

## **Schools Forum Constitution**

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

The last review of the Schools Forum constitution took place in 2010. It seems appropriate to review the current membership and the conduct of business.

### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 The forum agree to the revised constitution shown in Appendix A.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1. The regulations governing Schools Forum were published by Department for Education (DfE) back in 2014. It provides details of the membership, meeting protocols and conduct of business.

### **.4. Schools Representation on the Forum**

- 4.1 Under the regulations primary schools, secondary schools and Academies must be broadly proportionately represented on the forum, having regard to the total number of pupils registered at them. Although a Local authority may determine the number of members representing schools in a particular school category they must be broadly proportionate to the total number of pupil numbers in that category when compared with the total number of schools maintained by the authority.
- 4.2 Currently the Forum have agreed that the Schools Forum should consist of 23 members as follows:

#### **Schools Members (18)**

6 primary school heads, incl. nursery head  
4 secondary heads  
1 special school head  
1 academy head

3 primary school governors  
2 secondary school governors  
1 special school governor

**Non-schools Members (5)**

- 1 Diocesan Board of Education
- 1 Archdiocese of Southwark Schools Commission
- 1 PVI Early Years Provider
- 1 14-19 Partnership representative
- 1 Pupil Referral Unit

4.3 If we take the current pupil numbers (Schools census 2015), the split of pupils by school category would be as follows

**Allocation by pupil numbers(January 2015 Census Data)**

Sector	Pupil numbers	%	Rep
Primary*	24,307	61%	7.29
Secondary	10,195	25%	3.06
Special	534	1%	0.16
Academies	4,975	12%	1.49
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	40,011	100%	12.00
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If we take the numbers of schools the allocation of membership would become

**Allocation by number of schools**

Sector	Schools	%	Reps
Primary	66	75%	9.00
Secondary	12	14%	1.64
Special	5	6%	0.68
Academies	5	6%	0.68
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	88	100%	12.00
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An allocation of representation by schools numbers would appear to under-represent Secondary Schools. If the Secondary sector had two members, that would only allow one representative from a post 16 school and one from a non post 16 school and would not have regard to small or large schools or vice versa.

It would appear that the balance of membership broadly reflects the number of pupils in each sector and it is proposed no change should be made.

## **5 Terms of Office**

### **5.1 Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

The current constitution allows for an annual election of the chair and the vice chair, but does not specify when this should occur. In practice these elections have been held at the meeting after the September meeting. New members are usually appointed to the Schools Forum in September to tie in with the academic year. This meant that voting of the chair / vice chair took place in November which allows new members time to “settle in” before being faced with an election. The recent changes to the budget setting process has meant that the November meeting now takes place in December where all the budget decisions are made. It would seem unfair for a chair to be appointed at that meeting with the complexities of the budget. It is proposed that a statement be inserted in the constitution to confirm that elections for the chair and vice chair will take place at the September meeting.

### **5.2 Members terms of office is currently three years. A register should be kept of each members appointment date and end of office, so that they can be re-elected or an a new member can be appointed. This will now be maintained and it is proposed that each members three year period will start now. If a members term office is ending the electing body will be notified.**

**6 Declaration of interest**

- 6.1 The current constitution does not address this issue formally and members have in the past declared interests where relevant. In order to show transparency, maintain confidence in and accountability of its members, School Forum members are expected to declare relevant personal, financial or business interest, which they or any person closely associated with them, has in any matter to be considered by the Forum. Each agenda will remind members of their obligations to declare interests on items proposed on it.
- 6.2 In considering the declaration of interest a member of the Forum should apply the following test: would a member of the public, knowing the facts of the situation, reasonably think that the member might be influenced by the interest.
- 6.3 There is not deemed to be a declarable interest where the Forum considers the allocation of resources between schools but there is, if their institute is the only one to benefit. A member should voluntarily declare their interest in an item and will be asked to retire from the room.

**7. Substitutes**

- 7.1 If a member is unable to attend a meeting it is permissible to send a substitute. The substitute for a Headteacher or Governor needs to be a fellow Headteacher or Governor.

There has been occasions when a request has been made to send a School Business Manager(SBM) as a substitute. It is felt that a SBM would not have the wider strategic view of the whole school estate and the proposal is to re-word the constitution to say that only fellow Headteachers or Governors of schools can act as substitutes.

**8 Attendance**

- 8.1 The minutes of the meeting now show members attendance records over the last year. There are a small number of members who have not attended any Forum meeting over the last 12 months. It is proposed that if a member has not attended a meeting in the last 6 months then a reminder will be sent to the member, if the member does not attend for 9 months the nominating body will be notified, in order for them to consider whether they want to appoint an alternative member.

**9 Conclusion**

The revised draft constitution is shown in Appendix A. These changes will help tighten up the working practice of the Forum.

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