

Dear Colleagues,

Our Governors Forum last week placed the spotlight on Sustainable School Systems.

Throughout the forum, we acknowledged that our collective ambition will be pivotal in achieving and sustaining a system that offers excellent education across settings for all of our children. Doing this means collectively engaging governors, leaders and staff in thinking about why we exist, what we wish to achieve and how we will align our promises with our core values. It means collaborating in our mission to deliver our promise of high quality education from early years to early adulthood; having inclusive settings that tackle the impact of inequality, being financially viable organisations that are able to continuously improve.

The subject of Sustainable School Systems is vast. At our forum we touched on the estate strategy, school closures and developments across the early years system. We addressed how governors can help our schools sustain quality education with balanced budgets. We also explored how we take control of risk and uncertainty within strategic development plans. We invited colleges to share their thoughts by considering these within a framework known as the circles of control.

Developing Sustainable School Systems in an ecosystem constantly challenged by economic, social and political pressures, requires us to be proactive in our strive for excellence. Stephen Covey spotlights this in the [7 Habits of Highly Effective People](#) (1989) where he distinguishes between proactive people – who focus on what they can do and can influence - and reactive people who focus their energy on things beyond their control.

At the **Governors Annual Conference on Thursday 27 June 2024**, we will dedicate more time to sustainable systems, with a central focus on **Equity**. Remember to hold the date whilst we prepare more details to share. In the meantime, we are delighted to share:

- The launch of the [Hackney Schools Charter for Race and SEND](#) with an letter of [invitation](#) to sign up
- The release of our [anti-racism animation](#), setting out the basis behind our commitment to becoming an actively anti-racist borough
- The **Hackney 10x10 initiative** to broaden the horizons of our children launches at 1.30pm on Thursday June 27th. We welcome governors to attend the event and also join the steering group, by contacting kay.richardson@hackney.gov.uk

As you watch back and reflect on the presentations in the [video](#), [slide deck](#) and notes below, we hope the content of this forum will further support your work. Also hope all leaders and governors will be inspired by this quote from **Stephen R. Covey** *"I am not a product of my circumstances. I am a product of my decisions."*

We wish you all a restful break at the end of term, and hope you enjoy the celebration of festivities with your families and friends, including the religious festivals of Easter, Eid and Passover!

Sincerely,
Maggie Kalnins, Leader of Governance Services

The content:

This update provides a summary of headlines from our Extended forum for Chairs of Governors - which took place virtually from 5pm to 6.30pm on Thursday 14th March. The event focused on the following key area:

- Sharing Headlines/ best practice from our chairs and leader
- Sufficiency of Education Provision, together with an update on school closures
- Sustaining quality education & balanced budgets across all phases
- Understanding and integrating the management of risk and uncertainty within strategic development plans
- (The [slide deck](#) and [video](#) from last week's event)

Hold the date: Thursday 27 June 2024 - Governors Annual Conference

We also remind you of our previous [updates and tools](#), our [Governors' Training Programme 23/24](#) and our [Governance Services offer](#), all designed to assist the crucial work you do. We encourage you to share this update with board members and your wider networks, who can [subscribe here](#) to be included in our future communications.

EDUCATION DIRECTOR'S UPDATE
Paul Senior - Interim Director of Education and Inclusion

Headline Notes:

