



THE ENGLISH SCHOOLS FOUNDATION
REPORT TO THE BOARD
FOR THE MEETING ON 17 NOVEMBER 2011
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

1. Introduction

- 1.1 I would like to take the opportunity to welcome our new Board members : the independent members nominated by the Nominating Committee : Alexander Chan, Mike Dowie and P M Kam; and the elected parent members : Kim Anderson, Rob Bennett, Mark Clifford, Vincent Ho, Simon Joyce and Simon Osborne.
- 1.2 Members of the Board have already met twice: for an induction briefing and for an away-day to discuss ESF's strategic development and finances. They were constructive meetings with a firm focus on finance and the case for the retention and increase of the subvention emerging as major themes from the away-day.

2. Strategic Plan

- 2.1 A new three-year strategic Plan is due to be prepared this year for the period 2012-15. Given the uncertainty about the subvention and the fact that the current plan contains a ten-year vision, a high-profile review process seems neither appropriate nor necessary, though the views of the Board on this would be welcome.
- 2.2 The Senior Management Team are therefore proposing to undertake an executive review of the plan with a view to bringing a first draft to the Board in January 2012 and a final one in May following consultation with the advisory committees.

3. Admissions

- 3.1 The central admission period for Year 1 and Year 7 (for entry in August 2012) ended on 30th September. Compared with September 2010, Year 1 application numbers at Discovery College and ESF primary schools have risen by over 14%, and by over 23% at Renaissance College. Altogether, well over 3300 applications have been received for the 1302 places that will be available. The first round of Year 1 interviews will be conducted in January 2012 with invitations to interview being issued in late November.
- 3.2 After the sharp increase in Year 7 application numbers recorded last year which reflected the increased birth rate in 2000 (being both millennium year and Year of the Dragon) numbers have returned to more usual levels. As was the case last year, Renaissance College did not take part in the central admission process as the College will all but fill available places with its own Year 6 students. Discovery College received 49 applications for 30 places and ESF secondary schools received 314 applications for the 90 or so places that will be available. Year 7 assessments for external applicants were conducted at two primary school venues on Saturday 29th October and results will be known in early December.

3.3 As of 7 November, 2011, 17,041 students were enrolled the Foundation's twenty-one schools and kindergartens, which is 99.6% of targeted capacity.

4. Cost Review Exercise

4.1 One of the issues emerging from the Board's discussion of the subvention was the need to keep costs under control.

4.2 As a result, we have set up a Cost Review Exercise which will be overseen by the Finance Committee. The aim will be to look into all areas of expenditure to investigate whether there are other ways of doing things and of reducing costs without prejudicing the quality and standards of education.

4.3 One area which will need to be reviewed is staff pay. We propose to commission an independent consultant to carry out this exercise in order to ensure impartiality and objectivity.

4.4 Regular reports will be made to the Board about the progress of the Cost Review Exercise.

5. Education

5.1 Clearwater Bay School Principal Recruitment Update

The Education and HR teams have been working with the CWBS School Council on the recruitment of a Principal for CWBS. 64 applications were received for the position from which a long list of 12 was created. The Appointment Panel has compiled a short-list of 6 strong candidates who will be interviewed via teleconference on November 10. A final field of 2-3 candidates will then be chosen from this list and invited to Hong Kong for the final interview process between November 28 and 30.

5.2 Review of Standards and Competencies

Two Working groups are currently reviewing the standards and competencies frameworks for schools. A Working Group comprising Committee of Teachers representatives is working on the Teaching Standards and Competencies and a working group led by David Fitzgerald and comprising Principals and Vice-Principals is working on the Leadership Standards and Competencies. Both groups have had initial meetings and are sharing progress. Draft documents are planned to be distributed in term 2.

5.3 PYP Training for Newly Appointed Teachers

On Thursday, November 3rd, 22 new teachers to ESF were actively engaged in a full day workshop to develop their personal knowledge and understanding of the IB Primary Years Programme. The workshop presented an overview of the written, taught and assessed curriculum as it pertains to concepts, knowledge, skills, attitudes and action – the five essential elements of the PYP that are integral to classroom practice. The feedback from the teachers involved was very positive with teachers enjoying the opportunity to work collaboratively and connect with other ESF colleagues as well as deepening their understanding of the essential elements of the PYP and internationalism. The workshop supported teachers with their ongoing questions on their journey to implement the Primary Years Programme in an ESF school context.

5.4 iPads in ESF

A number of ESF schools have begun trialing the use of iPads in the classroom. This trend seems to be gaining momentum and so ESF Centre has purchased a cart of iPads to run

training for teachers and to develop strategies for managing the iPads. Training has been run at the centre on how to roll out apps to class sets of iPads ; keep the iPads synchronised and updated as well as how to keep them secure and charged.

Training courses have been run on the best apps to buy to support different groups of students and the best pedagogical approaches to use with iPads in the classroom.

Initial feedback has shown that iPads have a great deal to offer, especially for early years students and students with Special Educational Needs.

5.4 'Mirrors with Memories'

'Mirrors with Memories' is an anthology of writing from ESF secondary students. The book celebrates the talents of the ESF students primarily in creative writing and also in visual art. The title, adapted from the short story by Azaara Perakath from West Island School captures the intent of the collection, which is to reflect the themes and issues important to students and to create a lasting record of their work. Students' poems, short stories and observational pieces are beautifully illustrated with highly acclaimed art from ESF students. 'Mirrors with Memories' also highlights the importance of creativity in the growth and development of young people and affirms the place of the expressive arts in the secondary curriculum.

