

Minutes – City Academy Council

Date: 24 April 2024
Location: City Academy (CLF Institute)
Time: 5.00 pm

Present:

Ruth Pickersgill (RP)	Sponsor Academy Councillor (Chair)
Ben Tucker (BT)	Principal
Claire Rodgers (CR)	Teacher Academy Councillor
Sejal Patel (SP)	Sponsor Academy Councillor (Co Vice Chair)
Jason Clarkson (JC)	Student Advocate
Mahalah Katz (MK)	Sponsor Academy Councillor
Abdi Mohamed (AM)	Sponsor Academy Councillor
Cameron Shaw (CS)	Executive Principal
Leah Dowty (LD)	Sponsor Academy Councillor (Co Vice Chair)
Donna Taylor (DT)	Observer – Elected Parent Academy Councillor

Attendees:

Linda Corbidge (LC)	Academy Council Clerk
Catherine Hickey (CH)	Vice Principal
Leigh McKenna (LM)	Observer (new councillor)
Mohamed Elmi (ME)	Observer (new councillor)

Apologies: Marlène Rak (MR) Observer – Elected Parent Academy Councillor

Item	Description	Action
1	Introductions	
1.1	RP welcomed councillors to the meeting and introduced Leigh and Mohamed, two new councillors who were attending as observers until recruitment checks were complete.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.2	There were no verbal declarations of interest made for this meeting.	
3	Minutes of Previous Meetings	
3.1	The minutes of the meeting held 7 February 2024 were approved as a true copy.	
4	Matters Arising	
4.1	<i>BT will arrange a meeting with Colleen and MK to discuss Pupil Premium.</i> BT explained that MK and Colleen had been unable to meet due to changes in the Senior Leadership Team. Following interviews this Friday, a full team will be in place for next year and BT/CH will shortly be looking at re-allocating SLT responsibilities. <u>ACTION: BT will link Mahalah with SLT member for Pupil Premium when known.</u>	BT
4.2	<i>BT to share staff survey results at next meeting.</i> <u>ACTION: Taken forward</u>	BT
4.3	<i>BT will look into data on workforce ethnicity which is not clear in the report.</i> <u>ACTION: Taken forward to next meeting</u>	BT
4.4	<i>CH will send results of the Pupil Voice Across Bristol Survey to JC.</i> Completed	
4.5	<i>BT will bring information to next meeting re when adding top up funding and SEND notional funding, does it cover spending on SEND?</i> <u>ACTION: Taken forward</u>	BT

Item	Description	Action
4.6	CR will discuss how to demonstrate evidence of progress for EAL students with EAL Lead. CR advised that data will be available on the new Bromcom system at the next data drop.	
4.7	BT will arrange to add wording re safe space provided for children if they are being bullied to the Policy. <u>ACTION: CH will check this has been completed.</u>	CH
5	Governance	
5.1	Membership	
5.1.1	It was noted that the Support staff vacancy is ongoing. It was noted there were no nominations received at the last election. Another election will take place again shortly. Post meeting note: <u>ACTION: due to possible changes to composition of Academy Councils, Clerk to seek guidance from the Central Governance Team regarding action on Support Staff vacancy.</u>	LC
5.2	Link roles	
5.2.1	BT/CH explained the responsibilities of the vacant Health & Safety Link Councillor role. ME volunteered to undertake the role of Health & Safety Link Councillor. <u>ACTION: LC will put ME in touch with Lucy Ware regarding Health & Safety Link Role</u>	LC
5.3	Training	
5.3.1	The new councillor was reminded to complete the Governance Essential Module.	
5.4	Breakfast Meetings	
5.4.1	It was noted that the breakfast meeting had been postponed to 8 am on 18 th June to look at Careers. Post meeting note: now CHANGED TO 8am TUES 2nd JULY	
5.4	Immersion Day	
5.4.1	Dates were discussed for the next Immersion Day. It was agreed the day will take place on Tuesday 9th July (8am if attending for breakfast, day to start at 9am), and will focus on Leadership and Management. <u>ACTION: Councillors to add Immersion Day 9th July to calendars</u>	All
6	Parental Engagement & Community Engagement Updates	
6.1	Parent Engagement	
6.1.1	DT reported that she had been thinking about how to widen out the parent engagement offer to attract other parents. Discussion followed around how to get feedback on engagement from parents. Ideas included using IT, e.g. the new Bromcom App, which is likely to be in place from September, a Parent Survey, using visual links for the Parent Café and using other venues for parent meetings e.g. The Loaf. Councillors stressed the importance of communication around launch of the Bromcom App. It was suggested to launch in September with the new Year 7 and liaise with Bristol Metropolitan Academy as they have already launched it. MA volunteered to support with communication around the launch, e.g. drop in after Parent Café. <u>ACTION: Discussion on ideas on communication at next Parent meeting.</u> <u>ACTION: CH/BT to arrange meeting with CS at Bristol Met to discuss introduction of the App</u> <u>ACTION: RP/CH to liaise with MA and any other councillors regarding support with communication around the launch.</u>	RP CH/BT RP/CH
7	Link Councillor Visits/Learning Walks	
7.1	EDI Link	