- 100% of Children's Centres have a good or outstanding Ofsted rating, while 98% of schools are rated good or outstanding as per Ofsted framework.
- Outcomes have been outstanding and have placed us in the upper performing quarter nationally.
- Schools and settings are outstanding and leadership and management have truly set the tone.
- The role of the Governing Body and Chair of Governors and their teams to bring that challenge and support is so important. Paul would like to extend thanks to all the teams who collaborate and make Hackney Education the best it can be.
- Forums across Hackney Education are working together to shape and design Hackney's 2030 Strategy. During the latter part of summer term, a project was launched to look at data, demand, future need and future opportunities. The team looked at key priorities and strategic aims. There will be a launch in July 2024 for the *Hackney 2030 Strategy*.
- There will be working groups which will include governing body members, school leaders, officers and partners. They will look at key priorities and strategic aims to future proof the excellence we have in Hackney. Core focus will be School Improvement, SEND and wraparound care to support children to get the best possible outcomes.
- There will be a big focus on continuum of provision across children's centres, primary and secondary schools, as well as Post-16 and the further education sector.
- London Council Falling Rolls - a London-wide event with attendees included: Directors from Ofsted, London Department for Education colleagues, The London Anglican Diocese Team and Roman Catholic Diocese team so there was a true sense of integrated systems across London. Hackney is most impacted in the primary phase, closing four primary schools in summer with some of the main drivers being lower birth rates, Brexit fallout and housing affordability. 31 out of 33 London Authorities are facing similar challenges and are beginning to close secondary schools. Hackney is looking at how we can minimise the risk on the Hackney Education System. Ministerial intervention is needed and we are liaising with regional and national leaders but local action is being taken.

See [slides](#) 4 - 5 ([Video](#) section **15:00 - 25:53**)

SUFFICIENCY OF EDUCATION PROVISION, TOGETHER WITH AN UPDATE ON SCHOOL CLOSURES

David Court - Interim Assistant Director, School Estate Strategy

Tim Wooldridge - Early Years Strategy Manager

Laleh Laverick - Senior Leadership and Management Adviser

Headline Notes:

Early Years, Early Help & Wellbeing

What free childcare is currently available for parents?

Current Offer:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are 3 different types of funded places:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Fifteen hours per week free childcare for some 2 year olds whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits2. Fifteen hours per week for all 3 and 4 year olds - this is a universal offer for all parents3. An extra 15 hours free childcare per week for some 3 and 4 year olds whose parents are working<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Parents can access funded placements at any childminder, school or nursery that is registered with Ofsted○ For further information can be found here: Hackney Education website
How free entitlement will change:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The free entitlement scheme will expand in the following stages:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ April 2024: 15 free hours per week for working parents of two-year-olds○ Sept 2024: 15 free hours per week for working parents of nine months olds○ Sept 2025: 30 free hours per week for working parents of nine months old• This means more working parents will be entitled to receive free education entitlements• For further information see Hackney Education website or look at the Education Hub Blog

- **Eligibility Criteria**

- New funded offers are for working families only.
- Parents or carers will need to earn at least the equivalent of 16 hours at the minimum or living wage but no more than £100,000. (This is the same as for the existing 30 hour for three- and four-year-olds)
- This applies to each parent in dual-parent households (though there are exceptions where one parent is in receipt of Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Limited Capability for Work Benefit or contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance and their partner is working)
- Eligibility is determined by the Department of Work and Pensions
- Please see slide for more detail

- **Children's Centre Consultation:**

- A [consultation](#) has begun on a proposed restructuring of the early education and childcare delivered by the children's centres funded by the Council, in order to achieve greater efficiency and sustainability across the early years system. The proposals are;
 - **Hillside Children's Centre:** the centre would transform into an early years Additional Resource Provision (ARP), a specialist nursery delivering term-time early education and care for children aged 2 to 5 years with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND);
 - **Oldhill Children's Centre:** the centre would provide nursery places for children 6 months to 3 years old, phasing out places for 4 year olds;
 - **Fernbank Children's Centre and Sebright Children's Centre:** alternative providers would be invited to take over the management of the centres. If a suitable alternative provider could not be found by Autumn 2024, the two centres are proposed to close by August 2025
- The consultation is open until 24 April 2024. Further information, and how to respond is [here](#)

- Cabinet's final decision on the proposals is expected in summer 2024.

