

**Joint Full Governing Board Meeting of the Governing Board of Lauriston
Primary School with the Governing Board of the Federation of Daubeney and
Sebright Primary Schools**

**Lauriston School
Wednesday 23 May 2018-05-18, 18:00 - 19:30**

Present: Laurence Kavanagh (D-S); Will Emms (D-S); Chris Russell (D-S); Anna McSweeney (D-S); Seamus McGowan (D-S); Louis Harris (HoS, L); Sara Summersgill (D-S); Gregory Logan (HoS D); James Green (HoS, S); Laura Stacey (D-S); Janice Thomas (Exec head); Corrine Ffinch (L); Kitty Stewart (L); Colin

Hutchinson (L); Madeleine Davis (L); Jacey Templeton (L); Marisa Childs (L); Pauline Abbie (L)

In Attendance: Tatiana Kazim (clerk)

Apologies: Marc Allenby (D-S), Christian Klettner (D-S), Allegra Mullaney (D-S), Fiona Clarke (L)

Meeting opened at 18:02.

1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1. Welcome and purpose of meeting

- 1.1.1. Apologies were given to Lauriston governors - papers were not distributed to them in good time in advance of this meeting. It was agreed that business could proceed for the majority of items nonetheless.
- 1.1.2. The main business of the meeting is to agree the selection process for the federation governing board and structures of the committees. Before moving to the main business, the minutes from March meeting will be covered and the division of tasks of the Federation Working Group outlined.

1.2. Attendance; absences; determining quorum

- 1.2.1. **Attendance:** The meeting is quorate for making decisions as two separate governing bodies.
- 1.2.2. **Apologies:** Marc Allenby, Christian Klettner, Allegra Mullaney and Fiona Clarke offered their apologies in advance. There were no other apologies for absence.
- 1.2.3. **Declarations of interest:** All parties are interested and may need to step out at the relevant decision points. There were no other declarations of interest.

1.3. Minutes to be Agreed

1.3.1. It was decided that the minutes from the last meeting cannot be agreed since the Lauriston governors had not had sufficient time to examine them.

1.3.2. Governors from Daubeney & Sebright were invited to give their comments: a few minor edits were suggested.

Agreed: Daubeney & Sebright governors were content with the minutes, subject to the amendments described, and it was agreed that the minutes would be considered by Lauriston governors prior to 11th July.

2. Preparation for Federation

2.1 Update and summary of tasks undertaken by Federation Working Group

2.1.1 There are three work strands:

- Selection
- Structures
- Communications

The work strands have conducted research to allow for fully informed discussions and decisions, setting the path towards September. Some mechanics – for example, a new instrument of governance – will also be taken forward by the Group.

2.2 Selection:

2.2.1 The Selection Working Group has looked at available guidance: the governance handbook; the governance of federations guidance; and the competency framework.

2.2.2 The overall theme of the guidance for now and for the future is around using the skills matrix - offered by the DfE as template to explore the areas of governance in which potential governors require competency.

2.2.3 There are a number of decisions that need to be taken at this meeting. Having spoken to Hackney Learning Trust and other heads in the area on how to manage the federation process, the Selection Working Group have come up with a number of recommendations, to be agreed tonight.

2.2.4 **First recommendation:** To transfer the existing two chairs across to continue as governors on the federation governing board, on premise of solidity, experience, and relationships within process of federation over last 18 months.

Marisa Childs and Laurence Kavanagh left at this point. Corrine Ffinch acted as chair.

There was a discussion about how this recommendation sat alongside the principle that *all* governors should be selected in terms of their skills and experience.

The discussion concluded that, given the complexities of the current situation, the chairs should move forward. In light of their experience with the federation process, the chairs are the only two people who currently match the skills matrix. It was also noted that chairing responsibilities of the federation governing board will be reconsidered in the Autumn term.

Agreed: The two current chairs were nominated to continue as co-opted governors in the new federation.

Marisa Childs and Laurence Kavanagh returned and were informed of the decision. Corrine Finch relinquished the chair.

2.2.5 Second recommendation: To nominate the current Lauriston LA governor to continue as a governor in the new federation.

Colin Hutchinson left at this point.

It was noted that Daubeney & Sebright do not currently have a LA nominated governor. The Lauriston LA governor has only recently taken on this role.

Agreed: It was agreed that the Lauriston LA governor should continue as a governor in the new federation.

Colin Hutchinson returned and was informed of the decision.

2.2.6 Third recommendation: That the selection process for the remaining co-opted governor spaces should be on the basis of the NGA skills matrix.

There was a discussion to the effect that the process for selecting the remaining governors should follow the DfE guidance and use the NGA skills matrix - a self-assessment, based on the specific core skills needed for the governance of a federation in particular.

The Working Group had, in addition, identified skills needs for the new board around “communications” and “change management”.

Agreed: It was agreed that the skills matrix should be used to select the remaining governors in the new federation, with the inclusion of specific skills communications and change management skills.

