



THE ENGLISH SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

REPORT TO THE BOARD

FOR THE MEETING ON 15 JUNE 2010

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Introduction

We are anxious to respond to comments from some Board members that they find it difficult to understand what is happening in the schools around the ESF system and that policy decisions seem sometimes to lack a context.

For the meeting on 15 June we have produced an experimental Chief Executive's Report. If members like the approach, we will continue to develop it for use at meetings during the next academic year.

1. Follow-up to Last Board Meeting

1.1 ESF/ESL Relationship

The report and minutes will be taken to the ESL Directors for their approval of the follow-up action.

I shall brief the 'legal team', comprising our external audit partner and our lawyer from JSM so that action can be taken over the summer on the drafting of the necessary documentation.

1.2 Capital Projects

The Principal and Chairman of the School Councils of Kowloon Junior School and KGV were informed of the Board's decisions immediately after the meeting. Both Principals have informed parents and staff and both schools expressed considerable appreciation of the Board's decision.

A brief press release was issued which was picked up by the SCMP and two of the Chinese newspapers. The tone was very low-key. A report (deferred from the last Board meeting) on the agenda for the upcoming meeting proposes the establishment of a Major Building Projects Committee to review projects, recommend decisions to the Board and ensure that the Board receives regular reports on progress.

1.3 Refundable Capital Levy (RCL)

Parents and staff were informed of the introduction of the RCL by individual email letter on May 20/21, 2010. A number of teachers expressed appreciation of the decision to give 80% relief to teaching staff.

1.4 Review of Performance Management

Principals have been informed of the Board's decision regarding end-of-year arrangements for the 2009-10 school year.

A report on the agenda for the upcoming meeting confirms the action in hand to revise the arrangements and the Board is asked to sign it off.

1.5 Budget

The Board's budget decisions have been communicated to schools.

2. Relations with the Education Bureau

It would be helpful to have the Board's agreement to discuss about the review of the ESF Strategic Plan and Special Educational Needs provision with the Education Bureau.

3. Education

3.1 Secondary

Examinations for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma, BTEC, Applied A-Level and GCSE/IGCSE are now complete. We believe they have gone well.

IB Diploma results will be issued to students in early July. This year we plan to have a cross-ESF analysis ready by 9 July – though this will be preliminary and it is unlikely that the results will be complete by then. The Board will receive an analytical report during the autumn term.

British A-Level results are published on 19/20 August 2010. Students who have applied to UK universities and who miss their IB targets may have to wait till the end of August (or, if they miss by a long way, the clearing house in September) to receive the offer of a place.

GCSE/IGCSE results are published on 26/27 August 2010.

A major conference for senior staff from all secondary schools/departments took place on 3/4 June 2010 to discuss Post-16 pathways, including alternatives to the IB Diploma.

During the summer term there are many schools and cross-ESF activities, including the ESF Film Festival at Discovery College on 27 May 2010.

South Island School received accreditation from the Council of International Schools/Western Association of Schools and Colleges for its self-evaluation processes. It joins Sha Tin College as our second accredited secondary school.

(King George V received accreditation after the Board meeting.)

3.2 Primary

The Interactive Computerised Assessment System tests were completed by the middle of May by all primary schools and departments. An analytical report will be presented to the Board in the autumn term.

Six primary schools have received Primary Years Programme (PYP) authorisation from the International Baccalaureate Organisation. This brings the total number of IB World schools at primary level to nine. The remaining two schools (Kennedy and Bradbury) are on course for authorisation in the next 18 Months.

Kennedy School was accredited by the Council of International Schools (CIS) for its high standards of professional performance in international education and self-evaluation procedures. A total of three primary schools have achieved this status; the others are at different stages in the process.

A Year 6 exhibition in which students undertake an enquiry and present the outcomes through a display which they design and organise themselves is a requirement for PYP schools within about 18 months of authorisation. Three schools held Year 6 exhibition this year – Renaissance College and Sha Tin Junior School (its first attempt). Both showed an impressive range of work and were very well received by parents.

(Clearwater Bay School held its Year 6 Exhibition after the Board meeting.)

Many schools are holding concerts, play productions and class performances at this time of the year. As this is also the time when primary school teachers are working on children's end of year reports and Year 6 data for transfer to secondary schools, it is a particularly busy time.

A group of 124 Year 6 primary students spent 5 days in Beijing from 17 May, visiting schools and seeing some of the most famous historical sights. The trip was led by our Chinese Adviser, Wang Xiaoping, and accompanied by Brenda Cook, Principal of Glenealy School and Paul Hay, Principal of Kennedy School, 18 other staff members and 4 parents. Glowing messages of thanks were received from parents.

