

Report Title: Hackney Schools Group Board - New Remit

Date: 28 July 2022

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Hackney Schools Group Board (HSGB) was established in September 2019, with a remit to engage all Hackney schools in the leadership and oversight of the local school system. This paper sets out what the work of the Board has taught us, its impact, and why the remit should change in the light of these factors.
- 1.2 HSGB has had a significant and lasting impact on Hackney's understanding of Belonging and of how schools tackle aspects of Belonging that can change children's experience at school, impacting on their outcomes and life chances.
- 1.3 The paper proposes a new remit that;
 - 1.3.1 reflects this learning and possibilities,
 - 1.3.2 suggests some changes to its membership, sets out a purpose that will focus strongly on hearing and building on community expectations while tackling only the big issues,
 - 1.3.3 opens the door to working with headteachers on long term strategic thinking about significant issues for the whole of Hackney,
 - 1.3.4 and suggests a model of working that will be an expansion of the model used to work with parents on race.
- 1.4 The Board is asked to agree the new remit, (section 4), purpose (section 5) and membership (section 7) and to recommend it for Council wide agreement.

2. Change since the establishment of the Board.

- 2.1 The Board's work on listening to parents talking about race has shown how to work alongside parents and schools and develop sustainable ways of enabling schools to co-produce their ways of working while also generating a publication from which the whole system could learn and make changes. Schools that took part have been able to sustain and grow their leadership alongside parents, and the publication that came from the work was used as a starting point for many other schools and for Hackney Education.
- 2.2 The key characteristics of this work were;
 - 2.2.1 meetings that were led by the Board Chair who is an independent person,
 - 2.2.2 meetings that were carried out alongside schools,
 - 2.2.3 a commitment to listening to understand and not to immediately respond,
 - 2.2.4 a published document describing the themes arising from any programme, with suggested solutions,
 - 2.2.5 each event being seen as a starting point for schools to co-construct solutions to issues alongside their parents.
- 2.3 The Board also sponsored some highly successful work on Reading for All that was led by a Headteacher. The aspiration for the Board to develop a climate for learning was seen very clearly in this work that was a collaboration between schools, Council

services such as the library service, and Hackney Education. Three years on, and working throughout the covid pandemic the group has established some strong and sustainable work where teachers and schools will learn together while really adding value to the way children are enabled to grow a love of books and literature.

- 2.4 The remaining issue of how else the Board works with headteachers to act as a challenge and system leader for the education system was discussed by the Board earlier in the year and a plan was developed to establish a headteachers' consultative forum to look alongside headteachers at long term strategic issues. The HSGB will prioritise bringing together thinking from children, and parents to help inform strategic planning with headteachers. This will add to existing structures that form part of local consultation with schools.
- 2.5 The Board now needs to build on its confidence about what is good and look more deeply at the complexity of what needs to improve. Hackney Schools are schools to be proud of, that help to lift children out of poverty, and yet it is still the case that a minority of children do not yet gain from this system. Many of these children are black and global majority children. Some children doing less well than expected have SEND, or other challenges that go unseen.
- 2.6 Some things have not yet changed or have changed in ways that have not helped children and their families. Covid made things much worse for some families and the consequences of this are still emerging. There remains a high number of children who have never readjusted to school life, or whose needs have become entrenched instead of improving.
- 2.7 Children's Services has a new leader very committed to ensuring the whole of the system is engaged in children's lives in and out of school and her energy to use the strength of all services has the potential to really add value to the work that has often been perceived as only the work of schools.
- 2.8 The commitment of the newly elected Council to children's achievement strengthens our desire to work in a more focused manner that will really inform action. This means bringing together all the services that support children's outcomes, health and children's social care so that the lessons from the work of the Board can be used to think about all the support a child may need.

3. A new remit

- 3.1 This is a moment where Board members have expressed a strong view on having a more targeted impact on change for children and their families. Many aspects of work with schools are already carried out by Hackney Education. Challenge and accountability is the responsibility of Scrutiny. The intention is not to duplicate any of this, but to bring together the voice of the community, both parents and children, as well as headteachers, through a board that is a system leader and challenger of schools and of the Council. The Board will facilitate and publish learning from all aspects of this learning, from parents, pupils and headteachers.

4. The proposed remit is as follows

- 4.1 The remit of the Board is to act as a challenge and system leader for the education system to make sure all Hackney children do as well as they possibly can throughout their journey through the education system and are well prepared for adult life.

4.2 It is to make sure action is taken on the issues the Board agrees as a priority.

5. The purpose of the Board is:

5.1 To hear and understand the experiences of children and their families in order to inform policy and practice at all levels of the system.

5.2 To promote children's wellbeing and all-round ability to learn.

5.3 To contribute to setting the strategic direction and priorities for the future of the local system through work with headteachers as well as parents and children.

5.4 To lead the local system to challenge its responses to how race can stop being a barrier to success and parents of all black and global majority children can be confident their children are as entitled as everyone's children.

5.5 To lead the local system to challenge its responses to children with SEND so that they are the responsibility of all and have the opportunities all children have.

5.6 To lead the local system encompassing educational partners to provide responses and challenge to local strategic development on a borough wide basis to inform borough decision making.

6. How will this be different from the existing ways of working?

6.1 The Board will cease focus on school improvement work, and increase its challenge about how school improvement work and the work of other services will best support the Board's purpose. Much of the work will be carried out as consultations led by the Board, however, in addition there will be research carried out on the Board's behalf where this is agreed as part of the programme.

6.2 The focus will be simple and reduced in scope to only the big issues.

6.3 The Board will be nimble and able to change its focus as and when new issues emerge. This will be enabled by reducing the existing panel structure and having a task and finish group to focus on hearing the community voice, modelling a way of working with schools, publishing findings, and checking on implementation.

6.4 The Board will be supported by a professional co-ordinator who will develop its programme that will be reviewed annually alongside headteachers. In addition they will establish and lead on the listening work carried out with parents and children, as well as headteachers, providing published articles, social media and events arising from the work. They will be the key contact with any external professionals (e.g. University Professors) where work is being carried out on the Board's behalf.

6.5 Board membership will expand to include Director of Children's Social Care and Integrated Commissioning Workstream Director.

7. New Board Membership/Composition.

7.1 The current Board membership consists of;

- Chair - Independent Member
- Cabinet Member for Education, Young People and Children's Social Care
- Cabinet Member for Families, Parks and Leisure
- Group Director of Children, Adults & Community Health
- Director of Education
- Headteacher Members (3)
- Chair of Governors (2)
- Independent members (3)

7.2 The Board will continue with its current membership, with the strengthening by converting any existing independent panel members to full Board members, in the following posts: Director of Children's Social Care and Integrated Commissioning Workstream Director.