Item	Description	Action
7.1.1	SP (EDI Link) reported that she had spoken to the EDI Coordinator about the work he is doing and reported that this was going well – he had put a lot of work into the Inset Day.	
7.1.2	CH explained the presentation, which was delivered to staff on Inset Day, advising that staff reaction had been generally very positive, although they were aware there was work to do with some staff. CR fed back that there was a detailed survey afterwards which was good as it had made staff think about EDI. BT advised that the time allocated to the EDI Coordinator was 9 hours a week which councillors felt was a good allocation of time for the work. It was explained that there is also an EDI Link for the Central Team who meets with the EDI Co-ordinator. Changes to the curriculum also involve the EDI central link.	
7.1.3	Further discussion took place; councillors comments included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the work could be fed into RSHE. • that there was evidence of good practice in a recent English job advertisement as the EDI thread could be seen in the advertisement. • Suggestion to add an article in the next newsletter on the EDI Coordinator as it is important that parents are aware. • that it is also important for students to understand what EDI is and what they can contribute re EDI. ACTION: BT to arrange for an article to be added to newsletter on the EDI Coordinator.	BT
7.1.4	What was the aim of the Inset Day? To start having real conversations around EDI, conversations which some of our staff will find it difficult to talk about. For example, the Safeguarding Report details incidents of colourism in the school; some staff in the building will challenge colourism and there are others who don't feel confident to have those conversations.	
7.2	SEND	
7.2.1	DT (SEND Link Councillor) had visited and met with the SENCo. DT had: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looked at the transition offer from Primary re SEND. • noticed some isolated young people at lunchtime and had volunteered to come into the school to support actions around that. 	
8	Student Voice	
8.1	JC provided the following report on student voice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one Year 11 and one Year 10 student had been successful in recent student elections. • a Pastoral Support Assistant in Year 11 will be attending an event on 29th April 5.00 – 7.30 pm with Citizens UK which has involved students at City Academy. • expressed thanks to Leigh (LM) for his support with students around conversations about them feeling safe in the community. 	
8.2	CH reported that the Healthy Schools Survey (all Bristol schools) will be rolled out shortly.	
8.3	LM reported that he had been involved with a student survey in collaboration with Bristol Brunel Academy to see how safe students feel in the community which had more thorough questions than other surveys. ACTION: JC will contact Colin at BBA re issuing a survey at CAB	JC
8.4	LM reported that one CAB student had received the Outstanding Shining Star Award commenting that it was a most inspirational piece of work which should be celebrated. Discussion followed where it was agreed that promotion of the award would be thought about carefully by staff.	
9	Academy Council Report – Strike Action	
9.1	RP explained that this meeting's report would focus on BT updating councillors on the strike action at the Academy, which has been extremely challenging for the Principal and SLT.	

