

East Midlands Academy Trust - Board Meeting

Pyramus House, Roman Way, Grange Park, Northampton NN4 5EA – **Hybrid meeting**

20th September 2021 at 10.00am

First meeting of academic year 2021/2022

These minutes reflect the order of the agenda and not necessarily the order in which items were discussed.

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
1. Welcome	<p>Present: Kevin Crompton (EMAT: Trustee) – Chair – <i>Attended virtually</i> Andy Davis (EMAT: Trustee) – <i>Attended virtually</i> Leigh Jones (EMAT: Trustee) – <i>Attended virtually</i> Ayo Salam (EMAT: Trustee) Fiona Wheeler (EMAT: Trustee) Stephen Morales (EMAT: Trustee) <i>Joined the meeting at 10:15am</i> David Houghton (EMAT: Trustee)</p> <p>Joshua Coleman (EMAT: CEO) Lorna Beard (EMAT: Head of Inclusion & Training Hub) Nattria Dhana (EMAT: Management Accountant) John Lawson (EMAT: Head of Education) Monica Juan (EMAT: Head of Governance & Compliance) - Minutes</p> <p>The clerk welcomed all and reminded all present that the matters raised within this meeting would remain confidential until the minutes were agreed and signed off. The clerk chaired the meeting until item 6 when the Chair (KC) was elected.</p>	
2. Apologies	Apologies from Paul Wheeler were received and accepted by the board.	
3. Quoracy	The meeting was confirmed as quorate.	
4. Declarations of Interest	There were no declarations of interest pertaining to this agenda in addition to those already recorded on the annual Register of Interests.	
5. Board Resignations	Resignations from Asvin Morjaria and Bernard Weiss were received and accepted.	
6. Election of Chair & Vice-Chair	Trustees discussed succession planning. DH expressed his interest to become chair in the future and agreed to shadow KC during the current year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kevin Crompton was elected Chair • David Houghton was elected Vice-Chair. 	
7. Minutes of EMAT TB meeting held on 21/07/2021	<p>The minutes of the meetings held on the 21/07/2021, were reviewed and agreed to be an accurate representation of the meetings.</p> <p>KC agreed to physically sign the minutes once lockdown restrictions had been lifted.</p>	

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8. Action Log from the meeting held on 21/07/2021	<p>All actions had been completed.</p> <p>Trustees requested the link for the NFF podcast to be distributed.</p>	<p>MJ to distribute podcast link</p>
9. Board housekeeping: i. Code of Conduct ii. Register of Interests form iii. KCSE 2021 acknowledgement form iv. Members ToR v. Teams access – information only	<p><i>Papers had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.</i></p> <p>MJ reminded trustees that all the documents needed to be physically signed.</p> <p>Trustees were reminded to complete the new DoI 2021 and KCSE 2021 form and send it to the MJ/CN</p> <p>Trustees were reminded that the migration from GovernorHub to Teams should be completed before the next TB meeting and accounts should have been activated by then.</p> <p>Trustees agreed to adopt the Code of Conduct and Members ToR</p>	<p>MJ to distribute paperwork</p>
10. Constitution of Board: i. Allocation of Lead roles: Safeguarding; SEND; Inclusion (PP & EAL); Well-being; Careers ii. Allocation of Trustees to committees iii. Allocation of Trustees to schools iv. Election of Chairs of committees v. Board recruitment update	<p>Trustees considered the current constitution of the board and agreed to the following allocations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Safeguarding Lead: Fiona Wheeler SEND Lead: David Houghton Careers Lead: Ayo Salam Inclusion Lead: Stephen Morales Wellbeing Lead: Leigh Jones ii. Standards & Performance: FW/LJ/DH/AS Finance, HR & Estates: SM/AS/KC/AD Audit & Risk: AS/AD/FW/DH iii. NIA: David Houghton PWS: Andy Davis Castle: Fiona Wheeler Hardingstone: Stephen Morales Stimpson: Kevin Crompton Orchard: Ayo Salam Shepherdswell: Leigh Jones <p>In response to a question from a trustee regarding what the expectations of trustees were when visiting schools JC explained that trustees linking to schools was a way to provide a further understanding of what school life looked like. This could be achieved either by visiting the school, attending LAB meetings or/and conducting conversation with the Headteacher . MJ agreed to share trustees' details with all Heads.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. Chair Standards & Performance: Leigh Jones Chair Finance, HR & Estates: Andy Davis Chair Audit & Risk: Ayo Salam 	<p>MJ to send email to Heads and trustees regarding school allocation</p>

