



THE ENGLISH SCHOOLS FOUNDATION
REPORT TO THE BOARD
FOR THE MEETING ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2010
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Introduction

I am pleased to welcome Board members back to a new school year. The term has started well in all our schools and we are optimistic for another year of significant achievement and development.

1. Follow-up to Last Board Meeting

1.1 Major Building Projects Committee

The Committee has been established and met twice. Its recommendations form an item on the agenda for this meeting.

1.2 As I write, we are waiting for the Education Bureau to set a date for the meeting I have requested on the ESF Strategic Plan.

2. Student Enrolment

2.1 Enrolments in ESF schools on 7 September were healthy with primary schools at 99.5% and Secondary Schools at 100% against overall targetted capacity. The comparative figures for September 2009 were 99.4% and 99.9% respectively. The target number of places at secondary schools has increased by 78 since September 2009.

2.2 Discovery College enrolments were at 96.9% against overall targetted capacity, with the primary school essentially full and the secondary school enrolments having increased since last September from 244 to 366 students as the College has grown to include Year 10. Renaissance College enrolments are 100.1% against targeted capacity, and enrolment numbers have increased from 1742 to 1872 since this time last year.

2.3 JCSRS has 61 students enrolled, one over target.

2.4 ESF International Kindergartens enrolments were at 98.1% against overall targeted capacity. In the last year, kindergarten enrolments have increased from 907 to 1130 as provision has expanded at Wu Kai Sha and Hillside (previously Sheung Wan).

- 2.5 The few vacancies that currently exist are largely due to late or un-flagged withdrawals. Schools are working from their waiting lists and are in the process of organizing and conducting interviews where necessary. Wu Kai Sha Kindergarten has a few K1 places to offer. Discovery College has some remaining secondary places, as does Renaissance College in Years 9, 10, 11 and 12. With the exception of KGV and Island School, ESF secondary schools have a small number of vacancies in Year 12 for which they are actively recruiting.
- 2.6 As of 7th September 2010, 16870 students were enrolled in the Foundation's twenty-one schools and kindergartens. These encouraging figures reflect the continuing hard work in the area of admissions by school management and admissions staff.
- 2.7 Applications were accepted for the corporate surety scheme from 7 January until 30 June 2010. 261 applications were submitted, a nearly 40% increase over the figure for the scheme in 2009. Through the scheme, 197 applicants were offered the opportunity of a place in an ESF primary or secondary school, subject to gaining success at interview, with 142 proceeding to interview.
- 2.8 Looking ahead, applications for admission in August 2011 are now being received for Year 1 (children born in 2006) and Year 7 (children born in 2000). The central application period for these two year groups runs from 1st to 30th September, 2010. Applications are made through the ESF on-line admission system.

3. Education

3.1 Secondary

The IB Diploma results were very pleasing with significant improvements in key areas. The overall pass rate of those entering the Diploma increased from 91.9% to 94.4%, and the average points score per student, increased from 32.8 to 33.5.

If the Board would like more detail, we would be pleased to submit a longer report at the next meeting.

The pattern of university entry appears to have continued to change with an increasing proportion of students choosing to enter US, Canadian, Hong Kong and Australian universities. Entry to the UK universities was much smoother this year, with the great majority of applicants securing their places within a few days of the IB Diploma results being published. Fortunately the uproar in England about A-level students failing to gain university places has not affected ESF at all. Again a full analysis can be given at the November meeting if the Board wishes to see it.

The GCSE/iGCSE results showed a pleasing improvement with 93% gaining A*-C grades, and 54.3% of papers gaining A* and A grades. All ESF schools

achieved more than 50% A* or A grades. A full report can be supplied at the next meeting if the Board wishes to see further information.

Work is continuing on proposals to establish a workshop/studio centre for Advanced Diploma/BTEC students on either side of the harbour. This is likely to be in rented, commercial/light industrial accommodation on a fairly short lease. We will seek the Board's approval when plans are more advanced.

3.2 Primary

The Interactive Computerised Assessment System tests (INCAs) developed by Durham University have now been analysed and the results shared with Principals and School Council Chairmen. At Year 3 in Maths, 87% of students achieved above their chronological age, the same proportion as last year; in English, the proportion above chronological age was 86%, again the same as last year.

At Year 6, 82% were above chronological age, 6 percentage points fewer than last year. Maths is a priority for our primary Continuing Professional Development programmes this year. In English at Year 6, 90% achieved above chronological age, 3 percentage points lower than last year, but similar to the score in 2006/07.

