



THE ENGLISH SCHOOLS FOUNDATION
REPORT TO THE BOARD
FOR THE MEETING ON 14 DECEMBER 2010
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Introduction

It has been an extraordinarily busy term in the schools, ending with the usual round of Christmas activities which delight parents, students and staff alike – and generate a great deal of work for teachers, support staff and PTAs. Congratulations to all on some hugely successful school fairs, carol concerts and other performances. They have been, as always, a source of pleasure to all who participated.

1. **Follow-up to the Last Board Meeting**

1.1 Visits to Schools

We will publish a schedule of possible visits, each with a theme, and invite members to sign up early next term.

1.2 Meeting with EDB

A further meeting with EDB officials took place early in December. We will report on the discussions at the Board's brainstorming session on 11 December and at this meeting.

2. **Search for a Chairman for ESF**

2.1 The Board has established a Search Committee with the following members : Sophia Kao, Markus Shaw, Nick Bilcliffe, Virginia Wilson, Amy Wong, Marc Castagnet, chaired by Kevin Taylor, Vice Chairman. The Search Committee will meet for the first time on 7 December 2010. A brief progress report will be made at the Board meeting.

3. **Board Brainstorm on the Future of ESF**

3.1 A majority of members of the Board are able to attend the meeting planned for the morning of Saturday, 11 December. Board members will be joined by Jane Foxcroft, Principal of West Island School; Ed Wickins, Principal of KGV; Sarah Rigby, Chairman of the School Council at West Island School; Mike Hudson, Chairman of the School Council at Clearwater Bay School; Pam Ryan, Vivian Cheung and Jonathan Straker. The morning will be facilitated by Christine Loh.

3.2 The purpose of the session is to open a discussion on ESF's role and contribution in Hong Kong looking into the future rather than to the past. It will be a reflective, not a decision-making, discussion.

4. Government Capital Grant for Kowloon Junior School

- 4.1 Meetings have been held individually with 12 members of Legco to brief them on the project. I am also grateful to a number of Board members : Felice Lieh Mak, Sophia Kao, Liz Boshier, Kim Mak, Nick Bilcliffe and Elaine Leung for leading the deputations.
- 4.2 The KJS project is on the agenda for the Legco Education Panel on 13 December. We will report on the outcome at the Board meeting. We expect the scheme to be considered by the Public Works Sub-Committee on 19 January 2011 and by the Finance Committee on 18 February 2011.
- 4.3 If all goes well, the children will be decanted from the Perth Street site to the government primary school in Hung Hom at the end of the spring term 2011 and demolition will start in May 2011.

5. Cimigo Report

- 5.1 Early in the autumn term we commissioned a survey of schools' perceptions of the services provided by ESF Centre by Cimigo, a reputable Hong Kong based market survey company.
- 5.2 Cimigo conducted 37 interviews with Principals, School Council Chairmen and Business Managers. They also facilitated three focus groups with parents to discuss the admissions process.
- 5.3 The Cimigo report was published at the end of November and shared with Principals at their committee meeting on 2 December. It will be discussed by School Council Chairmen at their next meeting in January 2011.
- 5.4 The value of the report lies in its granularity and in the detail of the observations and insights which will enable us to frame an agenda for further improvement.
- 5.5 Key headlines include :
- stakeholders are proud of ESF and appreciate SMT's leadership in setting up policies, protocols and processes that align the operations of schools and translate into improved efficiency;
 - stakeholders want to see ESF Centre doing even more to foster collaboration between the schools to enable ESF to become a genuinely world-class educational organisation;
 - schools want more devolution of power and resources;
 - Principals want more and earlier involvement in policy development.

The comments on individual departments are too detailed to summarise easily, but a few headlines would be :

- enthusiasm for a 3-year budget;
- need to automate and streamline the financial reporting systems and processes;
- need to follow up procurement decisions to monitor quality of products and services;
- wish for schools involved in major building projects to have the same engagement with Facilities Development as with the summer works programme;

- call for clearer information about admissions;
- dilemmas regarding educational advice : wish for more subject-specific advice, yet recognition of limited manpower; possibility of drawing more expertise from the schools but reluctance to disrupt regular teaching;
- call for ICT managers to spend time in schools to observe the interface between systems and get feedback on system performance;
- need for a more proactive communications strategy;
- kindergartens need more advice and professional training specific to their needs.

6. Education

6.1 Chinese

The development of Chinese programmes has been a strategic priority for ESF. Some current headlines include:

- The primary daily Chinese programme is now well established. Students continue to find enjoyment in Chinese classes as it is gradually recognised as a core subject in primary schools.
- IGCSE Chinese as a second language syllabus (0523) has been developed by ESF and endorsed by Cambridge International Examinations. Teaching of the syllabus commenced in five ESF secondary schools as a pilot for CIE at the beginning of the current academic year. The syllabus focuses on practical language use.
- Three learning pathways have been established in secondary schools to match the primary programme. The structure will cater for different needs while providing streamlined and consolidated opportunities of certification in Y7-13.
- Stronger links have been made with mainland schools. ESF Joint Y6 Study Trip to Beijing is now a tradition, attracting 120 students in 2009. A number of primary schools now run a week long excursion to the mainland instead of the traditional school camp, often linked with a local school.
- A rigorous effort has been made to develop teachers. The ‘ESF Teaching Chinese in an International Context Workshop Series’ has run to its 61st event.
- Three Chinese drumming teams have been established and the fourth one is in progress. They have become an attraction on various occasions.
- The Chinese debate, in its 3rd year, has attracted other schools in Hong Kong and overseas.
- ESF students showcased their excellent language ability to the local community. Two secondary students (DC & SIS), together with 22 others, won 1st Awards in the Overseas Chinese Student Writing Contest, among 1700 entries from Hong Kong. Scores of students also took prizes from the annual Hong Kong Music and Speech Festival.