Item	Description	Action
9.2	<p>BT explained the context of union representation at the Academy, the process which had led to the strike actions (2 ballots, one for support staff/one for teachers). Staff had voted during the Easter Holidays for strike action. BT went through the NEU 'asks' in detail, and what had been agreed to date. BT explained that he felt he had worked hard on resolving the 'asks' and felt he had communicated well and in good faith with staff (which had included morning briefings, written documents with clear information around responses to 'asks'). The Deputy CEO had supported in formal meetings.</p> <p>BT said that he felt there is a wider context behind the strike action rather than it specifically being about CAB issues. Some 'asks' relate to terms and conditions determined at CLF level. He also said it is hard to get to a resolution as the 'asks' were changing. There had been many hours of meetings, and the majority of 'asks' have been met. BT explained his efforts to meet with the NEU this week in order to resolve the second day of strike action next week, however the NEU could not meet until this Friday. BT said that he felt there is a lot of anger and upset within the staff group due to differing views.</p> <p>RP commented that only one case had previously been referred to council which BT explained had been referred to the CEO and resolved.</p> <p>The two key areas of break times and directed time, and parity in pastoral pay were discussed in detail.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the accusation of bullying and harassment as the councillors wanted to know exactly what this referred to, and it was explained that there were a number of mainly historic situations raised, that SLT thought had been resolved at the time, and some referred to pupils' actions against staff, (which councillors agreed were important but could not be bullying under agreed definitions) ,and whilst there is always learning from any such situation, it is not clear specifically what action is now required by the NEU to address this area.</p>	
9.3	<p>What effect has this had on staff retention and recruitment? There have been very few resignations received this year, and it does not appear that these relate to the industrial action. Retention is good as our conditions are good.</p>	
9.4	<p>Do the staff know that the conditions at City Academy are better than elsewhere? Yes, we are over communicating that.</p>	
9.5	<p>Why have those staff chosen to strike at this time? Do you think there has been more impact on pastoral staff as a result of what is going on in the community? It appears that the timing is to put the upmost pressure on the school due to the timing re Year 11. We are aware there has been more impact on pastoral staff and we have given as much support as we can through support from the education psychologist and conversations with SLT. Twelve out of fifteen pastoral staff are now back in school.</p> <p>RP commented that councillors recognised the challenging situations that pastoral staff face in all schools generally, and that nationally this is not reflected in their pay levels, and that there is a specific issue for CAB staff compared to other CLF schools. BT advised that previous changes had already been made to the roles and grades for some pastoral staff. A Job Evaluation process has been agreed and if successful, pay will be backdated, but the order the Job Evaluations were taking place in CLF had previously been agreed with Unions.</p>	

Item	Description	Action
9.6	Councillors discussed SLT secondments, expressing strong support for secondments and visits generally to CLF and other schools which gave staff experience of working elsewhere and shared best practice.	
9.7	Further discussion followed around communication. Points made by councillors included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recommendation of ongoing communications to parents around the strike action. CH explained what actions SLT are taking each day. • the importance of ensuring there is a range of people from diverse backgrounds recruited into teaching and leadership roles as well as pastoral roles, as students notice representation. • recognition that there is a belief that members of unions have to follow the union to strike, and not to cross a picket line. 	
9.8	Following the presentation and discussion, councillors expressed their full support for the actions BT is taking.	
9.9	Is there any support that councillors can give you? It was agreed that councillors could not get involved in any negotiations but could continue to visit informally to listen if staff want to talk , but they would hold future staff surgeries.	
10	Safeguarding	
10.1	The Safeguarding Report had been shared and was noted.	
10.2	RP explained that there had been some concerns about support for Children in Care as the responsibility had changed. RP advised councillors that she had been reassured that the students were all being managed and supported but Annual Report and monitoring information is outstanding. The new CIC Designated Teacher went on training yesterday.	
10.3	One of the new Designated Safeguarding Leads had attended training.	
11	Policies	
11.1	RP explained that whilst CLF schools are only expected to complete an annual EDI Statement, a more detailed EDI Policy needs to be presented to councillors for approval, as it is a requirement of the City of Bristol College, who fund the ESOL provision we deliver at the Beacon Centre. RP welcomed any other comments on the policy. Policies approved: City Academy EDI Statement and EDI Policy. CLF/CAB Policies noted: Attendance; CAB Admissions Policy 2025/26 (noted as signed off by the Chair); Online Safety; Remote Learning; Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions.	
12	Matters for the attention of the Board/COAC	
12.1	None.	
13	Any Other Business	
13.1	None.	

The meeting closed at 7.10pm.

Next Meetings:

CAB		
AC1	27/09/2023	5-8pm (CLF Board & Academy Council Results Review)
AC2	11/10/2023	5-7pm
AC3	29/11/2023	5-7pm
AC4	07/02/2024	5-7pm
AC5	24/04/2024	5-7pm

AC6	03/07/2024	5-7pm
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