



**Mission Statement:** *Inspiring learning, developing character, building futures*

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION OF BLACKPOOL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

**Date:** Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

### 01.2020 Preliminaries

Following government guidance, the Full Board meeting did not take place instead directors were invited to email any questions relating to reports distributed directly to the presenter, it was agreed the Clerk would record the questions and responses.

### 02.2020 College Action Plan

**Comment** A brilliant detailed report.

### 03.2020 Attendance and Retention

#### Questions from Directors via email

**Question** 8.1 I found it strange that the attendance in all three groups increased and the converse was a fall in retention. Can you explain why?

**Response** The relationship between attendance and retention is an interesting one. They are often at odds as measures for the following reason. We always work very hard to keep/retain students at Blackpool Sixth - we feel that every student needs an opportunity to complete their studies, however, sometimes (not always) the students we are trying to retain have low attendance, for example, due to poor physical or mental health. If we retain these students then their low attendance has an impact on our overall attendance figures. Equally, if we get to the point where a student leaves then their low attendance is removed from the overall attendance figures thus has a positive effect. It's one of the reasons we are measured on both attendance and retention.

**Question** Also, in the Maths department A level enrolments fell by 37 in L6. Does this reflect a failure in the five main feeder schools to gain good grades.

**Question** Do we have a breakdown of our feeder schools' results to indicate where the failures are occurring?

**Response** We get an overview of most feeder school's results, but we don't get the detail from each school - for most we have what is shared in the public domain, clearly, we get more detailed information from the FCAT schools. So, it isn't possible to say categorically that the reduction in student numbers on A level maths is due to reduced outcomes at KS4/GCSE maths locally, although this is a logical assumption. The maths team have been doing a lot of work in local schools (including through the post-16 project) and their results/reputation are very strong so I don't think there is an issue with our liaison work. Also, we know that due to a high turnover of staff in many of our schools, especially Blackpool schools, pupils don't always get the best experience of maths. We are working hard on this through the post-16 project and through our liaison work but stability in the schools would help.

**Question** Some improvements in a number of areas - still a challenge in Level 2 courses, but that may be expected.  
Do we know if closure of the college as part of Coronavirus policy will be

counted as 100% attendance in the year's totals or will they draw a line under all data from 23 March until we reopen?

**Response** We don't yet know this but we will be in communication with the ESFA/DfE about it. We will raise it as a question on the SFCA hub as everyone will be in the same boat. We are not collecting attendance information for the vast majority of our students now as all learning is online. The online learning has to be flexible enough so that staff and students can manage their time at home as needed in case they have dependents to care for or they are sick themselves. This means students are not "registering" on individual lessons hence no attendance information. We have a very small number of students (currently 7) coming into college to access our limited study supervision and these will sign in and out each day when they choose to attend. Your question is one all colleges will be asking - we'll let you know when we get an answer.

#### **04.2020 Employer engagement with work and industry placements**

Director response to the report - This report in detail reflects our curriculum offer.

**Question** I couldn't remember why we had withdrawn from the ESFA project

**Answer** We withdrew for several reasons: a] this project was taking a lot of staff resource for a small number of students, b] the funding provided by the ESFA was under threat of clawback if we didn't reach our targeted number (hence all that work and staffing cost but then the possibility of money being clawed back), c] we were in constant communication with the ESFA yet their communication with us did not always answer our specific questions - this made us unclear on the funding and made it very difficult to plan financially for this project this year and next, d] at present we do have no plans to deliver T levels so we are doing all this work to prepare for a programme that may never be offered, hence diverting our resources from more important work.

#### **05.2020 Directors Training Feedback from Directors' conference**

**Comment** This was a well collated report. It showed excellent work by all the presenters for each module of the conference.

Good feedback was given and this should improve our outcomes for B6 going forward.

Session1.Employers

I thought that we achieved all three outcomes with the limited number of employers in attendance, which was beyond our control.

#### **Other questions**

**Question** There still isn't final and absolute clarity about how A levels and GCSEs will be graded without exams this year. Some schools are requesting that students supplement (a) predicted grades, mocks and coursework with (b) some sort of test early in Autumn. Do we know the possible effect of:

(a) on our outcomes for 2020? Might be too soon to tell? Do we have a preference to supplement (a) with (b) or stick with predicted outcomes?

**Response** It's too early for us to say what the effect on our outcomes will be, however, we will have better information very soon. We had a "data drop" planned for Monday but we have put this back to for several reasons: a] last week was a lot to take in for everyone and staff were responding (rightly) to the coronavirus situation that was immediate (planning and practising online learning) so asking them to enter grades when their minds and efforts were elsewhere would have been unwise, b] as you rightly say, these grades could well be very important to us and to our students so we want to give staff an extra week to think carefully about them and enter them with a clear head, c] we have delayed the academic monitoring reports (to parents/students)

going out as we recognised that following the news about exams, this information becomes all the more significant - we want to get it and the communication right - we have told them about this short delay, d] following the DfE's announcement about possible ways of allocating grades, we want staff to think carefully about this data drop - it could not be more important. When we have this information, we will have up-to-date progress grades for L6 and predictions for U6 and R3 - this will give us much better information. In terms of just using predictions or supplementing these with teacher tests, we need to consider a] DfE/Ofqual advice - we may be directed one way or the other, b] what our predictions tell us at the end of March, c] practicalities such as staffing and how we do this "online". We have been very clear to our students and their parents/carers that one method of attributing qualification grades may be teacher assessment - this is important as we want students to continue their learning and remain focused.

**Date and Time of next meeting**

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July at 5pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_