

The Boston Grammar Schools Federation  
Record of a meeting of the Governing Body  
23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010 at Boston High School

Meeting commenced at: 6.04pm

Present: Mr. A Elmer [CoG] Mr. P Bosworth, Mr. J Tryner, Mrs E Thomas, Mrs. L Storrey, Mr. G Cook, Mr. M Worrall, Dr. J Wardell, Mr. B Gosling, Mr. J McHenry, Mrs C. Ellis, Mr. C Campion, Mrs. C Hamshaw, Mrs. L Hammond (Vice-CoG) 14  
By invitation of the COG: Mr. P Duxberry and Mr. A Breckon  
Mr P Marsh, Mrs J Thornalley.

1. Absent / Apologies: Mrs. H. McEvoy (Principal), Mr. R. Piggins - 2

(2. LEA) The COG decided to change the agenda in order to allow Messrs. Duxberry and Breckon to come in first [ he said to allow reasonable travelling time]  
Agenda item 7 became agenda item 2

- (6.05) Mr. Duxberry expressed support of GB decision to move to co-ed, confirmed BGSF inclusion in BSF bid and requested information regarding the standards and viability of returning to separate schools. So to what is best for this area? A difference of views was evident. Mr. Breckon stated the BSF board [at the LA] had met on Friday and had agreed to accept the proposal to move the bid forward through consultation. He stated that BGSF was the first grammar school to be BSF approved; the papers referred to a PAN of 150 at BGS for a joint school, this however required a commitment by the staff to continue to work together - in Federation. The submission to clarify the legal position of the co-ed status was made on the 29<sup>th</sup> Jan. The implications for the BSF money were to be discussed.
- (6.12) Mr. Elmer asked as to the timescale of the funding process.  
Stage 1- a remit letter of the process. (April 29<sup>th</sup>)  
Stage 2- develop an outline business case for each school to include the GB decision, at the top of the list.  
The pupils move from BHS; a consensus read because coherent planning needed. The website showing the Partnership for Schools was mentioned here.
- (6.15) A governor pointed out that the funding therefore should not be influenced by the coed status at the BHS site.
- (6.17) Mr. Breckon referred again to a coherent plan being required. A prerequisite for the funding is a "readiness to deliver" which he said meant mixed education at BHS.
- (6.18) A Governors stated that this was the first time the phrase had been mentioned to the GB.  
The governors re-iterated their desire to have the boys back at the boys' school for a plethora of valid educational reasons. These were clearly supported by all the governors
- (6.20) The standard of education is higher when delivered on two separate sites. The disruption to continuity of pupils' education by travelling staff was agreed by all the governors. Mr. Breckon re-iterated the "readiness to deliver" prerequisite for funding. This proposal is in three parts: the LA, the GB and DCSF must be united. The criterion based nature of the proposal was highlighted.
- (6.23) An LEA governor enquired as to dependence of the bid on co-ed status.
- (6.24) The timing of the clerk's letter withdrawing co-ed status was disputed by Mr. Breckon. It was clear that Mr. Rich the then clerk had stated he had sent the letter informing Mr. Breckon of the GB decision to withdraw BHS from co-ed status on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February. Mr. Breckon had apparently not received this until much later (Feb 5<sup>th</sup> acknowledged by CfBT on a letter recd by the GB on the 8th) and he had in the meantime submitted a bid based on co-ed status at BHS.