Estates Strategy - Update on school closures

- Progressing with closure of four schools, preparations around supporting the children and staff and all assets in the school buildings are being dealt with by the end of August 2024.
- Since the proposals were announced in the previous academic year, some families have moved away. Schools are mostly left with Year 6 students who are completing this academic year and pupils who have Education, Health and Care Plans who are able to move at the start of the next academic year when their school closes.
- The work around supporting staff and schools with closure is a coordinated effort which is bringing together all expertise and knowledge from all areas.
- We have learned a lot through current proposals and necessary statutory processes, and feedback will be acknowledged. The Falling Rolls Advisory Group (FRAG) has been created to ensure smoother processes, and includes a wide range of stakeholders.
- Current proposal for closure will remove 105 reception places out of the system, which has reduced the initial surplus of 600 places. The aim is that schools are financially viable, school places need to closely match the number of children coming through.

Wraparound Care

- What can the LA's programme funding be used for?
 - The funding will be used to contribute to startup/expansion and running costs for schools and childcare providers (including childminders).
 - Childcare provision funded from this grant must meet the definition of wraparound childcare, i.e., be available directly before and after the school day, from 8am to 6pm (or equivalent, if data shows that local demand is for different hours) during school term time for primary school-age children.
 - **It may be run on a school site or at another setting, but this should not require parents to pick their children up from school and drop them off at another location.**
- Creating a self-sustaining system
 - The DfE's ambition is for all parents and carers of primary school-aged children who require it, to be able to access term time 'wraparound' childcare in their local area from 8am to 6pm.
 - Local Authorities are expected to launch an expansion of their wraparound care offer by September 2024, with the **substantial majority of the local offer to be financially self-sustaining by March 2026.**
 - By self-sustaining, it is meant that it will be feasible for the provision to continue, funded by continued parental demand and payments, without the initial 'pump-prime' funding provided by the DfE.
- If wraparound childcare is established using the powers of the governing board of your school or trust, the provision is the legal responsibility of the governing board.
- The trust board can delegate decision-making authority to others, e.g. local governing bodies aligned with its scheme of delegation, but ultimate responsibility remains with the trust board.
- The governing board is responsible for the strategic direction and monitoring of this provision.
- Questions for Governors to consider:
 - In discussion with your school leader(s), find out what the vision is for wraparound care for your setting (to increase/ provide additional support to local schools, etc.)
 - What would be the best way to cater for your local community?
 - Could provision become self-sustaining in your school?
 - What would be the most effective way to engage with parents/carers in your schools in order to ensure all voices are heard/are represented in our supply and demand mapping exercise?
- Next Steps:
 - Mapping exercise and looking at future demand as well as incorporating work with children's hubs and more independent sectors. The aim is for funding to be used to ensure a self-sustaining wraparound system.

Early Years, Early Help & Wellbeing: See [slides](#) 8 - 14 ([Video](#) section **2:30 - 14:53**)

Estates Strategy: [slides](#) 6 - 7 ([Video](#) section **27:30 - 32:10**)

Wraparound Care: [slides](#) 15 - 19 ([Video](#) section **32:32 - 38:05**)

SUSTAINING QUALITY EDUCATION & BALANCED BUDGETS ACROSS ALL PHASES

Jason Marantz - Assistant Director, School Performance and Improvement

Sajeed Patni - Assistant Director of Finance - Children and Education

Headline Notes:

