

The Heath Family (NW) Multi Academy Trust
PART I - Minutes from the MAT Board meeting held on
Wednesday, 24th June 2020 at 8.00 am

***** This meeting was held remotely using Microsoft Teams *****

<u>Present:</u> Helen Stevenson (Chair), Edward Vitalis, Morag Davies, Alison Duckworth, Karl Smith, Kate Whittlesey, David Donnelly, Sharon Black, Craig Parkinson, Judith McConville		<u>Apologies:</u> Dave Lancaster			
<u>In Attendance:</u> Ben Peck (Rebranding Presentation)		Non attenders: Anantha Subramanayam			
		Clerk: Trish Roberts			
Items	Discussion	Action	Who	When	Notes
1. Welcome, introductions & apologies	<p>Ms Stevenson welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were accepted from Mr Dave Lancaster. It was also noted that there had been no communication from Mr Anantha Subramanayam.</p> <p>Ms Stevenson explained that Mr Peck had been invited to the meeting in order to provide the presentation with regards Trust and HPS Branding (Agenda Items 8 and 9); it was therefore agreed that it would be appropriate to move these items to the beginning of the meeting.</p>				
2. Declaration of Business and Pecuniary Interests	<p>Trustees received an electronic copy of the current Register of Business Interests prior to the meeting and confirmed at the meeting that there were no changes in relation to their declared interests:</p> <p>Helen Stevenson – Partner/Sole Proprietor of Satis Education, Contract with another Trust in the area (Frank Field Education Trust), Related to a Local Governor at one of THF schools (Sister).</p> <p>Edward Vitalis – Chief Operating Officer at Bright Futures Educational Trust, HDH Executive Director at NHS Salford Clinical Commissioning Group.</p> <p>Morag Davies – Director of M & P Business Solutions Ltd</p> <p>Alison Duckworth – Director of Epona Marketing</p> <p>Karl Smith – Vice Principal of Carmel College</p> <p>Kate Whittlesey – Director of The SEND Advisory Team</p>				

3. To receive/ ratify PART I Minutes from THF Board meeting held on 29.05.20	<p>Trustees received an electronic copy of PART I minutes from the MAT Board meeting held on 29.05.20. There were no amendments to be made and therefore the minutes were accepted as a true record and ratified.</p> <p>RESOLVE: That PART I minutes of the MAT Board meeting held on 29.05.20 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>	Chair of the Board to sign agreed MAT Board Minutes from 29.05.20			
4. To review Matters Arising not included on the Agenda (to include Action Tracker)	<p>Trustees received an electronic copy of THF Action Log dated 24.06.20</p> <p>Matters Arising from Minutes of 29.05.20</p> <p>Page 5 – CEO Report: Mr Donnelly confirmed that a further update has been sent to Governors ref plans for further reopening of schools.</p> <p>Page 10 – Reports from Trust Committees: Ms Black confirmed that a copy of the Trust Curriculum Strategy PowerPoint presentation has been sent out to all Trustees.</p> <p>Page 11 – Governance: Mr Parkinson confirmed that he had uploaded a copy of the updated Scheme of Delegation and High Level Division of Responsibility document onto the Trust website.</p>				
5. Chair’s Action Report (to receive)	<p>Trustees received an electronic copy of the Chair’s Action & Governor Membership Update 24.06.20 report prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Mrs Roberts updated Trustees in terms of Governor vacancies at DPS. A governor at DPS is due to come to the end of their term of office as of 31.08.20; and has advised that they do not want to take up a second term of office. As a result of this a further vacancy will need to be advertised.</p>	Upcoming vacancy to be advertised with a view to appointing for Sept 2020.	P Roberts	ASAP	
6. Coronavirus Response	<p>Mr Donnelly reported that written guidance has not yet been received with regards to the new social distancing rules; ref keep 2 metres apart unless it is not possible. However, it is expected that under this new guidance the Trust could move to pods of 15. Mr Donnelly advised that he has some concerns with regards to the interpretation of “unless it’s not possible”. The Trust’s Health & Safety advisers have therefore been contacted and they have agreed that the guidance is not clear in respect of this.</p>				

Q: Could we not ask the RSC for direction?

Mr Donnelly advised that he would prefer to seek the views from the Trust's H&S adviser, as they have detailed knowledge of our schools' buildings, and therefore are better placed to provide guidance re ensuring the safety of all our site users. Mr Donnelly also spoke about how the Trust has followed the advice from Public Health England and its H&S Advisers throughout the lockdown period.

Discussion followed regarding the upcoming meeting with the RSC.

