

**Educational Research Centre  
MEETING OF THE BOARD  
12<sup>th</sup> September**

A meeting of the Board of the Educational Research Centre (ERC), was held on September 12<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the offices of the organisation.

**Board Members Present:**

Pauric Travers (PT), Prof Michael Martin (MM) (Via Skype Link), Edward Murtagh (EM)

**In Attendance:**

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

**Absent:** Denise Burns (DB)

**Counsel Present:** N/A

**Call to Order**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2.45 pm.

The Agenda was adopted (Appendix I).

**1. Minutes BMin – 0618**

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**

- PA and JC have been working closely since early August to manage the transition of CEO
- PISA data were submitted on 6 Sept under derogation agreement. The same arrangement is planned for the PISA feasibility study data submission (Jan 2019) but a long term solution is required to address GDPR requirements
- The Board has copies of two recent reports: PIRLS and ePIRLS (Eivers & Delaney, mid August) and evaluation of SSP in urban schools under DEIS (Weir & Kavanagh, Sept)
- A report on the HSCL component of DEIS and a synthesis report examining ICT usage is with the DES for review
- Agreement in principle has been reached on financing of the CPD evaluation study with the Teacher Ed section of the DES but terms of reference, etc. are forthcoming
- The final report on the DLF trial has been submitted to DES for review (June) and a learning day with PDST and field trial school staff is planned for early Oct during which ERC will present field trial findings and administer a short follow-up questionnaire
- Funding for wider evaluation of DLF has been approved in principle and work is commencing on this although staff are not available to work on DLF yet. All schools will

receive a baseline survey during PDST seminars and a representative sample will be followed over the 2018-19 and 2019-2020 academic years

- PIAAC: as noted at previous meeting, ERC is to continue as governing board representative with CSO as national project manager. Details of this arrangement were confirmed at a meeting with DES attended by PA and JC on Sept 10

- The DOTS research team (including Aidan who now replaces Eemer) met with Vidappt on Sept 6 to progress work over the short and medium terms. Centre staff are implementing a strategy to promote and publicise the new online testing system

- PA and JC attended a meeting of the Resource Allocation Steering Group on Sept 7. The Centre will provide an updated model allocation to this group towards the end of September. Allocations for this academic year have been made on the basis of the initial (first) model and the Centre has provided allocations for six new schools on the basis of enrolment

- The collaborative study with NEPS involved some initial work up until mid-July and planning for this study will resume at a meeting scheduled for Sept 13

- JC has identified and booked training on governance (end of Sept) and financial management (mid Nov) with the IPA.

#### **4. Governance matters**

The ERC is seeking confirmation that the DES has issued correspondence to DCU extending the current transition agreement which expired in September 2017 and was extended once already.

The ERC had meeting with the CPU section of the DES (CPU is now taking over reporting role from CAP) to discuss urgent staffing matters and CPU is to revert back to ERC within 2 weeks. The Board noted the urgency of these issues and agreed that JC would keep the Chair of the Board updated on developments.

The ERC is seeking a meeting with its legal counsel and the DES's legal department to discuss their recommendation that ERC should not seek charity status.

The Board confirmed that it has adopted the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016.

#### **5. Policies (For discussion or review)**

##### **a. Child Protection Policy (B6-18-1)**

The issue as to whether the ERC is a mandated organisation in relation to Child Protection Policy was raised. The ERC will contact TUSLA for guidance on the matter and on the basis of this decision the ERC policy will be finalised for review by the Board at its next meeting.

##### **b. Communication**

The Board adopted the Social Media Usage Policy (B-6-18-2) and the Twitter Policy (B-6-18-3).

##### **c. Data Protection Policies**

The Board adopted the Data Protection Policy (B-6-18-4), Privacy Policy (B-6-18-5), Subject Access Request (SAR) Policy (B-6-18-6) and Data Breach Policy (B-6-18-7).

d. **Customer Charter (B-6-18-8)**

The customer Charter was reviewed and approved as it appears on the ERC website.

e. **Anti-Fraud policy (B-6-18-9)**

The Anti-Fraud policy was discussed and it was decided that the 'Audit committee' should be replaced by the 'Audit and Risk Committee'. Final draft to be presented at the next Board meeting.