2.2.7 Fourth recommendation: The selection should be carried out by a panel comprised of the three governing board members selected to move forward, and potentially also the executive head teacher.

Janice Thomas left at this point.

There was discussion about the appropriateness of including the executive head on the selection panel, given that the role of the governing board is to hold the executive leader to account.

Agreed: It was agreed that the selection panel should not include the executive head.

Janice Thomas returned and was informed of the decision.

2.2.8 **Fifth recommendation:** To hold the elections for parent and staff governors in the autumn term.

This prompted some discussion around the timings of the panel selection process, having in mind potential need for interviews. It was noted that this was not the point in question here - the timing of the selection process is the responsibility of the selection panel.

Agreed: The elections for parent and staff governors should be held in the autumn term.

2.2.9 **Further decision point:** Whether the terms of those governors moving forward to the new federation should continue as they currently stand, or whether the clock should restart from the point at which they join the new federation governing board.

Declaration of interest: Laurence Kavanagh declared an interest in the restarting of the clock, given that his term runs out on 10th September.

There was a discussion about the length of terms – if the clock is restarted, terms should be of differing length, to ensure that there is some continuity. For example, if all terms ran for 4 years, then at the end of 4 years there would be an entirely new governing board, and no continuity with the previous board.

Agreed: It was agreed that, regarding the terms of those governors joining the new federation governing board, the “clock” should be re-started, with the option to consider the length of term to be left open.

2.3 Structures:

2.3.1 ‘Structures’ in this context refers to the committee structures around the governing body, to support them in their role.

2.3.2 As part of the consultation process it was agreed that there should be three separate committees – one for each school. But there are other decisions to be made.

2.3.3 Principles which should drive these decisions are as follow: support strategic objectives; realise some of efficiencies that being federation offers (e.g. agreeing some policies centrally); allow local committees the ability to scrutinise work in individual schools and escalate concerns; giving the federation board the option of

enhanced focus on a particular school; complement existing federation management structure.

A discussion ensued about the role and nature of associate governors, and about whether the number of association governors is to be fixed. Further discussion on these points was postponed (see the fourth proposal at 2.3.7).

2.3.4 First proposal: To have a separate finance committee.

There was a discussion to the effect that finance is a refined skills set; it is therefore pragmatic and sensible to have a separate finance committee. There was a discussion about the remit of this committee, to the effect that the finance committee should have financial oversight; premises oversight; and HR oversight.

Agreed: It was agreed that there should be a separate finance committee.

2.3.5 Second proposal: To have a separate curriculum committee.

It was noted that one of the key benefits of curriculum committee is that it can have access to data for each of the schools which can act as comparison points.

Agreed: It was agreed that there should be a separate curriculum committee.

2.3.6 Third proposal: To have a separate committee for safeguarding, SEN, and children's centres committee.

There was a discussion which concluded that these issues ought to be considered by the central federation board, where they will be considered and discussed in their application at each of the schools.

Agreed: It was agreed that there should not be a separate safeguarding, SEN, and children's centres committee.

2.3.7 Fourth proposal: The ratio of federation governing board members to associate governors should be 3:2.

There was a discussion about the need to ensure that the federation governing board members are not outnumbered by the associate governors; thereby jeopardizing the balance between the federation governing body and the individual schools and potentially undermining the effectiveness of the federation.

There was further discussion about the selection of associate governors and the length of their terms. It was noted that associate governors can be selected for specific projects; this is a model used in other federations.

Agreed: It was agreed that that each committee should have at least 3 federation governing body members.

Agreed: It was agreed that local school committees should recommend associate governors for membership, with final decisions on membership made by the Federation Governing Board).

2.4 Communication:

2.4.1 The decisions made today around selection process and structure should be communication points. The Communications Working Group requires a full understanding of what has already been communicated to stakeholders at each school; with this understanding, the messages going forward can be refined.

Agreed: Will Ems to communicate with Lorraine Groom about current forms of communication used at Lauriston.

2.4.2 There was a discussion regarding the commitment to three public meetings in each of the three schools between now and July: these were committed to as a result of federation consultation. The organisation and purpose of these meetings was discussed.

2.4.3 It was noted that it may be useful to update parents prior to the meetings, in order to allow time to prepare questions.

2.4.4 It was noted that an agenda will need to be put together for each of the three meetings, setting out the current position; decisions already made; and allowing for attendees to raise concerns and give responses.

Agreed: The following governors will work with Will Ems on Communications: Corinne Finch; Madeline Davis; Marisa Childs; Seamus McGowan; and Anna Sweeney. Communication volunteers agreed to a sub-group meeting, to be diarised as soon as possible.

Agreed: That the upcoming election of parent governors should be advertised that the parent meetings. The precise election date should be left open at this stage, to unnecessary disappointment.

3. Any other business

3.1. There was no other business.

Meeting closed 19:29.