6.2 Mathematics Professional Development

Recently we have had external consultants from MLATS (Mathematics Learning and Teaching for Success) work with many of our primary and secondary teachers. MLATS is a group of highly skilled educators from schools across Australia who have been trained in providing professional development in mathematics for teachers of students aged 3 – 15 years. They provide a collaborative and practical framework for teachers to engage with and present significant ideas related to the teaching and learning of mathematics and the development of numeracy.

Between November 15th and 19th, 82 primary teachers attended extended workshops (2.5 days) which were held for year 1 – 3 teachers and then year 4 – 6 teachers.

The workshops covered the following areas:

- how mathematics practices are changing – essential elements relating to the teaching and learning of mathematics;
- what is the role of mathematics in inquiry;
- differentiating and assessing learning in mathematics.

Feedback from the workshops has been extremely positive with 98% of participants responding that “their understanding of mathematics learning and teaching was enhanced” and that they “will be able to apply what they learnt in the classroom.” (Teachers’ comments in the Professional Development Evaluation exercise)

Principals and maths co-ordinators have requested that we engage the consultants again in March to build on the current interest and development in schools.

The secondary model in working with MLATS will be three one day workshops. These will be held from 6 to 8th December for 40 teachers, spanning the year levels of 7 - 13. The workshops will focus on:

- approaches to teaching mathematics;
- algebra using the inquiry model;
- mental computation – links to visualisation and algebra;
- teaching algebraic expansion.

7. Finance

7.1 The ESF Annual Audited Accounts have been signed off by KPMG, our external auditors, with a clean opinion. This year, we included a Report of the Board of Governors in order to be more in line with the format of a standard set of company financial statements. Furthermore, we improved our disclosures, both on the face of the accounts and the Notes to improve transparency. Finance Committee discussed the accounts during the last meeting and endorsed it and Audit Committee also reviewed the accounts.

7.2 Finance has worked closely with Admissions Team over the last month to revise the admissions form to include details of the Refundable Capital Levy collection process. The forms have already gone out to the 2010-11 Year 7 students.

7.3 Every year, ESF pays approximately \$10m on travel expenses. This includes recruitment as well as overseas trips organized by schools. After a stringent tendering

process, which involved business managers from schools and various representatives from departments at ESFC, we have awarded travel services contracts to two local service providers, Lotus and Nan Wah, for air-tickets and hotel bookings, and group travel administration.

8. Development and Communications

8.1 Fundraising

- KGV has kicked off its campaign for the Fundraising Gala Dinner to take place in early April 2011 with a target of \$1m to be raised through the event. Funds will be raised through the sales of tables, raffle tickets and an auction.
- Jockey Club Sarah Roe School will raise money for purchasing books for its library. A fundraising campaign titled *Adopt-A-Book Campaign* will kick off in December. The target is to raise \$300,000 for 2,000 books and to increase the school's profile in the community.
- Peak School is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2011 with a series of events and projects in place. Fundraising and involvement of alumni is in the planning stage.
- ESF joint school projects with fundraising opportunities are at various stages in collaboration with teachers and potential sponsors.

8.2 Communications

- Opportunities for face-to-face dialogue with parents were arranged. A meeting with parents from the Concerned Parents' Group was held at the end of October. Two public meetings were arranged -- in mid November and in early December for the purpose of briefing parents on ESF's finances and discussion on other related matters.
- Meetings with individual Legislative Council members who are members of the Education Panel and the Public Works Sub-Committee) were arranged to lobby for their support for the Kowloon Junior School redevelopment project. These meetings were led by a member from the ESF Board of Governors, accompanied by a parent representative from KJS. The exercise allowed us to answer questions or concerns that may arise from the Legislative Council members and also to prepare us for the Education Panel meeting to take place on 13 December 2010.
- Arranged media coverage in November included a fundraising event held at Island School and the *Journée du gout* at South Island School.
- Continuous contacts with media include a meeting with Mr Reginald Chua of SCMP, interview with Principals for a local parenthood magazine, and responses to media (Ming Pao, Sing Tao, Ta Kung Pao) on various issues were made.
- The 09-10 Annual Report will demonstrate the work and achievements of ESF schools' students and include a higher degree of detail on the accounts.
- The ESF 2011 Calendar including art works from ESF students was produced.

9. ESF Educational Services Limited

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- Enrolment went very smoothly for the second ten week Language programme. Student numbers have risen as new children have joined the programme and a high percentage simply re-enrolling and continuing their classes. Growth has been particularly strong at

the young ages and, with the addition of Abacus, language classes are now taking place in all four of ESL's kindergartens. Enrolment in winter camp has also been strong with over 200 students already enrolled. By the end of November, ESL had conducted 117 Cambridge exams, twice the number in the same period last year, and is waiting confirmation by Cambridge ESOL to become a computer-based exam centre for two English exams, Key English Test and Preliminary English Test.

- 9.2 Australasia Tennis Aces have been appointed as the new provider of tennis, to start in March 2011, following their successful bid in the tender process. Planning is underway for winter camp and term two.
- 9.3 In the kindergartens, K1 applications are being sorted and plans made for screening visits to take place in January. The curriculum review is expected to report shortly.

Heather Du Quesnay