

**Educational Research Centre
MEETING OF THE BOARD
27th June 2018**

A meeting of the Board of the Educational Research Centre (ERC), was held on June 27th 2018 at the offices of the organisation.

Board Members Present:

Pauric Travers (PT), Chairperson; Denise Burns (DB), Deputy Chairperson; Prof Michael Martin (MM) (Via Skype Link), Jude Cosgrove (JC); Edward Murtagh (EM)

In Attendance:

Peter Archer (CEO), Anne Comey (AC) who took the minutes

Absent: N/A

Counsel Present: N/A

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2.15 pm.

The Agenda was adopted (Appendix I).

1. Minutes BMin – 0418

The minutes of the last meeting were adopted and signed.

2. Matters arising from previous minutes

No matters arising.

3. Report on developments since previous meeting (See Appendix II)

The Report from the CEO was noted.

AC to email the links for the TIMSS and DFL reports to all Board members.

4. Proposed change to reporting arrangements to the DES (Dr Alan Wall, Assistant Secretary in the DES with responsibility to the Central Policy Unit will attend)

PO responsible for DUP has not yet been appointed. Change over will not happen until September so introduction to the Board was postponed.

5. Governance matters

The response from DES legal section in relation to ERC registering as a Charity suggests that ERC legal instruments are not suitable for Charity governance and question whether all ERC purposes

are charitable purposes. Therefore Legal Section's view is that it is not appropriate for the ERC to apply to become a charity.

The CEO will discuss this with the DES at the Governance meeting in July and refer to the recommendations from the ERC solicitors to apply for Charity Status.

The Board also noted the issues likely to arise if the ERC cannot register as a Charity in relation to the transfer of the Test Department building and the bequest made to the Centre by Thomas Kellaghan.

Board noted that the payroll issues are still ongoing. If the matter is not resolved, the Board agreed to write to the DES to request intervention.

Board noted that the Customer charter was drafted as per requirement of COP and agreement with DES to postpone same until Q2 2018. Action plan for implementation has yet to be finalised.

The Board formally adopted the Code of Practice 2016 taking into account the exemptions granted by the DES.

6. Delivery Performance Agreement (B-5-18-1)

Draft of proposed DPA was reviewed by the Board and will be issued to the DES for comment and will be discussed at the Governance meeting.

7. Risk Management (Recurring item)

No updates on this recurring item.

8. Accounts 2016 and letter of Representation (B-5-18-2)

Following recommendations of ARC, the Board recommended signature of the latest draft of the 2016 accounts provided no significant changes were requested by C&AG before its approval.

The Chairperson and the CEO will have to sign the final version as well as the letter of representation.

9. Annual report 2017 (B-5-18-3)

The CEO circulated a draft of the 2017 annual report. The board confirmed that the level of details on projects was sufficient. The percentage of DES funding should be included as well as a section listing functions and key achievements.

The Board decided to await DES comments on the 2016 annual report before finalising the 2017 draft. C&AG will be auditing the 2017 accounts in 2018 so it is expected that the annual report will be finalised in late 2018.

10. Staffing (B-5-18-4)

The CE

O reported that the AP position has been filled and that this created a vacancy for a new HEO. Both the HEO and the test department EO vacancies have been advertised and the

recruitment process is ongoing. Interviews for the additional Research Fellow sanctioned by the DES are nearing completion. The competition will be used to fill potential other vacancies arising in the short term and to create a panel for a Research Fellow for which sanction will be sought.

CEO shared an email sent to the DES relating to temporary staff whose contracts are nearing expiry. This will be discussed at the Governance meeting.

CEO shared two documents explaining how staff are currently deployed and what the centre should be looking for in the medium term. General management work from research staff (non project related), was not included in the estimations.

ERC to undertake external review of the ERC staff structure.

11. Strategic Plan including staffing

No updates on this recurring item.

12. AOB

MM will be away on November 28th so the Board meeting has been rescheduled for November 21st.

There was no other business.

13. CEO Recruitment

The CEO and JC withdrew from the meeting at this point.

The Chairperson gave an update on the report from the Independent reviewer. This review involved a detailed assessment of each of the complaints submitted by the three complainants. It acknowledged the genuinely held views of the parties but concluded that the Code had not been breached and, accordingly the complaints were not upheld.

The Board noted and welcomed the report. The Chairperson agreed to write to the reviewer thanking him for his services and reminding him to submit his account.

The Chairperson indicated that he had to date received no indication as to whether there would be a further appeal to the Commissioners..

The Board then reviewed the additional references for the recommended candidate and the medical report and decided to proceed with the appointment of Dr Jude Cosgrove as the CEO designate with effect from 1 September 2018.

The current CEO is to remain in post for two weeks following this date to ensure a smooth transition.

The draft contract was issued to the DES for comments in March 2018. The Chairperson will pressure the DES to issue comments as a matter of urgency.

Following the retirement of the future CEO the Board wishes to thank all the candidates and reaffirms its confidence in the ERC's Senior staff.

Pamela Sweet
12 Sept 2018

Appendix 1

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE Board Meeting 27 June 2018 Agenda

1. Minutes of meeting of 25th April 2018 (Bmin-418)
2. Matters arising from the minutes
3. Report on developments since previous meeting
4. Proposed change to reporting arrangements to the DES (Dr Alan Wall, Assistant Secretary in the DES with responsibility to the Central Policy Unit will attend)
5. Governance matters
6. Delivery Performance Agreement (B-5-18-1)
7. Risk Management (Recurring item)
8. Accounts 2016 and letter of Representation (B-5-18-2)
9. Annual report 2017 (B-5-18-3)
10. Staffing (B-5-18-4)
11. Strategic Plan (Recurring item)
12. AOB
13. CEO Recruitment (B-5-18-5)

Appendix II

Developments since meeting of April, 2018

1. Work has begun on producing a revised model for allocating special education teaching resources to schools using updated and, in some cases, new data. The model is required by December 2018 but not all of the data have been received. In the meantime, we have been asked to predict 'churn' (i.e., the extent to which schools will gain and lose compared to the first run of the model).
2. At a meeting with DES and the Central statistics Office (CSO), it was confirmed that CSO will manage PIAAC but DES still wants Ireland to be represented on the Board of Participating Countries by ERC.
3. Following meetings with NEPS and senior management in DES, it looks like the Centre will have a significant involvement in standardising tests developed by NEPS (Post-Primary Assessment & Diagnosis – English).
4. The proposed evaluation of CPD relating to wellbeing has still not been confirmed but will probably go ahead.
5. A baseline report of the evaluation of trial of the Digital Learning Framework was published in May (<http://www.erc.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/DLF-Trial-Evaluation-Interim-Report-May-2018.pdf>). A final report of this phase of the evaluation is due in July. Discussions about a further phase are at an advanced stage.
6. Coding of PISA data is complete but submission to the contractors has been postponed because of an issue caused by GDPR which has stipulations about transferring data to agencies that are not in the EU. We believe that this issue is close to being resolved.
7. Data collection for the TIMSS field trial and the standardisation of new primary tests was completed on time.
8. VIDAPPT has been approached to try to make the platform multilingual, in the first instance, to accommodate tests as Gaeilge.
9. The procurement process for printing is almost finished. A company has been selected and a contract should issue in the next two weeks.
10. Earlier today, a report using TIMSS data was published (<http://www.erc.ie/2018/06/27/third-report-in-erc-research-series-released/>). It is *Inside the post-primary classroom: Mathematics and science teaching in Second Year*.