**6. 2016 Financial Statement (FS), Management Letter and Annual Report (B6-10-18 and B6-18-11)**

The Secretary (AC) confirmed that the C&AG had signed off on the 2016 FS and issued a draft version of the accompanying management letter. Response to this letter should be issued within 4 weeks with comments. The response letter will be circulated to the Board for comments before being issued to the C&AG.

The ERC is awaiting comments from the DES on its 2016 annual report. The Annual report is to be issued 4 weeks after the C&AG issues accounts certification.

**7. 2017 Financial Statement**

C&AG have been auditing the 2017 accounts since September 3<sup>rd</sup>. A number of items have been raised which may require changes to the current draft. The ERC will wait for all comments from the C&AG to be issued before issuing the final draft for review by the Board.

**8. Risk Management (Recurring item)**

An IT audit is to take place in Q4 as well as a review of financial internal controls by an external consultant.

Both of these audits and the Project Management status update reports will be used to develop a risk assessment and a risk register for the ERC by year end for the ARC to review / action from January 2019.

**9. Staffing (B-5-18-4)**

Urgent staffing issues are being followed up with DES. Without a response from the DES by the end of September the Board will issue correspondence to follow up on same.

ERC plans to recruit three research associates by end September to replace the vacancies created by the appointment of one permanent Research Fellow and one Acting up Research Fellow as well as a new research associate post for PISA 2021

Strategically, i.e. over the medium term, the deputy CEO, the additional Research Fellow, the IT post and a potential CO to cover reception are high priority.

#### **10. Strategic Plan**

JC acknowledged that this item is of a high priority and that work will commence immediately to allow the ERC to produce its first Strategic Plan by end of Q1 2019.

Outside advice will be sought to assist with this task and the initial structure will be agreed with senior staff and board, with content to be developed on the basis of the objects and function of the Centre.

Continuity will be one important aspect of strategy.

Other internal matters to be considered in the short term include implementing performance appraisal from Q1 2019, refreshing and developing IJE and research series, and seeking to install lift.

#### **11. AOB**

No other business was raised.

#### **12. CEO Recruitment, Appointment and replacement of Board Member (B-6-18-12)**

*PA and JC withdrew from the meeting at this point.*

The Board reviewed and approved the CEO contract.

The Chair confirmed that he would have a number of review meetings with the new CEO during the probation period.

Following the appointment of Jude Cosgrove as CEO, a vacant position has arisen on both the Board and the Audit and Risk Committee panels.

The Chair will draft a profile specification to be circulated to the DES for the replacement of Jude Cosgrove as a Board member and an ARC member. Depending on the candidate selected by PAS, the Board will review whether a further appointment will be required to provide financial expertise to the ARC.

**Appendix 1**

**EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE  
Board Meeting  
12 September 2018  
Agenda**

1. Minutes of meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018 (Bmin-518)
2. Matters arising from the minutes
3. Report on developments since previous meeting
4. Governance matters  
(To include internal transitional matters)
5. Policies (For discussion or review)
  - f. Child Protection Policy (B6-18-1)
  - g. Communication
    - i. Social Media Usage Policy (B-6-18-2)
    - ii. Twitter Policy (B-6-18-3)
  - h. Data Protection Policies
    - i. Data Protection Policy (B-6-18-4)
    - ii. Privacy Policy (B-6-18-5)
    - iii. Subject Access Request (SAR) Policy (B-6-18-6)
    - iv. Data Breach Policy (B-6-18-7)
  - i. Customer Charter (B-6-18-8)
  - j. Anti-Fraud policy (B-6-18-9)
6. 2016 Financial Statement, management letter and Annual report (B-6-18-10 and B-6-18-11)
7. 2017 Financial Statement
8. Risk Management (Recurring item)
9. Staffing
10. Strategic Plan (Recurring item)
11. AOB
12. CEO Recruitment, Appointment and replacement of Board Member (B-6-18-12)

BMin 6- 09/18

*Pamela Lewis*  
13/09/2018