- A financially sustainable school system is vital to the learning and development of the country's children.
- Schools are financially sustainable when they successfully provide a good-quality education to all their pupils within the income that they receive.
- **Key Financial Challenges**
 - **Low pupil numbers / falling rolls** - surplus places in schools has the most significant impact on controlling finances. A high impact issue for Schools within Hackney and across London
 - **Lack of inflationary increases** - accumulation of below inflation increases in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) has had a significant impact on non-staffing budgets
 - **Energy costs** - has had a high impact in particular since 2022/23
 - **Unfunded pay increases** - although additional grant is provided for pay increases, generally schools with a higher number of experienced teachers can lose out as an average per pupil rate of funding is used in the grant methodology.
 - **Cost of living crisis for pupils and families** - Schools have to consider, school meal costs for paying pupils, Uniforms etc. and can have challenges around increasing costs as an avenue to increase income
- **Key Financial Responsibilities**
 - The governing board has a legal obligation to set an annual budget plan
 - Ensure budget is managed effectively
 - Make strategic decisions on how the delegated budget should be spent
 - Report back to provide assurance
- **Governors Roles and Responsibilities**
 - The Governing Body has a legal responsibility for financial management of a school or academy
 - Set the educational (SDP) and financial priorities, informed by Head teacher
 - Self Evaluation - Holding to account
 - Answerable to, parents, the wider community, and pupils (accountability)
- **Top 10 planning checks for governors and school leaders see slide 27**
- **Wider considerations when facing a deficit**
 - We often use the phrase, *Get Some, Save Some, Make Some*
 - This acknowledges that addressing a deficit won't and shouldn't necessarily come from one source
 - Reducing staffing (save some) will often yield the largest savings yet may not be the only option
 - **Savings:**
 - Look at all other areas before staffing: contracts, etc.
 - Consider the size of your school and whether or not sharing resources with others is possible.
 - **Getting and Making:**
 - Ensure that all grants and funds are being received (e.g. EYFS and SEN)
 - Look for income generation opportunities such as lettings, traded work?

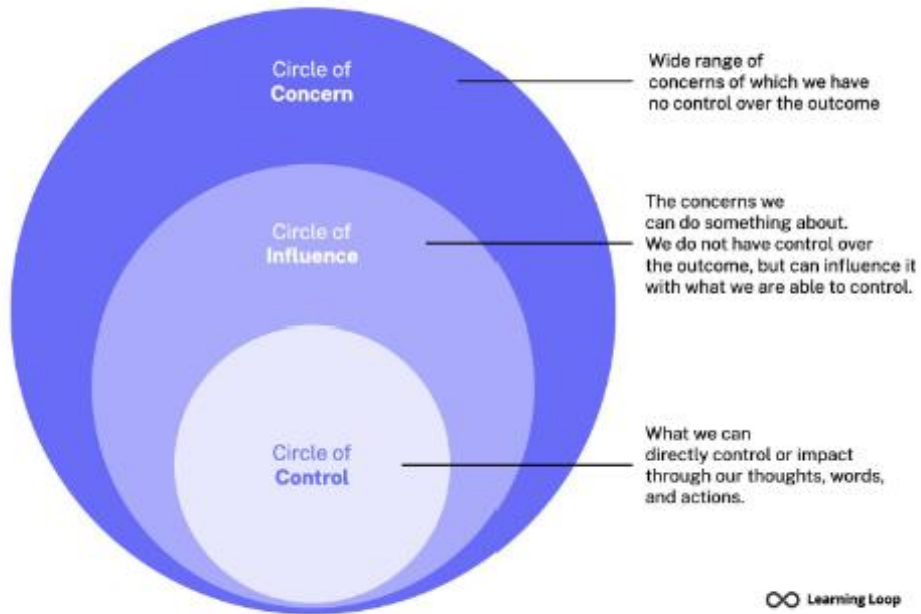
See [slides](#) 20 - 30 ([Video](#) section 39:00 - 56:17)

**UNDERSTANDING AND INTEGRATING THE MANAGEMENT OF RISK AND UNCERTAINTY
WITHIN STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

**Paul Senior - Interim Director for Education and Inclusion
Maggie Kalnins - Leader of Governance Services**

Headline Notes: Breakout Group discussed the below concept

Circles of Control



HIGHLIGHT OF TRAINING & GUIDANCE FOR GOVERNORS - HEADLINES

Spring Term Training:

- Tue, 26th March, 5.00pm - 7.00pm: [How do we ensure an inclusive approach for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\)?](#)

Summer Term Training:

- Wed, 17th April, 5.00pm - 6.00pm: [How do governing boards observe Key Stage 2 Test \(SATs\) Administration to assure best practice?](#)
- Thu, 25th April, 5.00pm - 7.00pm: [How do governors fulfil their professional and ethical responsibility?](#)
- Thu, 2nd May, 5.00pm - 7.00pm: [How do we govern financial performance and ensure money is well spent?](#)
- Tue, 14th May, 9.00am to 11.00am: [How do we ensure the development of emotional, mental health and wellbeing of children?](#)
- Tue, 21st May, 9.00am - 11.00am: [The ethical decisions and statutory guidance that underpin the suspension and exclusion process](#)
- Wed, 5th June, 5.00 - 7.00pm: [How do schools ensure effective engagement with stakeholders and effectively manage complaints?](#)
- Tue, 13th June, 5.00pm - 7.00pm: [How do we safeguard our children including those from Black and Global Majority communities?](#)
- Tue, 13th June, 9.00am - 11.00am: [How do we ensure an inclusive approach for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\)?](#)

<p>People</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor focus: school teachers and leaders working longer hours - School teachers and leaders working more hours was a key finding published by the DfE from the second ‘working lives of teachers and leaders’ survey 2023, part of a government study which explores factors affecting the supply, recruitment and retention of teachers and leaders. Over one third of teachers and leaders indicated that they were considering leaving the state school sector in the next 12 months – an increase from 25% in 2022. High workload was reported as the most common factor, (94% citing it)
<p>Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor focus: Curriculum - Ofsted’s latest subject report explores the strengths and weaknesses of the English curriculum across primary and secondary settings. Findings show that the teaching of the curriculum has ‘improved markedly’ but that some schools need to do more to support pupils. • Governor focus: supporting disadvantaged pupils - An analysis of careers education in secondary schools and colleges in England has found that progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks has doubled in the last five years and that employers are seeing direct benefits from engaging in careers education. However, the figures published by the Careers and Enterprise Company show that there is a disparity between disadvantaged pupils and their peers when it comes to career readiness. • Governor focus: budget - In the spring budget, Chancellor Jeremy Hunt has announced £105 million towards building 15 new special free schools. This aims to create over 2,000 additional places for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) across England with specific locations to be announced by May.
<p>Regulatory Changes & Compliance</p>	<p>On 7 March 2024 the DfE published two new Governance Guides replacing the Governance Handbook: Maintained Schools Governance Guide and Academy Trust Governance Guide</p>
<p>Crisis Management & Resilience</p>	<p>Consider a school sustainability link governor role.</p>

Stakeholder Engagement & Communication	Hackney: https://www.hackneyservicesforschools.co.uk/extranet/parent-and-carer-engagement
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See [slides](#) 34 - 36

RELEVANT LINKS

Headline Notes:

1. Promoting Equalities: with focus on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
 - [Government Must Support Schools To Take The Battle Against Child Poverty Inside The School Gates, New Child Of The North/centre For Young Lives Report Urges](#)
 - [Outcomes for young people who experience multiple suspensions - EPI](#)
 - [London's Inclusion Charter: Why A Charter To Keep Children In School Safer In School](#)
2. Enabling achievement
 - [Ofsted Big Listen](#)
 - [A New Social Contract In The Childcare System](#)
 - [Transforming early childhood: narrowing the gap between children from lower- and higher-income families](#)
 - [Fair School Admissions: Advocating for Change to School Admissions in England](#)
 - [Measuring the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils using Star Assessments 2022/23](#)
 - [Towards an oracy entitlement for every child](#)
3. Assuring provision for Pupils with SEND
 - [New Analysis Reveals Autism Assessment And Support Crisis With Tens Of Thousands Of Children Waiting Months And Years For Help After Demand Rockets By Over 300% Since Covid](#)
4. Sustainable school systems
 - [What else? What next? What if? Rethinking Leadership](#)
 - [New teaching apprenticeship set to transform pathway to classroom](#)
 - [Support offered to families, children and staff of the four closing primary schools in Hackney](#)
5. Safeguarding, wellbeing and pastoral provision
 - [Protection of children online, research](#)
 - [New regulations for schools in next stage of attendance drive](#)