3.3 Special Educational Needs

We have decided to postpone seeking the Board's approval to a strategy for the further development of Special Educational Needs provision. This follows a discussion with the Committee of School Council Chairmen in June, who felt that more work was needed in a number of areas. The incoming Director, Education will take a lead in resolving these issues. We do need to be in a position to seek the Education Bureau's support for a Learning Support Class at Sha Tin Junior School before the end of the calendar year.

3.4 Information and Communication Technology

The autumn term of 2010 marks an important point in the development of our new communications and information system, the Gateway. (Some members saw a prototype called Lionel in use at King George V School during their visit last year.)

a. The Gateway

The Gateway is now being used by all schools Foundation-wide. Parents may now access their children's information via the Gateway at several schools. 90% of Foundation schools are setting up or using the Assessment Recording and Reporting Markbook (KGV continues to use its own Lionel system). We hope that all schools will be fully reporting and continually assessing students on-line by the beginning of the next academic year. Parents are able to update demographic information, enroll their children in activities online, receive immediate alerts of absences and school bulletins and register for Parents' Evening. Other daily functions used by all schools include Continuous

Professional Development enrolment and Higher Education application. The Gateway is visited more than 40,000 times per week by staff, students and parents and has more than tripled its usage since last academic year.

b. Learning Gateway

The Learning Gateway was launched in January 2010 and provides a virtual learning environment for our students. It is based on the open source Moodle platform. The money saved on license fees has allowed ESF to install high speed servers in schools, rather than trying to support all schools from a single central server. It has also allowed ESF to highly customise Moodle to meet the individual needs of schools and offers a range of interactive features. These include quizzes, forums, on-line journals, blogs, wikis, embedded multi-media and audio tasks. The Learning Gateway is also a hub for students to download resources, link to external resources on the internet and submit assignments. The ESF development team have built seamless links with other programs, such as Google apps. There is also a link to a virtual classroom solution with the potential for supporting face-to-face teaching in the event of school closure. The Learning Gateway is proving popular with teachers and students; it is user-friendly and is helping to support personalised learning and collaboration. Over 10,000 students and teachers currently use the Learning Gateway, on average making roughly ten visits per week.

4. People Issues

4.1 Staffing for the New Academic Year

Principals, supported by the ESF Centre HR team, filled more than 150 teaching posts across our schools and kindergartens. More than 25% of the posts were filled through internal movements within ESF and more than 30% of posts were filled within Hong Kong. The United Kingdom continued to be the primary originating country for overseas teachers with smaller numbers coming from Australia, mainland China, the United States and the Middle East.

4.2 New Teacher Induction

During the first two weeks of August approximately 90 new teachers arrived in Hong Kong to start the new academic year. We welcomed new teachers to all ESF schools and the PI schools as well as ESF kindergartens. Three New Teacher Induction Programmes were held. The aim of these programmes was to assist new teachers and their partners and families get settled in Hong Kong and to provide them with general information about working at ESF.

Now in its second year, on 11 August, 2010 we invited all new teachers to a talk presented by noted local historian, Jason Wordie, followed by a treasure hunt around Hong Kong which culminated in a dinner for survivors on Lamma Island. More than 80 new teachers and staff participated in the day.

On Friday, 13 August, immediately before the start of the new academic year, the Chief Executive welcomed over 120 new teachers to our schools and kindergartens with a New Teacher Cocktail Reception held at the Hong Kong

Jockey Club. Many Board members, School Council Chairmen and senior staff had an opportunity to extend their own welcome to the new teachers and we were grateful for that support.

4.3 Support Staff Management Training

The long summer break for schools provided ESF with an ideal opportunity to launch some management training programmes for support staff. Two two-day Managing Others programmes were conducted in the second half of July and four half-day skills programmes were conducted. The half-day programmes focused on Situational Leadership, Performance Coaching and Giving and Receiving Feedback. More than 70 staff attended the various programmes from schools, ESL and ESF Centre. The feedback on the programmes was very positive with strong recommendations to provide the Managing Others programme for all people managers in ESF.

4.4 Support Staff Induction Programme Launch

Support staff, including EAs, are critical in supporting teaching and learning within our organisation. Support staff occupy a variety of roles: from ICT technicians to administration staff; EAs to HE Counsellors; and Nursing, Finance, Communication and HR specialist roles. Overall we employ support staff in more than 70 different types of roles. We have now planned to conduct an ESF Support Staff Induction Programme on a monthly basis throughout the year. The plan is that new support staff to ESF and ESL come to the Support Staff Induction Programme in their first month of employment with ESF. The first session took place on 8 September, 2010 with new staff attending from various schools. The time and dates of these programmes has been published as part of the overall CPD calendar. Schools can obtain more information about the programme and schedule by contacting Human Resources at ESF Centre.