3.3 Special Educational Needs

Work is well advanced on a strategy for Special Educational Needs. The strategy sets out our vision for a Learning Support Centre/Class in every school (3 out of 5 ESF secondary schools, and 6 out of 9 ESF primary schools already have one; Renaissance College and Discovery College have no SEN/LSC provision); the development of Jockey Club Sarah Roe Special School as a centre of excellence for SEN support; and for better coordinated therapy and educational psychology services. (The Board's budget decisions will enable us to progress the last point). Our next operational priority is to develop new Learning Support Classes at Kennedy, Sha Tin Junior and Glenealy Schools. This will require some recurrent funding from the Educational Bureau. We will bring a report to the Board's meeting in September.

3,4 Continuing Professional Development

In the recent teacher survey carried out in March 2010, results show that 88% of respondees stated that they had the opportunity to learn something new or improve their skills outside of their school, in relation to continuous professional development offered by the ESF. In all 376 workshops, conferences and training events have been designed, organised and implemented by the Education Team so far this academic year. The newly developed Gateway CPD module, with its online registration facility, has been instrumental in the management of these learning opportunities that have been delivered at ESF Centre, directly within our Schools and also through online means. So far this academic year over 5000 participants have attended the professional development offered by ESF Centre. Over 21,000 people have passed through the training rooms on the 25th floor of the Fortis Centre, attending training sessions, conferences and meetings.

4. People Issues

- 4.1 Board members have asked for more information about the climate and morale in ESF schools. On the agenda for this meeting are two reports which will assist Board members to take a view of these matters.

First there is the second ESF Stakeholder Opinion Survey, a report on the responses to a questionnaire sent to all parents, teachers, support staff and older students from Year 5 onwards. The responses were made electronically and anonymity was guaranteed. The previous survey (which was the first) took place just over two years ago.

Second, the Director, Human Resources will report on teacher turnover and recruitment, and provide some demographic information on the age and nationality of the teaching force.

Both these reports will provide data across the whole of ESF. School specific data relates to relatively small numbers of individuals and can give a distorted picture of the differences between schools. We believe that the performance

of an individual school is a matter for the School Council (who always receive ESF-wide data so that they have a reference point for their particular school) and for management.

- 4.2 Among the staff leaving ESF at the end of this term, it is important to mark the departure for Mulgrave School in Vancouver, Canada of John Wray, Principal of South Island School for 9 years and a member of the Executive Committee/Board for two.

Andrew Sortwell, Director Education and Rob Bennett, Chief Financial Officer, will be leaving after 3 and 2 years respectively. Both have given generous service to ESF.

5. **Finance Issues**

- 5.1 Finalising individual school budgets continues, with the approval process through individual Councils. The ESF Centre budget 2010/11 has been completed, together with the total ESF 2010/11 Budget, as presented at last meeting.
- 5.2 The Education Bureau is currently considering the proposed fee increases for all ESF schools and kindergartens, a job which always generates a good many enquires for key finance staff. A letter has been received from a parents group raising a number of questions around the fee increases.
- 5.3 The Billing Team have put in place the new billing system (PASS), which has demanded long hours of work in transferring data from the old system. The Billing Team are chasing up delinquent school fees, preparing to issue invoices for the Advance Payments for the September instalment of the school fee and also making arrangements to collect the PTA subscription fees for those schools which have requested them to do so.

6. **Facilities**

- 6.1 The Facilities Department is engaged in detailed work to progress the major building projects, working closely with the Education Bureau.
- 6.2 Summer is the busiest time of year for this group of staff as they award the contracts and plan for approximately HK\$107 million worth of maintenance and refurbishment work in schools, which must be completed while the students are off-campus over the summer.
- 6.3 The Health and Safety Review has been a major priority for Facilities over the past 6 months with good progress being made during the initial 'pilot' stage. More detail about this work will be presented to the Board in the Autumn term.

7. **ESF Educational Services Ltd**

- 7.1 The kindergartens have experienced a 56% increase in applications this year. We expect all four to be full or close to capacity in August.
- 7.2 In English language, we are hopeful of hitting our first-year target of 500 for take-up of the Cambridge ESOL (Education as a Second or Other Language) Young Learners' examinations. Plans are well underway for the summer with classes running in six ESF/ESL school and kindergarten locations (Language Summer School activities take place during the school summer holidays.) A group of about 12 students will spend 2 weeks in the UK improving their English.
- 7.3 Sporting activities are thriving with over 3,500 children enrolled this term, with particularly encouraging participation in Football. A basketball touring team has just come home from a successful trip to Singapore and children in the swimming programme have their first opportunity to compete against one another in a squad-level gala at South Island School on 4th June. Summer multi-sport camps and specialist clinics will operate at South Island School and Renaissance College throughout the summer. Venues have been limited this year because of the extensive school summer works programme.

Heather Du Quesnay
15 June 2010