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	<p>Trustees agreed to appoint VCs at the first committee meeting.</p> <p>v. Trustees considered the recent resignations and future aims for the trust and discussed at length what it was needed for the board. Trustees agreed that future recruitment of trustees should look for skills in Procurement, Marketing, Health & Safety and Audit & Risk. MJ to follow potential leads for recruitment.</p>	
<p>11. Governance Review – For discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TB Chair report • Committees Chair’s Report • LAB Chair reports • Essential Trustee Training Program 	<p><i>Papers had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.</i></p> <p>The Chair thanked trustees, governors and staff for their commitment during what had been another very challenging year.</p> <p>Trustees considered the documents presented and had a robust discussion around the direction of the Trust moving forward. Trustees agreed that the organisation was now stronger and in a better place to move towards expansion. A successful meeting with the RSC would be key in order to consolidate this.</p> <p>The following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees agreed that EMAT had consistently performed ahead of the curve during the pandemic, with staff performing brilliantly and helping to move the Trust in the right direction. • Summer results and Ofsted responses were a reflection of staff hard work and student resilience. • Although safeguarding was now effective across the trust it was imperative not to become complacent. • Scheme of delegation had worked well, allowing the trust to work more cohesively. • Central team growth had provided greater flexibility, including support for external schools in trouble. • Expansion plans had to be more focussed. The trust had successfully grown in numbers but not in size. The new HoE would be able to help scouting new opportunities. • Trustees acknowledged that if current expansion plans were not successful a more forensic approach should be implemented. • Trustees agreed to add growth plans as an ongoing item in the TB agenda. • Trustees thanked the LAB Chairs for their reports and acknowledged difficulties around recruitment. • The need for informal chats between trustees outside prearranged meetings was important. Trustees agreed for KC to facilitate this. <p>Trustees discussed the training provided by CST and KC/SM/LJ asked for their names to be added to the Essential Trustees Training Programme.</p>	<p>MJ to add growth standard item.</p>

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12. CEO Verbal Report	<p><i>JC provided verbal report.</i></p> <p>JC expressed how proud he was to be part of the EMAT family and acknowledged the journey the trust had taken since its inception. During the last year, schools had continued to work successfully in a collaborative manner, with the ethos and values shared by all, and embracing a culture of transparency. Finances continued to be strong and pupils across the trust were thriving. JC thanked the board for its continuous support and recognised the need to continue evolving.</p> <p>JC reported the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance across the trust was high. • TAGs results had been positive across the two secondary schools. • Two ex-members of staff had been reported to the TRA. • Ofsted reports from NIA and SAA had been good. Primary curriculum had been praised and secondary curriculum needed to be developed. • NIA safeguarding was now effective. The school maintained its GOOD Ofsted grading. • HAT negotiations were ongoing with some positive movement from the RSC. A SLA was being created which would be presented at the next FHRE meeting. • A new Primary school bid had been submitted. • As six schools in the trust were under the Ofsted window, there was a possibility that Ofsted might conduct a MAT review. A new guidance had been released designed to support inspectors in carrying out summary evaluations of multi-academy trusts. <p>In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether there were any guarantees that the merger with HAT would happen JC explained that there was a new team at ministerial level that would look at the merger with fresh eyes. The DfE had also released the ‘Try before you buy’ offer which could be utilised with the SLA until a more formal agreement took place. However, there were no guarantees. KC and JC would discuss expansion with the RSC during their annual catch-up meeting.</p> <p>JC highlighted the continued investment during the pandemic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orchard & Shepherdswell: New SEND department • NIA: New staircase, new Primary library, Mental Health Hub and alternative provision. • PWS: New facilities across site • SAA: Building investment • Shepherdswell: New EYFS setting <p>Trustees thanked JC for his report.</p>	<p>MJ to distribute Ofsted Guidance</p>