4.5 Performance Management

An implementation plan, developed by the Director, Human Resources, was circulated among the Senior Management Team and Principals at the start of the new academic year. The simplified proforma, focus on target setting as well as competency development and summary profile were welcomed by the Principals. It was agreed by the Principals that they would take the lead in training line managers within their schools in the modified process which builds on many of the best practices already evident in schools. For the first time, one process will be used for teachers, Principals, senior staff members and support staff.

4.6 Job Framework

On 3 September, 2010 HR announced the release of the Job Framework which is a compendium of about 130 generic job descriptions (JD's) that cover all of the primary roles staff members hold in ESF and ESL. These JD's are clustered in 10 Job Families - some with a specific professional orientation (e.g. Teaching, Medical/Clinical Support) while others cluster a more general array of jobs (e.g. Administration and Operations).

5. Finance

5.1 Fee increase

After an exchange of correspondence, the Education Bureau approved fee increases for the ESF and two PI schools. New fees for Hillside and Wu Kai Sha Kindergartens have been approved as well, but Tsing Yi and Abacus are going through the final appeal process at the moment, with Ann Pearce having contacted a Principal Assistant Secretary requesting him to reconsider the decisions.

5.2 Billing

Over the summer, the team handled advance fees collection, totalling HK\$85m from 11,354 pupils representing 83% of the total population. They also handled PTA membership fees collection, totaling HK\$931,000 from 3,762 pupils for 8 schools. Numerous phone calls were made and reminder emails sent to chase all outstanding school fees.

We experienced system issues with our new billing application which delayed our sending of statements to parents. The team worked closely with our system vendor for over 3 weeks and finally managed to resolve all issues at the end of August.

5.3 Procurement:

During the summer months, we have completed bulk tender processes with a total spend of HK\$5.5m, which are for equipment and services (PC, notebooks, LCD monitors, printers, projectors, provision of broadband services) for schools. We have also reviewed and renewed our general insurance program, costing HK\$2.45m.

5.4 Year-end Audit

Preparation for year end audit has commenced. A planning meeting with KPMG was held in August. In addition to month-end closing procedures, schools and ESF Centre are required to complete year end closing checklists to ensure books are closed properly. This year, a surveyor will be appointed to perform an independent valuation for the residential property portfolio and the market value will be disclosed in the notes to the accounts. It is expected endorsement and approval of audited financial statements will be on schedule (approval of ESF accounts: 14 December 2010; approval of ESL accounts: 13 December 2010).

6. Facilities Management

6.1 Summer Works

The summer works for 2010 were completed on time for schools starting again in mid August, as planned.

A significant amount of works was undertaken and completed at all ESF schools. The main highlights were: -

a. Primary

- Beacon Hill School had the final phase of its complete redecoration and refurbishment completed, as well as necessary re-roofing works to the main building.
- Bradbury had the library link bridge project Phase 1 completed (the library fit out will be undertaken in summer 2011) as well as complete replacement of all air-conditioning units. Two further sets of school toilets were also refurbished as part of the ongoing replacement cycle.
- Clearwater Bay had the main playground surface replaced as well as the creation of much needed resource space in the school. This was made possible by relocating the PTA office and shop into space away from the centre of the school. The school hall air-conditioning was also replaced.
- Glenealy School had new canopies added to access stairs at the rooftop playground area, the sports surface replaced at the lower level and extensive repairs done to the caretaker's quarters
- Kennedy School had two significant sets of shading structures installed, one on the roof level of the hall block and the other at ground level in front of the main entrance.
- Peak School had extensive renovation of the school offices and staff room as well upgrades to the school server room and main IT centre. External areas around the library were upgraded for use by students.
- Quarry Bay School had its main art area completely renovated and re-roofed as well as the complete replacement of all air-conditioning units. Renovation and replacement works were also completed to the school hall and gymnasium.
- Shatin Junior School had its school hall completely renovated and upgraded as well as the renovation of two sets of school toilets as part of the ongoing replacement cycle.

b. Secondary

- Island School had all of its main classrooms redecorated as well as the staff room.

- KGV had two sets of toilets at New Block renovated as part of the ongoing replacement cycle.
- Shatin College completed the final phase of its full redecoration.
- South Island School continued with its rooftop atrium project as well as renovation of its swimming pool changing rooms, food textiles room and staff room.
- West Island School had its school hall completely renovated with replacement seating and flooring the main items.
- Jockey Club Sarah Roe School had its library and main entrance foyer renovated.

6.2 KGV Slope Works

Tendering has been completed for the geotechnical feature upgrading works at KGV. The works include installation of soil nails, retaining walls and greening features and will be carried out between September 2010 and May 2011.

