

• GOVERNORS BULLETIN •

Academy News

The Bridge Academy is a proposed new secondary school in south Hackney on the site of the former Laburnum Primary School. The school will provide new places for 1150 pupils aged 11-18 beginning with Year 7 pupils only. The feasibility phase is due to be completed in April 2005, with the opening planned for 2007.

The consultation document will be available at the beginning of the new term and consultation with the community will run from January to mid-March 2005. Governing bodies may wish to consider the consultation document as an agenda item during the Spring term.

Chairs of governors and headteachers are invited to attend one of the joint meetings arranged by UBS (the Bridge Academy sponsors) in conjunction with The Learning Trust, HASGA and the chairs of the Headteachers' Forums. A meeting for the primary phase will be held at 6pm on Tuesday 18 January 2005 and for the secondary phase at 6pm on Thursday 20 January 2005. Both meetings will be held at the Hackney Technology & Learning Centre, 1 Reading Lane, London, E8 1GQ.

Progress is underway on the Petchey Academy, scheduled to open on the former Kingsland school site in September 2006. The Academy will be sending their brochure to Hackney schools and chairs of governors early in the new term.



Details are online now at:

www.jackpetcheyfoundation.org.uk/petcheyacademy. Two Hackney governors sit on the Petchey Academy stakeholder group – they are Jennifer Fridye from Colvestone School and Toyin Agbetu from St Matthias Primary School.

More information is available from Elaine Peers at The Learning Trust on 020 8820 7629 or e-mail elaine.peers@learningtrust.co.uk

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Emotional Literacy

The huge rise in interest in emotional intelligence is largely credited to the publication of Daniel Goldman's book in 1996 entitled 'Emotional Intelligence. Why it can matter more than IQ'. This book promotes the idea that intelligence is not restricted solely to IQ and that emotional intelligence can be taught and continually developed within us all. Goldman's book has made the term 'emotional intelligence' accessible and popular to a mainstream audience. However it emerges out of a wealth of research into cognition and emotion: that emotions enrich our thoughts, help us to make better choices and keep our mental state healthy. It complements studies in multiple intelligence which have helped improve both teaching and learning.

The term 'emotional literacy' rather than that of 'emotional intelligence' is frequently used within schools. However the terminology reflects a common goal: to develop positive emotional well-being in order to achieve potential and promote positive social change.

The School of Emotional Literacy defines emotional literacy as being the practice of:

- noticing emotions, including early signs of feelings and sensations.
- paying attention to them.
- giving them significance.
- thinking about them and understanding them.
- taking them into account in deciding how to act.

Many schools recognise that self-awareness plays a key role in the behaviour and social skills of all children, not just those with challenging behaviour. Teaching these skills will have a positive impact on the effectiveness of teaching and learning, providing pupils with life skills and competencies that will help them in later life.

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In emotionally literate schools learning improves, behaviour improves, inclusion increases (as pupils themselves are better at managing their emotions and behaviour), pupils and adults are more able to engage actively in effective team work and there is an improvement in mental health (source Primary Leadership Paper).

Developing an emotionally literate school might include a number of initiatives such as circle time, playground friends, peer mentoring or staff problem-solving groups.

Some schools also offer a curriculum designed to specifically teach social, emotional and behavioural skills. Packages are available that teach skills across the age ranges: from nursery into secondary school (e.g. Second Step, Pathways). More recently the DFES has developed a curriculum package for schools under the Primary Strategy, Developing children's social, emotional and behavioural skills. Pilot schools taking part in the Hackney Behaviour Improvement PI already have access to these materials.

All the curriculum-based programmes teach skills in five areas of self-awareness, managing feelings, motivation, empathy and social skills.

In line with the DFES programme for developing the skills of emotional literacy, The Learning Trust will provide support for schools in the implementation of this strategy and ensure that the good practice in many of our Hackney schools is shared and built upon.

For further information please contact Rachell Thompson, Primary Behaviour Support Co-ordinator, on 020 8820 7473 or email rachel.thompson@learningtrust.co.uk



Governor Recruitment and Retention

Many Hackney schools and governors have taken part in the recruitment drive involving two City firms – investment bank, Dresdner Kleinwort Wasserstein and law firm, Linklaters. The Learning Trust and the two firms commissioned the University of Hertfordshire to evaluate the programme. The research highlights the value to Hackney schools and City firms of encouraging pairs of volunteers – one from each firm – to be school governors.

The research identifies the skills developed or enhanced by school governors drawn from the business world. Overall, the experience was positive, 'worthwhile' and 'enjoyable' for the schools, employee volunteers and employers.

Headteachers commented on how the new school governors were 'a breath of fresh air', 'committed', and the great benefit of having people with 'no agenda', 'the ability to keep focused', 'prioritising, checking, having an eye for detail,' and who can 'hit the ground running'.

