

SCHOOL BUDGET FORUM
03/06/2019
Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin

Attendees:

MEMBERS:

Neil Foley(NF)
Dr Paul Evans(PE)
Mari Gaskell (MG)
Rona Jones (RJ)
Mark Hatch (MH)
Shannon Gage (SG)
Rona O'Neill (RON)
Geraint Parry (GP)
Claire Armistead (CA)
Helen Vernon (HV)

Prestatyn High
Denbigh High
Ysgol Llywelyn
St Brigid's – (Chair)
Ysgol Dinas Bran
Primary School Governor Rep (vice Chair)
Tir Morfa
Ysgol Brynhyfryd
Rhyl High School
Bodnant

NON-MEMBERS:

Craig Joyce (CAJ)
Cathy Howatson (Minutes)
Geraint Davies (GD)
Vicki Cotgreave (VC)
Paul Senior (PS)

School Funding Manager
School Funding Officer
Principal Education Manager
Ysgol Y Castell
Principal Finance & Assurance Officer

Welcome

Rona Jones (Chair) welcomed group.

11 members were present at the meeting to make it quorate.

1. Apologies

Karen Evans – Head of education & Children's Services
Bethan Jones – Ysgol Gwernant
Sue Dick – Ysgol Bodfari
Laura Poole – Denbigh Finance Manager
Lindsey Davenport – Secondary
Gethin Jones – Ysgol Tremeirchion
Bethan Cartwright – Ysgol Glan Clwyd
Liz McClean – Teachers Union Representative
Huw Hilditch Roberts – Lead Member for Education

2. Minutes from 09/04/19 agreed by forum - seconded by SD and SG

IL to send out notes from the Sustainability sub group looking at the future funding of sustainability for Dinas Bran.

3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

DECISION

Elected Chair - Geraint Parry, Ysgol Brynhyfryd
Re-elected as Vice Chair – Shannon Gage, Primary School Governor Rep

4. ICT Group

The sub group met looking at modeling the current allocation on size of schools - (see attached modelling.)

MG felt we need clarification on the DCC admin SLA and what was actually included.

GP –some of the charges are not dependent on the size of school.
MG – A small country school could cost more than a larger town school.
RJ asked what the fairest option is.
NF - we need information on the fixed and variable costs.
SG – costs included the new firewall.
RJ asked for more information before a decision is made. Would it be fairer to split the charges based on the various elements of the SLA?
The charges have not gone through as yet for 2019/20.
It was agreed Head teachers need to be represented at the meeting where ICT agree charges for the following financial year, as costs are increasing.

ACTION – CAJ to communicate with ICT so schools are included in future discussions concerning the SLA.
CAJ also to discuss with ICT how some of the elements in the SLA could be split fairly amongst schools.

5. School Balances

PS provided in year school balances. Schools were predicting a £1.1 million deficit by end of 2018/19. The actual deficit at year end was £171k.
WG gave £800k out in grants so the swing was not significant for any other reasons.
CA asked if we can do anything regarding the lateness of grants – they come from WG so there is nothing that can be done.
Rosemary Jones has been commissioned to look at Education funding as a separate project.

6. Pooled Schemes

KE is asking audit to do an internal check on pooled schemes.
SG asked if looking at savings internally it will affect the pooled schemes.
GP – a discussion has previously taken place which included the level of sickness and coding issues.
GD mentioned there is a new framework coming in place Sept 19.
MG – Can it be explained why we need to have mini competitions when schools do not want them? If there are a choice of 9 approved WG supplies of cover why do we need a mini competition?
PE – has had issues with release fees of £3k.
MF – has refused all release fees when requested. RJ – Procurement should have a terms of reference regarding release fees etc.
GP – SBF agrees that they will not in future engage in paying finders fees to agencies.

ACTION – GD to speak to IL regarding mini competitions.

7. ALN

The sub group meet on 9th April to discuss SEN funding allocations. There is no further update. Secondary decided they would potentially like to remove any allocation for Managed Transfers to increase the amount allocated to High Need.

ACTION – Enquire with Joanne Moore.

8. Matters Arising from Clusters

Rhyl cluster – concerns with ICT around mini competitions for providers. Tim Redgrave attends the Strategic ICT group – he will have further information.
VC asked if schools can renew admin network with the same company.
It depends on the tender value, but clarification is required.

No other matters arising

9. AOB

Leisure Partnership Agreement – PE enquired about this allocation.

CA – Who in Education challenges Leisure regarding increasing costs year on year?

MG – If schools have decided to not go swimming they should be able to share the income generated by Leisure for opening the Leisure Centre up to the public.

CA asked how much annually have Leisure increased their charges?

CAJ – figures usually have a 1% or 2% increase year on year

CA did not know that the Education budget is effectively top sliced for LPA costs.

It was agreed that the Secondary Heads would stay after the SBF to have their queries recorded so they can be sent to Leisure Services.

ACTION – Queries to be raised with Leisure and ask them to attend the next SBF regarding LPA agreement.

CAJ asked the forum for their views on the new alternative staff counselling service. The forum agreed it is up to schools to sign up to the new framework individually.

Meeting closed 11.30am

Date of next meeting – Monday 14th October 2019, Conference Room 1a, County Hall