves performance

Zone B – a rising amount of pressure – leads to optimal performance, a stage of maximum efficiency and effectiveness

PERCEPTION CHANGE

Zone C – hyper-reactive stage – an unpleasant place to be

Zone D – leads to emotional and physical exhaustion

She asked the headteachers to take part in a snap poll, asking which Zone they regarded themselves as being in.

West quadrant results:

A 4%

B 23%

C 73%

D 0%

Mid quadrant results:

A 0%

B 12%

C 80%

D 8%

Maria noted that, when we are stressed, we can lose up to 80% of brain function. She showed a video which gave an example of a situation when she was put under (minimal) stress and the impact that this had on her heart rate. She then explained a very simple breathing technique which instantly calmed and reduced her heart rate, demonstrated by the biofeedback technology.

She gave a couple of quotes to consider:

Henry J Kahn, MD

“It’s easy to forget that stress is one of your body’s warning signals that tells you that something is out of whack. If you ignore those signals, especially your emotions, you could become so accustomed to the stimulation of stress, ongoing tension and strain that stress can start to feel normal. When a lot of people in a particular environment are stressed, they can create a climate that makes it more difficult for any one person to see his or her stress clearly. When you have a whole culture pushing high performance, sometimes people don’t want to admit it or address it.”

Viktor Frankl

Between stimulus and response there is a space.
In that space is our power to choose our response.
In our response lies our growth and our freedom

Maria can be contacted at maria@pursuit-wellbeing.com

More information at <https://pursuitwellbeing.com/>

A recording of the presentation can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/ytu1tiXObfk>

6. CLOSE OF MEETING AND THANK YOU FROM THE WEST CHAIR

Isobel thanked the West headteachers for attending the meeting and wished them the very best for the last few weeks of term.

7. FUTURE DATES

WEST headteacher meetings 2021/22

Wednesday 17 November 2021

Wednesday 9 March 2022

Wednesday 22 June 2022

WEPHA conferences – Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth

Friday 17th September 2021

Friday 28th January 2022

Friday 20th May 2022

Deputy Headteachers' Annual Conference 2021

Friday 8 October 2021 Colchester Football Stadium

Headteachers' Annual Conference 2022

Friday 18 March 2022 Stock Brook Golf and Country Club