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13. Finance Flash Report August 2021	<p><i>Papers had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.</i></p> <p>ND presented the paper to trustees and reported that financial meetings were taking place regularly across all schools, with most of them being close to the mark. The current surplus of £420K was higher than expected as it included the declined retention payment originally offered.</p> <p>Trustees concurred that it was great to have enough reserves to be able to move forward comfortably.</p> <p>Trustees thanked ND for her report. There were no questions from trustees.</p>	<p>Flash report to be sent to FHRE committee.</p>
14. Safeguarding matters	<p><i>LB gave a verbal update.</i></p> <p>LB reported that Safeguarding was now effective across the trust as the NIA had been successfully inspected by Ofsted. There was a palpable change of culture, with clear systems and processes in place and staff trained to use them. However, there were still some concerns around behaviour which were being dealt by the SLT.</p> <p>The new Safeguarding policy truly reflected the needs of the trust as it had been prepared in a collaborative manner by a DSL working party with representation from all schools. Each school had contextualised the EMAT template.</p> <p>New safeguarding wallpapers had been introduced in all staff computers across all schools and central team.</p> <p>To reflect the new low-level concerns introduced in the KCSE 2021 a new adult code of conduct had been distributed across all members of staff. Use of the whistleblowing policy had been reinforced and a new DSL/DDSL JD had been introduced. FW and JL would attend training to become DSLs and reinforce safeguarding processes within the central team and board of trustees.</p> <p>LABs were now using a yearly structure for monitoring visits introduced during the Safeguarding Forum. The annual cycle of Safeguarding reviews across the trust was ongoing. DSL supervision was being led by LB with support from FW.</p> <p>JL introduced himself as the new HoE and confirmed that the new safeguarding policy was very comprehensive. The next step would be to ensure the SCR was totally compliant, with an exercise taking place during the current term to strengthen any minor gaps.</p> <p>JL explained that safeguarding needed to be pushed forward through the curriculum, to ensure that children understood all types of risk and how to report them.</p>	

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	<p>In response to a question from a trustee regarding what changes had been introduced across governance to reinforce the monitoring of safeguarding and identify problems at an early-stage LB explained that several things were now in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Inclusion and Training Lead new position • Comprehensive 2-day safeguarding audit review and audit tool • Yearly overview plan for governance to be used by LABs • DSL from other schools acting as LAB Safeguarding governors • Continuous training in place. 	
15. New Articles of Association Model – For discussion	<p><i>Papers had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.</i></p> <p>Trustees discussed at length whether it was necessary to change the current articles for the new model. As separation of layers was still underway trustees agreed to continue with the current model for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>In order to facilitate the separation of layers FW agreed to step down as a member and continue serving as trustee once new members had been appointed.</p>	
16. National Funding Formula consultation– For discussion	<p><i>Papers had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.</i></p> <p>Trustees discussed the proposal. SM suggested to watch the podcast and sent any comments to produce a collective response. Deadline for response was 30th September. Trustees agreed to send comments to MJ and AB by Monday 27th September.</p>	AB to liaise with SM to compose response
17. Policies for ratification:	<p><i>All policies had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy 2021/22 <p>Trustees unanimously agreed to ratify the policy electronically as the distributed version was not the latest one.</p>	MJ to distribute new document and upload policy to all EMAT websites.
18. Next Agenda items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools' allocation update • Trust Growth update • Ofsted: Summary evaluations of multi-academy trusts 	
19. AOB	<p>FW thanked the NIA for the support provided to her son.</p>	
20. Dates of next meetings	<p>Dates of meetings 2021/2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday 29th April 2022 @10am • Wednesday 20th July 2022 @10am 	Calendar appointments have been sent

Meeting closed at 12.00pm

Signed by Kevin Crompton, Chair of Trustees

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Date.....

East Midlands Academy Trust

Action Log of the Trust Board meeting held on 20.09.2021

Item	Action	Owner
1.	Distribute National Funding Formula podcast link	SM/MJ
2.	Distribute Board Housekeeping paperwork	MJ
3.	Send email to introduce Trustees to Heads of allocated schools	MJ
4.	Add Trust Growth update item to TB agenda (standard item)	MJ
5.	Distribute Ofsted Guidance: Summary evaluations of multi-academy trusts	MJ
6.	Add Flash Report to FHRE committee agenda	MJ
7.	Compose National Funding Formula response	AB/SM
8.	Distribute Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy 2021/22 to be ratified electronically – Upload to website	MJ