

The Taunton Learning Partnership

Minutes of TLP Day Conference 17th March 2011

Held at Taunton Racecourse

Present: E Gregory (Chair), M Amos, S Bellworthy, B Berks, J Bevans, N Bradford, S Brewer, N Bright, R Bullock, V Coles, H Cunningham, M France, R Garbett, K Greenslade, P Hanratty, D Hayward, G Jones, S Loader, J McCarthy, K Milton, K Nelson, A Pearce, P Sheehan, M Snowden, S Summerill, S Watson, A Boxer (TLP Coordinator), M Hope (CPD Coordinator), H Millard (Behaviour Coordinator), M Reader (secretary).

Apologies: S Baker, D Barrett, S Billington, A Cox, N Dalton, M Lunn, S McBride, S Mills

Actions:

1. Welcome:

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting. At this ever changing time for education the main objective of the meeting is for members to review the TLP: to look at TLP achievements and decide if the TLP should continue and if so to discuss the future development of the TLP. Presentations would be given by members of the Steering Group to put into context how the TLP has evolved and to set the scene for members to consider the next steps for the TLP.

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 24th June 2010:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24th June 2010 were signed as a correct record.

3. Finance Report:

In the absence of the Treasurer it was agreed that the Finance Report would be reviewed by the Steering Group and reported to Working Groups at their next meeting.

KR AB

4. The Future Role of the TLP:

4.1 PH provided an outline of how the TLP was formed twenty one years ago, originally comprising only primary headteachers and how it later expanded to include secondary headteachers. The TLP was formed to further the education of all the children in Taunton and for Headteachers to help prevent duplication of effort and share ideas. The time is now appropriate to determine if members wish to retain the TLP and to decide which route members wish the TLP to be steered.

4.2 NB looked at the changes being made in the education sector vis-à-vis LA Compact, academy status, teaching schools, specialist teachers, SEN Green Paper and the changes in teaching standards. He asked members to discuss what they would like the future role of the TLP to be; to consider how members can support each other and ensure the TLP is robust and effective and able to influence the way forward around the following four main areas:

1. Childrens' learning - eg, behaviour policy, gifted and talented provision, the children's carnival, Forest School.
2. Staff development (CPD) - eg, the successes of the INSET Days and meetings of deputy heads, EYFS and maths groups, the training provided for lunchtime supervisors, first aid training and Skills for Life.
3. Brokering of Services - eg, Forest School, TSSP, Skills for Life and PFSA's.
4. Employment of own staff - the TLP currently employs three coordinators, AB, HM, MH and the Steering Group has until now resisted employing other staff, however this may be an area which members would like to consider for the future.

4.3 It was noted the TDA has offered to carry out an audit of CPD on a free basis with Jan McKinley as facilitator.

4.4 The following points were noted following group discussions:

1. Members did not fully support the TLP becoming an employer of staff due to the associated liabilities and employment laws. However, the need to employ staff should remain an option for consideration on either long or short term contracts together with the ability to buy-in facilitators as necessary. Members shared experiences from other LPs where the line management of staff was carried out by Headteachers as part of their management development to give wider parameters outside of immediate school.
2. Brokering of services was considered an area where problems arise when funding is tight and schools have differing usage and varying needs from services, especially SEN. It would also be important to consider the services being curtailed and not the individual personnel. It was felt that bulk purchasing power would be possible, especially for servicing of equipment. Members felt that where brokering was agreed by the TLP schools would need to commit to funding of those services.
3. The secondary schools have a positive interest in what they can provide for the primary schools, especially with a focus on working with families and business management.
4. It was felt that there may be duplication of effort in some areas between the Schools Forum, SAPHTO, SASH and other groups which are also considering the way forward under the Compact and how they can support schools. Quality assurance from the Compact is also being looked at.
5. With regard to funding members suggested that the TLP should decide its priorities and then address funding, whether this is from schools, LA or outside bodies. It was felt that the TLP must ensure that the Compact includes clear provision for the TLP and that there is then a clear agreement between the TLP and its member schools.