Mr Smith advised that he would fully support what the Trust is doing in terms of keeping to the same size pods up until the end of this term; with a view to looking at fully reopening in September. Mr Donnelly confirmed that schools are working towards moving to normal operations for September, which will include full class sizes of 30. The Trust/School Exec Teams are assessing the risks associated with staff and children returning. Mr Donnelly stated that the rationale behind these assessments is to ensure the safety and welfare of all site users, whilst being comfortable that what we are doing is right.

Discussion followed regarding the amount of weeks left before summer and how long it would take to revise plans, get them approved by all bodies (including professional associations), and then make the changes within school buildings so that more children/staff could return safely.

Mr Donnelly then spoke to Trustees with regards summer opening; suggesting that there is currently a lack of clarity with regards schools opening during summer. The government have said that they would want plans in place for each child by the end of the summer term; but this is not possible when children are not attending school. There is also a lack of clarity in terms of catch-up funding; schools will only receive 75% of costs, the schools will have to fund the extra 25% themselves (potentially out of other catch-up monies). Mr Donnelly advised that THF just does not have this funding available without clarity on future allocations. Mr Donnelly also advised that he did not see any point in making extravagant plans in relation to this when we don't know what is happening in the future.

Q: What is your take on Staff Wellbeing? Have staff taken leave during the lockdown?

A: Some staff will have had an easy time in terms of workload during this period, but there are others, especially school leaders, who have been working throughout and are exhausted.

	<p>Mr Donnelly also advised that in the future he would like to the Trust to have a 50 week opening, but noted that we are just not in a position to provide this at present.</p> <p>Q: Are you asking secondary schools to do an earlier start (i.e. 1 week earlier) for their new Year 7 intake?</p> <p>A: Yes, this is something we are considering and we will be discussing this with Secondary Principals.</p> <p>Discussion followed regarding remaining open throughout the summer; Trustees agreed that as there is no requirement to remain open, childcare within our schools was not an issue as parents were already planning on having their children at home during summer, and government restrictions are beginning to ease, it would make sense for all of our Trust schools to close for a period of 4 weeks during the summer thereby ensuring all staff have opportunity to have a much needed break. Trustees also advised that in future years they would be happy to look at increased opening of schools so that further support/care can be provided for our children and their families.</p>				
<p>7. CEO Report</p>	<p>Trustees received electronic copies of the CEO report (dated June 2020) prior to the meeting. Mr Donnelly reported:</p> <p>Overall – Given the Trust’s financial situation and overall performance of Trust schools the status remains at red.</p> <p>Governance – Mr Donnelly advised that if schools reopen fully in September, then the plan would be to look at reinstating LGB delegation at that point.</p> <p>HR – Q: In relation to HR matters, do you have any gut feeling with regards likely impact of staff absences in September. A: There have been a small number of isolated cases whereby staff have raised concerns regarding returning to work; the vast majority of concerns raised have been in relation to childcare issues. A couple of staff indicated that they were not prepared to return, but their concerns have been addressed via meetings with their line managers. The staff members were also invited to visit the site so that they could see what measures in terms of social distancing had been put in place, i.e. what the classroom looks like in ‘lockdown mode’. We have looked at all concerns with compassion and staff wellbeing in mind. Staff absence issues are not widespread and in the main staff seem to be comfortable and happy to return to work.</p>				

	<p>Mr Donnelly also updated Trustees in relation to staff recruitment; stating that interviews have been taking place via Microsoft Teams. BWP are currently going through a recruitment process and received 76 applications.</p> <p>Q: Have staff been invited into school prior to them restarting? A: Primaries have opened to more children and therefore all staff have been into school. Secondary schools are currently looking at the logistics of bringing staff in and ensuring social distancing rules can be adhered to. Mr Donnelly also advised that there will be an extension on what is happening with primary schools during the curriculum meetings.</p> <p>National Policy – Mr Vitalis provided information regarding estimated Catch-up funding, stating that it could equate to an average of approx. £20K per school. Discussion followed regarding school cash flow and the need to ensure they have the resources required to enable reopening in September. Mr Vitalis commented that if funding is not released early enough there may be the need to vire money between budget headings. Mr Vitalis also agreed to forward the source of his funding information to DD.</p> <p>Q: Have we received any information regarding pooling this funding allocation? A: We have not received any information ref funding as of yet, as soon as the information is received we will forward on to Trustees.</p>				
<p>8. Trust Rebranding</p>	<p>Trustees received electronic copies of the board paper entitled Trust Rebranding prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Trustees agreed to move this agenda item to the beginning of the meeting so as to allow Mr Peck to deliver the presentation in relation to this item. Mr Peck provided a brief summary on the background of the project, and then went on to explain next steps in the process including the outline of the project plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although an initial brand had been agreed (Apeiron), it is now being reconsidered following feedback. Concerns were raised in relation to the fact that the majority of people would not have heard of Apeiron and therefore it is felt that a lot of time would be taken to explain its meaning and how to spell it. • Also, the original plan to start to roll out the brand prior to summer break has been put on hold; the Trust is now working to a full launch during Oct/Nov 2020. • A tender exercise has been started to seek costs and approaches for unifying the website structure across the Trust. It is expected that if the Trust moves to this 				