6.3 Summer Works Consultants

Every two years, the Facilities Team procures the services of architects and designers to assist with the undertaking of the annual summer works programme. As we are at the end of our current two year contracts, these important works have been put out to tender.

The Facilities Team uses the HK government's list of consultants for tendering and adopts a two-envelope tender for these works. Contracts are scheduled for award by mid September 2010.

6.4 Shatin Junior School Project

As part of the strategic development of our SEN provision, it is the intent to set up a Learning Support Centre at each of our large primary schools and Learning Support classes at each of the other primaries.

In support of this initiative, work is underway to study the technical feasibility of extending the existing accommodation at Shatin Junior School to create enough space for the Learning Support Centre as well as other curriculum needs.

6.5 Capital Projects

The Major Building Projects Committee (MBPC) met for the first time on 20 August 2010 and reviewed the design of the Kowloon Junior and King George V school projects. The Committee will be asked to review recommendations on Green Building accreditation for both projects on 16 September with the intent to seek Board approval of the recommendations at its meeting on 28 September.

- a. Kowloon Junior School
Work continues on the detailed technical preparations on the Legco funding submissions and tendering for the project.

The keys for the decanting premises were handed over to ESF from EDB on 1 September. Renovation works will take place on the premises from November 2010.

Green building accreditation is being analysed at the moment, with possible certification options being taken to the MBPC on 16 September.

- b. King George V School

Work continues on the technical preparations for target tender out in October 2010.

Advanced utility diversion works are being procured at the moment by the Facilities Team. The works are targeted for award within September 2010 and are critical to the success of the project.

7. Development & Communications

The newly created function of business development (fundraising) for ESF started in June with the Director, Development joining the organisation. She visited a number of schools in June as part of a familiarisation programme.

The contract with Burson-Marsteller for communications ended in August and we then decided to combine the two functions. We feel that this will enable us to achieve greater consistency and clarity in branding and positioning.

The Director, Development was also invited to sit on the KGV Strategic Fundraising Committee where good progress has been made in formulating ideas for raising funds for the KGV capital works.

In addition, ESF events such as the Orchestra and Choir concert, the Primary Choral concert and the Film Awards will be some of the events where sponsorship opportunities can be identified.

A paper presented to the School Council Chairmen and endorsed by the Board in 2009 proposed that a communication platform would be made available for the Alumni. Hence, the "Your Membership" software that allowed each school to create a secure web environment for its alumni, was purchased. Three of the five ESF secondary schools have launched an alumni website, namely Island School, South Island and KGV. Sha Tin College is actively pursuing the path of launching and forming its association.

Internal and external communications will be reviewed. We will continue to look for ways to improve the dialogue between the schools and ESF Centre.

8. ESF Educational Services Ltd

- 81 Tsing Yi and Abacus kindergartens started the year full. Hillside has reached full capacity in K1, doubling the usual intake, and there remain less than 10 places in K2, reflecting its success in attracting new students into the kindergarten after its relocation from Sheung Wan. Wu Kai Sha has some remaining K1 places to fill, and is currently at 90% capacity.
- 8.2 In English language, ESL administered 546 Cambridge ESOL (Education as a Second or Other Language) examinations in 2009/10, exceeding the year's target of 500, taking students from within its own language classes and from local schools and language centres. ESL is applying to run computer-based exams for secondary aged students, and would be the only provider in Hong Kong to do so. Attendance on language Summer School reached a five year high with over 1,600 participants enjoying classes in various ESF/ESL school and kindergarten locations. To better align the school year with that of local schools, to offer consistent course lengths and more teaching hours, ESL is stepping away from the ESF calendar and has restructured its scheduling and is running four ten-week programmes over the year.
- 8.3 Summer multi-sport camps and specialist clinics were operated at South Island School, West Island School and Renaissance College throughout the summer, with 1,275 children participating. Starting the new school year, Netball is being offered in four schools and Sports Cubs, for young pre-schoolers, are being offered in a few locations to meet demand for activities for this age group. A new squad system has been introduced into the swimming programme, and ESL is now running the in-school swim programme at four schools – Kennedy, Renaissance College, Shatin Junior School and Discovery College. ESL will run Football and Basketball tournaments for ESF schools this year, and will also be cooperating with secondary schools in a sports volunteer programme for CAS students.

9. Customer Survey of Services provided by ESF Centre

After a competitive tendering exercise, a locally based market research company, Cimigo Ltd, has been appointed to conduct a customer survey of ESF Centre services. All Principals and about 50% of School Council Chairmen and 50% of Business/Office Managers will be interviewed. Thirty parents will be invited to join focus groups to discuss admission procedures. The consultants have selected interviewees using random procedures and confidentiality will be protected. A report should be complete by mid-October.

Heather Du Quesnay
9 September 2010

Att