- (6.25) A governor raised the issue of the PAN figures. 180 was agreed by the GB previously for the BGS 'new' build, but 150 was one of the models [included in the feasibility study] which was put forward ONLY by the LA not by the GB [WHO HAD AGREED IT back in 2008.] He also mentioned the GB had not been informed of the "readiness to deliver" criterion. Was the bid dependent upon a mixed school being at BHS?
- (6.26) Mr. Breckon said it was not:- the 150 PAN was open to discussion and could be increased although to increase the PAN is unrealistic. Mr. Bosworth asked if the LA had planned ahead e.g. for the next 10 years as the birthrate had increased considerably (highest in UK) in Boston and consequently the pupil numbers are forecast to continue to rise. Mr. Breckon argued that the number of pupils passing the 11+ examination had fallen and this is the best way to preserve a grammar school education in Boston. The high aspirations of the Eastern European community in Boston was discussed and deemed relevant to a grammar school intake. Mr. Duxberry stated the bid as accepted is based on the GB actions and proposals. The DCSF would examine the details to ensure viability.
- (6.35) Mr. Bosworth assured the GB that 'detail' matters. Mr. Duxberry referred to the funding into Lincolnshire schools. The question of how much is available to BGSF was raised., but no figures were given. Mr. Breckon then outlined the difficulty in ensuring BGSF received the money despite not meeting the criteria. He encouraged the GB to continue working together as it had been doing. He also stated the building part of the document / application was not published [after being asked about this]. No date for when it would be was offered.
- (6.39) The influence of the political situation was raised, in view of the forthcoming general election, by a governor concerned that it would be irresponsible to act on uncertainties. He re-affirmed his pre-eminent concern for the pupils, staff and parents. The Conservative withdrawal of all building project monies was raised at this time.
- (6.40) A staff governor voiced agreement that only certainties should be entertained and acted upon and the best possible use of current resources should be made at the present time. Most governors supported the need to act only on certainties. A governor summarised the view of the GB [as evolved after many hours of discussion] regarding the promised money as being that of 'planning for the future - pupils as if the money is a certainty' but educating 'in the here and now' as if the money isn't coming.' Maximising current resources for the pupils being the immediate need. At this point Mr. Breckon alluded to the original plan.
- (6.43) All governors agreed the money has to be in place before returning to co-ed status to ensure stability for the pupils in the immediate term. Logistical issues raised by having a mixed school e.g. travelling teachers, three and four teachers per form, two and three teachers per class, a small number of boys in a girls school were undesirable and to be avoided. Stability is to be sought as a premium target. Mr. Duxberry expressed concern for the future plans.
- (6.48) Mr. Breckon stated the grammar school was already in the bid and risks should be taken. A future/change of government may not accept the bid.
- (6.50) A parent governor thanked Messrs Duxberry and Breckon for taking time to attend and expressed the view that parents' concerns about moving the boys to BHS was an unsuccessful 'pilot' scheme and would not want to disadvantage their children. He explained the initiation of a 'panel of governors' having mixed views to look at the bid in detail and plan accordingly and work with the LA. Mr Breckon agreed with the panel and would work with them..
- (6.55) Mr. Breckon suggested a BGSF school review be sought.
- (6.56) Would a review by the LA would be heavy handed? Mr. Breckon denied this most assuredly, stating a review would meet his desire "to get things right".
- (7.00) A staff governor explained the governors had been trying to "get things right" for many months now. Others governors referred to the lack of information being afforded the GB by the CoG which was hindering the democratic decision-making process.

- Mr. Breckon stated he had been" involved with many discussions with Tony Elmer" and had been happy to come to a GB meeting all along.
- (7.04) The Deputy Head Teacher pointed out that the SIP's had previously visited the school on several occasions and the CoG had blocked a Kirkland Rowell survey going out to parents and staff.
- (7.05) The money relative to the PAN was discussed. The forecasted increase in the number of places required by Boston pupils was re-iterated to Mr. Breckon.
- (7.08) A discussion followed concerning the ability of current pupils at BHS.
- (7.10) Mr. Duxberry assured the GB that a review is of supportive intent to the schools and would not used in any unsupportive way.
- (7.12) Figures and Governors reiterated their support of the 11+ appeals process were presented to Mr. Breckon.
- (7.15) That the funding issue has only served to de-stabilise and undermine the standard of education available to pupils was clearly stated to Mr. Breckon.
- (7.17) Mr. Breckon referred to Skegness grammar school's intake in support of his lowtred PAN
- (7.19) Mrs. Hammond (VCoG) asked if the issue of having a review was being avoided and continued at length as to why a review was needed.  
A staff governor asked the CoG why had the planned Kirkland Rowell survey been blocked for months by the Head and Chair as this would have helped avoid the need for a time-consuming and costly review by the LA?
- (7.23) Mr. Breckon stated the GB had a right to reject any report taken from his review team. They could just bin it if they wished.
- (7.24) A senior Governor with considerable knowledge and expertise in the construction industry informed the GB that a PAN of 150 would not require a rebuild of 70% thus, he requested the boys remain firmly at the boys school.
- (7.25) The review issue was discussed further. Mr. Marsh said the school is not refusing any help as the SIP is currently attending the school already [9.1] Another governor pointed out that a 'snapshots of schools' is dangerous in isolation.  
The governors agreed they were unaware of the figures involved in the bid and asked Mr. Breckon to explain
- (7.30) He explained the funding process. He stated that in order to obtain & justify the grammar school money he had to include the grammar school under a bid for 'Boston schools.' Thus details and figures were not available for the grammar school component of the bid. This did not satisfy many Governors
- (7.33) Mr. Breckon discussed the timescale and referred the GB to a website (LEP) which manages procurement for capital builds. He said this may change with a change of government.
- (7.35) A parent governor asked if the money was in any way secured?
- (7.36) Mr. Breckon said there was need to allow twelve months for bids and consultation. The time-plan between the General Election and the budget is usually six months plus 6 further months.
- (7.40) Again the need for minimal disruption to pupils and staff by maintaining two separate schools until a new school is ready to be occupied was highlighted by Governors.
- (7.42) Mr. Bosworth asked as to the involvement of other Boston schools within the process. Was there a plan to move the pupils from Haven High School into BHS?
- (7.45) The permanent loss of grammar school places to Boston and the surrounding villages was questioned by a parent governor. A PAN of 150 would for sure see 82 places lost [232 current PAN for both schools]. His knowledge of buildings gave credibility to the PAN of 150 as not being reasonable for the floor space available.
- (7.50) A staff governor re-iterated the issue of uncertainty for the pupils and staff as one to be avoided. He expressed his genuine concern that promises made to stakeholders had been rescinded. At this, Mr. Breckon assured him of being in a better position with this bid than the last one (which failed).

