

Chair of Governors Update

6 July 2023

Dear Colleagues

We were delighted to engage with Chairs of Governors at our extended forum last week, hosted at the Hackney Town Hall. This was the first live gathering of our governor community in a very long time and the atmosphere in the room was inspiring. There was no doubt about your continued endeavours to ensure every child has a rich education and the chance to succeed!

I opened the event by sharing a personal account about Hackney ... I arrived in the early 80's to a generously welcoming and richly diverse community, an image later captured in the 1985 iconic mural of the Hackney Peace Carnival in Dalston. The population of Hackney had dropped to its lowest point for 120 years and the community was suffering. The tensions from economic decline, rapid growth in unemployment and racism that led to racial riots across many cities, permeated every street. By the late 90's Chris Woodhead, the head of Ofsted had declared 'Hackney is the worst council' and by the early 2000's the borough was branded - 'murder mile' and the 'worst place to live'.

Over the past 20 years, the community's determination to transform, has been particularly shaped by two significant events:

- The formation of The Learning Trust in 2002, which galvanised the education community into driving school improvement by using respected research models, including [10 strong claims about successful school leadership](#) and the McKinsey report [How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better](#)
- The launch of ['I Love Hackney'](#) campaign in 2006, which united the whole community to express its sense of pride and civic commitment to this borough

Today, the polarising effects of gentrification are bringing a new set of challenges.

So as we collaborate, challenge and innovate strategies that will continue to ensure education in Hackney offers the best for our children, we must make certain these developments are informed by the principles reflected within our Public Sector Equality duties and Civic Rights. These principles directly impact a child's readiness to learn and to succeed:

Public Sector Equality Duties:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between people

- Foster good relations between people

Civic Rights, including:

- The right to a public education
- The right to gainful employment
- The right to support services
- The right to a house of one's own

We truly appreciate your commitment in supporting our school leaders and look forward to collaborating further to ensure the best education experience possible, where 'no child is left behind'!

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 at Hackney Town Hall, 5 pm to 7pm on Thursday 29th June. The event focused on the following key area:

- **Designing a world-class Hackney Education Strategy - please review attached :[Summary of Feedback from the 2030 Education Strategy Summit, 5th May 2023 \(School Leaders\)](#)**
- **Providing Headlines about the School Estate Strategy - [School Estates Informal Consultation Leaflet](#)**
- **Sharing key messages emerging from the report published on 20 June 23 - [Child Q Update Report – why was it me?](#)**
(The [sliddeck](#) from last week's event)

Future Dates of Hackney Governors Forums for 2023/24 starting at 5.00pm:

- Thursday 5 October 2023 - In person at Hackney Town Hall
- Thursday 23 November 2023
- Thursday 1 February 2024
- Thursday 14 March 2024
- Thursday 23 May 2024 - **Governors Annual Conference**
- Thursday 27 June 2024

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.

DESIGNING A WORLD CLASS EDUCATION FOR ALL

Paul Senior, Interim Director of Education

Headline Notes:

- 97% of Hackney schools are good or outstanding- among the highest in the country. This is due to outstanding school leaders and teachers.
- The role of governors in providing effective challenge and support for the schools is crucial.
- Hackney Education has an obsession to continue to raise standards and aim for excellence in order to give Hackney children the best life chances possible, including those from the most deprived and challenging backgrounds.
- Every child is entitled to a world class education and this is what Hackney aspires to.
- An ambitious Timeline has been devised to capture all views and move forward to implement the vision of a world class education for all.

THEMES EMERGING FROM GROUP DISCUSSION

Headline Notes:

Governors were asked to consider the **Summary of Feedback from the 2030 Education Strategy Summit, 5th May 2023 (School Leaders)**. They were then asked to share their thoughts in the following areas:

- **Task one: Exploring our shared vision, obsessions and outcomes**
- **Task two: Defining our priorities and, affirming our non-negotiable behaviours and guiding principles**
- **Task three: What might we need from each across our education system**

To give everyone present and as well as those who were unable to attend a further opportunity contribute your thoughts to these group discussion tasks focused on co-designing a World-Class Hackney Education Strategy - share your comment here: **2030 Education Strategy: feedback on the draft strategy**

Headline Notes:

- The school estates strategy is about creating a sustainable school system.
- There has been a fall in the birth rate in London. Residents from Europe have returned to their native countries owing to Brexit. Others moved during the pandemic or because of the cost of living.
- There are 634 vacant reception places in Hackney schools – equivalent to 21 classes, a 20% vacancy rate.
- If every school place were full, schools would receive £30,000,000 more per year..
- The council is considering two mergers each between two schools and the closure of two schools.
- We share the [School Estates Informal Consultation Leaflet](#) which closes on 16 July. All are welcome to comment. Have your say!

Headline Notes:

The [Child Q Update Report – why was it me?](#) published in June 2023 reviews progress on the recommendations of the March 2022 report. It raises issues associated with racism which schools and governing boards should be addressing . These were also detailed in the [email](#) sent to Chairs of Governors when the report was first released.

Support is available in a number of ways:

- Adulthood training
- School leadership space for equity and race
- Conversations about race facilitated by the Education Psychology Service
- Individual support and Counselling for pupils

Next steps

- Anti racism training based on STAR principles- Systematic, Trauma Informed, Anti -Racist

- The Council is relaunching the Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men Programme.
- It is also developing a Schools Inclusion charter based on anti-racism and SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)

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