	<p>way of working cost savings would be achieved after two years (the reason for the delay is that the first 12-18 months would include set up costs). The first proposals have been received and the deadline for tenders to be received is Monday 29th June at midday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 10-month outline project plan has been produced. The rationale behind September being the time for the “state of the nation” section of plan is that most key stakeholders will have had a lengthy amount of time out normality; and therefore when we bring everyone back together it would be a good time to launch the new Trust values and vision. Everything is expected to be in place by March 2021; and the review process will begin in April 2020. At this point a feedback report will be produced for Trustees. <p>Trustees were then asked for their comments/questions:</p> <p>Q: In terms of the Tender process, will it need Trustee involvement? A: The tender is likely to come in under £10K across the board and therefore is within the Exec Teams delegated budget. However, if Trustees would like to be involved they are welcome to do so.</p> <p>Q: What are the predictive cost savings? A: We envisage £4-5K saving, consolidated across the Trust; although the savings in Year 1 will be smaller due to set up costs. It was also noted that in theory the Trust did not have to go out to tender; but by doing so, there was a chance that costs could come in lower, due to the competitive nature of the process.</p> <p>Q: Have the details from the meeting held with the Principals ref the Trust Vision been shared with all Trustees? A: As far as I know, but we will need to go back and check.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly advised that it is his intention to bring potential options with regards the name and logo to the Trust Board in time for their next meeting (23.07.20). Discussion followed regarding the current thinking/concept for the Trust branding (name and logo). Mr Donnelly explained that they were looking at something around a triangle, which would symbolise the relationship between the home, the child and the school; although the feeling is that most names linked with ‘triangles’ have already been snapped up by other Trusts (e.g. Delta); and therefore we may have to settle with just the logo symbolising this, and the name being something completely unlinked.</p>	<p>Details from Visioning meeting held with Trustees/ Principals to be circulated to all Trustees</p>	<p>D Donnelly</p>	<p>ASAP</p>	
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Q: How will the ‘State of the Nation’ (referenced in the project timeline) be delivered?

Discussion followed regarding the unknown factor in terms of how schools will return in September and in what format. Mr Donnelly stated that the rebranding will be about refocussing staff. He also noted the importance of engaging with staff throughout the process. Trustees also suggested that by linking the Trust’s CPD charters and Performance Management processes into the new Vision and Values it will assist in embedding them across the Trust.

Q: Should Trustees be involved in the Rebranding launch?

During discussion it was noted that this is a Trust launch and therefore it would be appropriate that all members of the Trust are involved, including Trustees.

Q: How do Principals feel about the Rebranding?

A: They are fully committed to the Rebrand/Values, it is only the name that has fallen out of favour. Principals want something simple, and the name Apeiron did not fall right with them. Mr Donnelly advised that he is due to meet with the Principals to discuss this further.

Q: Have you thought about a consolidated name which links to locality?

A: Yes we have, unfortunately names linked to locality can cause difficulties. If the name is too specific to current locality, it can cause issues further along the line, i.e. locality reputation can go up and down and if the Trust’s name is linked to it the Trust’s reputation can be affected too, another issue could be that schools wanting to join the Trust from outside the locality could be put off, as they would not feel part of the Trust from the outset.

Q: Has any consideration been given to the history of Liverpool when seeking a new name for the Trust?

A: We are looking at names for what we are as a Trust, rather than names linked to geographical location.

There being no further questions, Trustees agreed that they were happy with the proposed project plan and timings.