4.5. In summing up EG stated that the TLP should be a facilitator not a driver. With LA provision being drastically reduced the voice of the TLP could help save some vital services. The meeting had reinforced the values of the TLP by bringing together members to exchange views, to share areas of expertise and enable the TLP to grow in strength. The TLP is a powerful group and must now take a wider view and examine other LPs, how they operate and obtain funding, to look at different ways of working, draw on the experiences of new members and proactively investigate other structures.

EG

4.6. It was proposed that a small group of members identify the services being lost in September and consider whether these services are needed by schools in the TLP. Both MS and SL volunteered to be members of this group and EG would email absent colleagues to join the group.

EG

5. Taunton's Christmas Carol Competition:

SS informed the TLP of a competition organised by the Orchard Shopping Centre which is open to all primary, secondary and special schools in Taunton to write a new carol for Taunton. The winning school from each category will be invited to perform at the Christmas Lights Switch-On. Further details will be circulated to schools.

SS

6. Consider Ways of Learning:

KM advised of a conference to be held at Selworthy on 2nd September with an SEN focus to Consider Ways of Learning'.

7. Information:

Information was tabled by KN regarding In-Finity Education organised by Maria Richards (formerly of the Somerset Literacy team), further detail is available from contact@maria-richards.co.uk. MA advised of a Maths Makes Sense taster day to be held at Thurlbear on 17th May 2011. PH reminded members of the Longwood Meadow activity days, details of which had been circulated previously.

8. Newsletter:

AB tabled copies of the draft Newsletter to be issued this half term. Amendments and comments to be sent to AB before 23rd March 2011.

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9. TLP Website:

A discussion was held on the need for the TLP website and how it could be developed for the benefit of members and other users, and how to encourage people to use it. It was suggested that the site be linked to the SLP and AB would investigate this. Other comments included colour coding meeting dates, to use the website as an archive and to store contact details for TLP schools.

AB

10. Children's University:

Eileen Coombes attended for this item and presented a powerpoint on the Children's University which is a national organisation originally for disadvantaged

children but in Somerset is for all children aged from 5 to 14 and aims to recognise achievements from activities and experiences outside of school hours. Children who participate in accredited activities will collect modules towards gaining awards. PS stated that his son is a member and the experience has been very positive and worthwhile. Should Taunton become a faculty the cost would be £430 for a school with less than 400 pupils but this is minimised if parents are recharged for the cost of the passport. Further information available from Eileen Coombes, Tel 01823 410148 or 07774335774, if schools are interested the first step would be for Eileen to attend a school assembly.

11. Integrated Data Needs (IDN):

Rhys Gwilym, Chris Chaffey and Chris Cadby attended from IDN and Rhys Gwilym presented an overview of their company and the key services offered to schools. It was noted that IDN has been the LA preferred network and audio visual contractor since 2000 and now work with over 250 schools and public bodies in the south west. Handouts were distributed on the IDN whole school support package. Further details can be obtained from Rhys Gwilym on email: rhys.gwilym@idnonline.co.uk or mobile: 07525668287. To enable contracts to commence in September schools must make contact with IDN before mid-April.

12. Resources for Learning:

Karen Horsfield explained that RfL as a service to schools provides more than just 'yellow boxes'. RfL is an effective way to access library services and all full subscribers are automatically members of the Somerset Learning Network. KH agreed to send AB the levels of discount available for TLP schools and AB would circulate these to members. Further information is obtainable from email: kahorsafield@somerset.gov.co.uk or tel: 01278421015. It was noted that the collective noun for a group of teachers is a 'Quiz of teachers'.

13. Conclusion:

In conclusion EG summarised the outcomes and associated actions from the meeting as follows:

- There is a recognised need for the TLP to become more proactive to secure services to maintain the current high quality provision for services for our children;
- To arrange the TDA audit of CPD;
- Action groups to proceed with their meetings and Chairs to email business which needs to be followed-up; and
- Individual members to take responsibility to follow-up their interest in Childrens' University, IDN or RfL.

NB

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14. Date of Next Meeting - Thursday 26th May 2011 at Hestercombe:

The next meeting will be held at Hestercombe House on Thursday 26th May 2011. This is an Action Groups meeting and has been extended to include lunch and a presentation from the Education Unit at Hestercombe.

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