

Schools Forum
School Funding and SEN Working Group
MS TEAMS MEETING
21st November 2022
Minutes

Present: Marie Taylor (Chair), (Finance, local authority ((LA)), Grant Davis (Finance, LA), Cate Mullen (Head of Inclusion & SEND, LA), Lisa Percy (Chair of SF / Hardenhuish), John Hawkins (Teacher / Governor rep), Catriona Williamson (Mere) Phil Cooch representing Georgina Theobald-Kiely (Downlands) John Read (Lyneham) Graham Nagel-Smith (Morgan’s Vale & Woodfalls), Graham Shore (Deputy Chair SF / Holy Trinity)

Apologies: Helean Hughes (Director LA), Andy Bridewell (Ludgershall Castle), Simon Thomas (LA), Gary Binstead (LA), Rebecca Carson (Woodford Valley)

1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>MT welcomed the group to the virtual meeting and explained that some members would be late or absenting themselves for part of the meeting due to school commitments.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes</p> <p>There were no outstanding actions.</p>	
3.	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
4.	<p>High Needs Update – (CM)</p> <p>CM provided a verbal update with slides focussing on the local authority’s enrolment in the DfE’s “Developing Better Value” programme of support and funding to assist with recovery plans. Starting with a 6 month diagnostic starting in January 2023 followed by an 18 month implementation – collaborative, supportive approach with oversight from Schools Forum continuing. Local authorities with more significant relative pressure are asked to take part in the DfE’s “Safety Valve” programme. Link to DfE website below:</p> <p>Guidance on our intervention work with local authorities - October 2022 publishing.service.gov.uk</p>	
5.	<p>Autumn Consultations (GD)</p> <p>GD shared the consultation results with the group. Responses were at the usual relatively low levels and the group discussed whether there was more to be done in the future to encourage a higher response rate, current practice some felt there was a high level of trust in Schools Forum colleagues in making decisions on their behalf and others felt higher engagement would benefit.</p> <p>In addition to the consultation - discussions with primary and secondary heads around the LAMB indicated a 100% de-del model would be approved.</p> <p>Decisions will need to be made in principle in December and once the actual allocations are received, the final budget set in January –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. to transfers between blocks, b. de-delegation, (and c. minor formula factors not aligned to the NFF.) 	

6.	<p>Schools Funding (DSG) Budget Monitoring (MT)</p> <p>MT shared her report & appendices – highlights, underspends in EY will be subject to a post financial year adjustment in June/July 2023 by the DfE. Schools block small underspend offsets the HNB pressures. HNB pressures in line with demand for services and previous years demand patterns – as shared at the last meeting, the focus on assessments and September placements means that the latest forecast is significantly increased from the previous forecast shared.</p> <p>LP reminded the group that Devon’s DSG deficit was £124m.</p> <p>Joint schools and local authority recovery work in this area on going and progress in this area was shared as item 4, above.</p>	
7.	<p>Growth (GD)</p> <p>GD shared his report and the group discussed issues such as the falling birth rate, LP suggested we retain status quo re: falling rolls due to this national and local trend.</p>	
8.	<p>NFF Schools & high Needs Blocks 2023-24</p> <p>Headlines £2.3bn nationally which is reduced by £0.3bn to reflect the social care levy funding – now not required to fund national insurance increases, hard formula by 2027-28 and a tightening between now and then for LAs who are not, like us, largely aligned to the NFF</p> <p>The in-principle decisions in December will be voted on in January and ratified by Full Council in February 2023 alongside the Councils revenue and capital programmes.</p>	
9.	<p>AOB (GD)</p> <p>GD asked the group if there were any updates from the teaching unions on pay negotiations. JR reported union members were in favour of industrial action JH agreed it did appear members were edging more towards action. JR reported NHT members worried about closing schools so action may not necessarily be a strike.</p> <p>Academisation was discussed and the government agenda for all schools to become part of a MAT by 2030 – the messaging is that the white paper may not convert to the Education Bill. GS said he attended a RSC round table, there is a delivery team of 3 in the SW and the SW has some of the lowest performing MATs in the county – there does not appear to be a massive appetite to progress.</p> <p>MT asked the group if they were happy to meet face to face for the December meeting as planned – consensus was to do so.</p>	
10	<p><i>Date and Time of Next Meeting</i></p> <p>The next Schools Forum meeting after our December meeting will be Thursday 19th January 2023 @ 1.30pm. This is planned as a face-to-face meeting.</p> <p>The date of the next meeting of this group is scheduled for Monday 9th January 2023 at 8.30am. This is planned as a virtual teams meeting.</p>	