RESOLVED: that Trustees approve the outline Rebranding project plan and timings

<p>9. HPS Rebranding</p>	<p>Trustees received electronic copies of the board paper entitled Halsnead Primary School Branding, Vision & Values prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Trustees agreed to move this agenda item to the beginning of the meeting so as to allow Mr Peck to deliver the presentation in relation to this item.</p> <p>Mr Peck explained that HPS has had a few issues over the years; and reputationally there have been some significant barriers to overcome. Despite the school improving significantly, student numbers are not yet increasing. Mr Peck went on to explain that the rationale behind the rebrand concept is more than just cosmetic; a number of new initiatives and approaches are being implemented, that are transforming many aspects of the schools, and further changes are planned for September; staff are being challenged to go beyond the norm; the existing brand is not reflective of the evolving school environment that is being created, in fact it is at odds. Mr Peck stated that it is expected that the rebrand will make the changes more tangible to the community, will roll out alongside the resetting of staff expectations and standards and will provide the opportunity to re-engage the community and change their perceptions of the school.</p> <p>Mr Peck then went on to provide details of the proposal in terms of name change, phased rollout plan and how the rebrand would be funded.</p> <p>Trustees were then asked for their comments/questions:</p> <p>Trustees discussed the geographical location of HPS and the possible issues the proposed name could cause to different sections of the community. Mr Donnelly advised that he was unaware of any issues but that he would look into the concerns that Trustees raised.</p> <p>Following further discussion Ms Stevenson stated that she would be happy to approve the HPS Rebrand proposal, as long as the concern raised was not found to be a problem.</p> <p>Q: Are you going to make sure that the HPS Rebrand falls in with the new Trust Brand? A: Yes, it will just be the name change initially, so that we can get the Trust branding sorted. The Trust and all schools will have the same strapline, and website format; we are also looking to produce a Trust-wide prospectus. Some of the schools are already using the new Trust Values strongly within their schools, including within their curriculum.</p>	<p>Concerns raised by Trustees ref possible issues associated with HPS name change to be further investigated</p>	<p>D Donnelly</p>	<p>ASAP</p>	
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	<p>Q: Taking into account the current situation whereby statues are being ripped down/taken away; in terms of the name change are there any historical connections? A: We have looked into this, and the proposed name is connected to a historic wood. With everything that has been happening we have checked this out with all names that have been considered.</p> <p>There being no further questions, Trustees agreed that they were happy with the proposed rebranding for HPS as long as no issues came to light in relation to their concerns raised with regards to the proposed new name for the school.</p> <p>RESOLVED: that Trustees approve the Branding Proposal for HPS (subject to confirmation that the new name for the school will not cause any issues within the community)</p>				
<p>10. Proposal for refurbishment of Trust Offices</p>	<p>Mr Donnelly advised that due to the new School Improvement Staff starting in September the current office space would not cope with the additional staff requirements. The proposal is therefore to make the current conference room into office space for the School Improvement Team. A slight alteration to the main office was also proposed into order to make a small private meeting room. Mr Donnelly also advised that the alterations would cost between £11-12K and therefore fall within the Exec Team delegated budget. Trustees agreed that these changes were needed and therefore approved the proposal.</p> <p>RESOLVED: that Trustees approve the Trust Office Refurbishment Proposal</p>				
<p>11. Governance</p>	<p>Appointment of Trust Appointed Governors (DPS): Mrs Roberts advised that she had received notification from the school that four governors (including the Chair of Governors) were due to come to the end of their term of office as of 31.08.20. Three of the governors (including the current CoG) had indicated that they would like to serve a second term of office. Mrs Roberts confirmed that they are eligible to serve a 2nd term and that the Principal had indicated that she would be happy for them to continue.</p> <p>There being no concerns raised, Mrs Roberts advised that the Trust would like to seek Trustee approval in relation to the appointments.</p> <p>RESOLVE: that Trustees approve the appointment of the Trust Appointed Governors listed below;</p>				

	Martin Pocock Hilary Watts Anne Windridge				
12. Risk Register	<p>Trustees received electronic copies of the Trust’s Risk Register. Mr Parkinson provided further information with regards the format and ratings within the document.</p> <p>Mr Smith spoke about the potential risk in relation to a decline in achievement following the cancellation of GCSE exams and the introduction of centrally assessed grades in their place. Mr Parkinson and Mr Donnelly explained that Trust secondary schools had carried out an analysis process whereby a grade had been produced for all students, and they had been rank ordered. It is expected that this will mean that our schools are potentially going to be in the same position as last year in terms of performance. Mr Donnelly raised the fairness of this method with Trustees, balanced against the unprecedented situation faced. Mr Donnelly went on to explain the moderation processes that have taken place.</p> <p><i>Q: In relation to appeals/GDPR, when you return in September, are you prepared for what could come in?</i></p> <p><i>A: We have flagged this up with our Data Protection Officer (DPO) and guidance has been circulated to all related parties (Executive Principal, Principal, CEO, Director of Teaching and Learning). We are aware that we need to be prepared for a number of enquiries; and the DPO will support the Trust/Schools with anything that comes through. The fact that we have carried out the moderation via FFT, means we can evidence that a robust process has taken place.</i></p> <p><i>Q: Have teachers been involved in the process of getting everything together in the background for ranking?</i></p> <p><i>A: Yes, they have been key in the process.</i></p> <p>There being no changes or queries, the Risk Register document was approved.</p>				
13. AoB	There were no AoB to be discussed.				
14. Date of Next Meeting	MAT Board: 23 rd July 2020 (8.00 am via Microsoft Teams)				

Meeting closed at 9.40 am

These minutes are approved as a true record of the meeting

Signed:

[Helen Stevenson]

Date: 23rd July 2020

Chair's initials to record approval of minutes:

Date: 23.07.20