The anthology is being sold through the Commercial Press and a successful launch was held at ESF Centre on 31st October with over 60 people in attendance. The Commercial Press sponsored the launch and South China Morning Post (Young Post), Sing Tao Apple Daily and Ta Kung Pao attended. The Chinese newspapers ran stories of interviews with students and parents. The book will be used also as a corporate gift. The intention will be to publish something similar every two years.

6. **Finance**

6.1 Tsing Yi Kindergarten Fee Increase

As a result of our appeal, EDB approved a 2.2% (or \$1,140 p.a.) increase to Tsing Yi Kindergarten's 2011-12 school fees, bringing the new fees from \$51,000 to \$52,140 p.a. Our original application was for an increase of 5.1% (or \$2,600 p.a.). The kindergarten fees for 2011-12 (and % increases in 11/12 and 10/11) are:

- Wu Kai Sha: \$56,300 (5.0%, 5.1%)
- Hillside: \$53,600 (0%, 5.1%)
- Tsing Yi: \$52,140 (2.2%, 0%)
- Abacus: \$51,000 (0%, 0%)

7. **Internal Audit**

7.1 The schedule of school audits for 2011-2012 is well underway, with fieldwork at three schools already completed. IA is expecting to visit two more schools before the Christmas break. ESF Centre audits have also commenced with an audit of Facilities Development Department Procurement currently in progress.

8. **Human Resources**

8.1 Teacher contract renewal offers are currently in progress. By 30 November, 2011, renewal offers are to be made to teachers in the final year of their two-year finite contracts. This year we are renewing 400 of approximately 855 teachers in ESF schools, 97 of approximately 217 teachers in PI schools and 18 teachers in Kindergartens. Teachers are

required to confirm their acceptance by signing and returning the contracts on or before 2 January, 2012.

- 8.2 The existing medical, dental and life insurers are in their fifth year with ESF and the schemes will expire in August 2012. Preparation is underway to re-tender the insurers. In an effort to evaluate and improve our group medical and dental insurance schemes, we conducted five focus group sessions with approximately fifty teaching and support staff members attending to express views and opinions. Feedback gathered will be analysed by our appointed insurance consultant broker – Jardine Lloyd Thompson (JLT). Summary views will be incorporated into the tender proposal. The tender will take place in the December to February time frame. The final recommended insurer(s) will be presented at the March 2012 Board meeting.
- 8.3 In response to feedback from support staff, this year we are placing a greater emphasis on support staff professional development opportunities. In October, ESF HR organised five classes in using Microsoft Excel 2010, attended by 113 support staff. ESF HR also invited a specialist from the Hong Kong Labour Department to conduct a workshop on Occupational Stress, attended by 37 staff. Finally, during October ESF HR conducted two workshops on “Resolving Conflicts and Understanding Others,” attended by 47 staff. Feedback on all workshops was very positive.

9. Communications

9.1 Media interviews

Gigi Lam (Higher Education Counsellor, RC) and two Year 13 students, Marcus Lam and Michelle Li, were interviewed by Ming Pao on their plans for applying for Hong Kong universities. The story was run on 7 November 2011.

Asia Television World (ATV) worked with Jockey Club Sarah Roe School (JCSRS) and the Therapy Centre (TC) for the programme “Inside Story”. ATV interviewed two parents of JCSRS who talked about how they raised their SEN children and how the school has been providing the appropriate education and support for them. The crew also interviewed Alan Howells and Educational Psychologists Tim Conroy-Stockler and Nicki Holmes about the services that TC provides to the ESF community. The programme will be broadcast at a later date.

9.2 ESF Website

A training session for website and newsletter administrators from ESF schools was organised by ESF Centre Communications Team on 25 October 2011 attended by 23 colleagues from 10 schools and ESF Centre on editing and administering the websites and newsletters.

9.3 Curriculum Brochures

The Communications Team produced two brochures recently, one on Chinese curriculum (primary and secondary) and one on the secondary curriculum (Years 7-11). Both are available on the ESF website for downloading.

10. Facilities Management

10.1 After the summer works programme in July and August 2011, the team is busy closing out final accounts with contractors and starting the planning process for next year.

10.2 Major Projects

The extension project works at Shatin College and Shatin Junior School are progressing well. Disturbance to the schools has been kept to a minimum, with no works being undertaken during recent examinations at the College.

The works at KGV and KJS are also progressing well with minimal disturbance. At KGV, we expect the first major concrete pour to be completed in the next 2 to 3 weeks. At KJS, piling works have started, with trial pile testing expected to be complete within the November 2011.

After the last meeting of the Board, procurement of a lead consultant for the Technical Viability Study at Island School has commenced. We hope to have a consultant appointed by the end of November 2011.

11. ESF Educational Services Limited

11.1 The application window for kindergarten entry for 2012/13 opened on 1 October. At the end of the month, over 1,400 applications had been received, exceeding the same period last year by over 10%.

11.2 In-school PYP training was delivered for the four kindergartens by IBO appointed consultants in October.

11.3 Responding to parental interest, ESL has opened English language learning classes for children of playgroup age in a couple of locations. Children are accompanied by an adult and are from age 15 months up.

11.4 ESL's annual swimming gala took place on 29 October at South Island School. The session was divided between those in the learn to swim programme and those in squads. Of the squads, nearly half of the participating swimmers set a qualifying time for the Hong Kong Amateur Swimming Association (HKASA).

11.5 ESL again ran the ESF Football tournament in October, and there were representative teams from all ESF and PI schools participating.

11.6 The Spring 2012 IB Finals Revision Courses were launched in late October, and recruitment of teachers commences in November.

Heather Du Quesnay
9 November 2011