Personal and professional development varied with each volunteer. For some it was as much about the benefit of using existing skills in a different environment – being adaptable – as learning new skills. Overall, volunteers found it gave them a 'more balanced perspective', made them 'more tolerant', 'more rooted in a larger community'; and more aware of social and educational issues. More specifically, being a school governor developed or enhanced their decision-making, public speaking, chairing a meeting, negotiating, conflict resolution and time-management skills.

This positive research will be fed into the Trust's governor recruitment strategy.

For more information contact Susan Moyse or Mark Brownlow at the Governor Support Unit on 020 8820 7377 or e-mail susan.moyse@learningtrust.co.uk

Salli Whittaker

We were sorry to hear of the recent death of Salli Whittaker, former chair of governors at Kingsland School. Mark Brownlow of the Governor Support Unit said: 'Salli was a well-liked and respected individual who was very conscientious and hardworking. She always had the best interests of people and the schools uppermost in her mind'.

Ivan Beavis, now a governor at Homerton School, who knew Salli over a period of 20 years said: 'Salli was a personnel officer at the highest integrity and a real champion for Kingsland School and education. She will be sadly missed'.

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Governors Conference

More than 100 Hackney school governors attended The Learning Trust's annual conference on Saturday 20th November. The theme of the conference was *Working together: children's services in Hackney* and we opened with a keynote speech from Rosalind Turner from Brighton & Hove Council. Working together was much in evidence as Alan Wood shared the platform with Councillor Carole Williams – Hackney Council's cabinet member for children's services – and as governors helped Learning Trust officers lead a variety of workshops. These included workforce reform, school inspection, safeguarding children, healthy schools and the Hackney strategy for extended schools.

Governors saw first-hand what an extended school can look like as the event was held in Stoke Newington School. This school already hosts a range of musical, academic and sporting Saturday activities for students and their families. In lieu of hire charges, the Trust has installed a permanent audio loop in the school's theatre – this will leave a lasting legacy of wider access for students and the community.

If you would like to be involved in planning the next Learning Trust Governors Conference please contact Susan Moyse on 020 8820 7377 or susan.moyse@learningtrust.co.uk



Governors Champion Joins the Trust

The Learning Trust is fortunate that Simon Bird, author of *Do the Right Thing* and *Governance Matters* has joined us as Assistant Director of Policy, Planning & Performance. Simon explains 'This means I'm head of the Chief Executive's office and I sit on the Corporate Management Team. My job is to equip managers and staff to improve performance – engaging with people like the Council and other stakeholders, such as headteachers and governor representatives. In 12 months' time, these key people must feel performance has improved. My priority is to ensure that we raise the performance of all Learning Trust services. Before coming to the Trust I worked for The Education Network, a think tank to develop the role of LEAs, but I've had a long association with Hackney.'

When asked who inspires him, Simon replied: 'the 350,000 school governors in this country. Before I came to Hackney, I did a lot of work with governors – they are an inspiration to everyone in education – they don't get paid for what they do, but are incredibly dedicated and can make a big difference to children's life chances.'



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Reminders

Safeguarding Children

The DfES sent revised guidance to chairs of governors in the autumn term. If you've not received your copy, please contact Prolog publications on 08701 555455 and ask for '31815/ What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' or e-mail doh@prolog.uk.com. If you prefer an online version, go to the DfES website www.teachernet.gov.uk/childprotection which contains up to date guidance.

Workforce Remodelling

The National Remodelling Team has produced its third Guide for Governors. Mailed to chairs of governors in October, it is available to download in print-friendly format (along with the two earlier issues) at www.remodelling.org/governors_resources.php. We have a small stock of paper copies at GSU. Contact Susan Moyse on 020 8820 7377 or susan.moyse@learningtrust.co.uk

Dear Governors Bulletin

Sorry we do not have space for 'Dear Governors Bulletin' in this issue. If you have a query you can phone the Governor Support Unit on 020 8820 7369 or write to GSU at The Learning Trust, 1 Reading Lane, London E8 1GQ.

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Governors Website

As part of the relaunch of the Trust's website, we have included a new section for governors at www.learningtrust.co.uk/governors. Here you'll find details of our training programme, an application form and past editions of the Governors Bulletin. Also included is a link to the DfES Guide to the Law for School Governors. A spokesperson for the DfES tells us 'to ensure the Guide remains as current as possible, we intend to produce amendments termly. A consequence of this, and in keeping with the Government's desire to move towards electronic communication, paper based amendments will no longer be distributed.'



We would love to hear your views on how we might develop the governors pages, you can e-mail these to susan.moyse@learningtrust.co.uk or telephone 020 8820 7377.

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Congratulations to Mike Tomlinson on his knighthood announced in the New Year's Honours list. As well as chairing the Learning Trust he recently published the national report on the future of 14-19 education. He said 'I really don't know why I have got this award, I suppose it could be in recognition of all the hard work that the teachers and pupils in Hackney have put in in the last year, as well as the effort that went into the report'.

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