

**Educational Research Centre
MEETING OF THE BOARD
5th July 2017**

A meeting of the Board of the Educational Research Centre ("ERC"), was held on July 5th 2017 at the offices of the organisation.

Board Members Present:

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

In Attendance:

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

Absent: N/A

Counsel Present: N/A

Call to Order

PT called the meeting to order at 2.30 pm.

The Agenda was adopted (Appendix I).

1. Minutes BMin 3 – 0517

The minutes of the last meeting were adopted.

2. Matters Arising from previous minutes

Dates for next meeting confirmed as follows:

26 September, 2017 at 2pm

29 November, 2017 at 2pm

PT met with Anne Looney on 15/06/2017.

- Collaboration between Institute of Education and ERC was discussed and the possibility of drafting a memorandum of Understanding (in the context of the independence of the Centre) between the two organisations was raised.
- PT also raised the ongoing issue with library access and the difficulty arising from that for staff members. Appointing senior Centre staff to adjunct positions in DCU might be considered. Library access would be available to the holders of these positions.
- The possibility of a funded capacity building bursary was also discussed. Anne Looney confirmed that she was open to the idea of a bursary to honour Tom Kellaghan. She asked if the funding of same should be discussed with Brian Mac Craith and that others might be interested in supporting the funding.

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

PA circulated a note on developments since the meeting of the board in May (see Appendix II) and spoke briefly about these developments.

A request from Social Inclusion Unit of the DES for data gathered from 120 schools, that participated in the evaluation of DEIS, was refused.

4. Updates on the transition agreement

Declan Rafferty suggested, at a meeting on 04/07/2017, that the best channel for discussions on the Richmond road trust was via Declan McSweeney in the Archdiocese and their legal advisors (Edward Gleeson in Mason, Hayes and Curran) and that he did not think that contacting DCU solicitors was advisable at this stage.

He also confirmed a meeting to discuss library issues for 06/07/2017.

AC raised the potential issue of the payroll, software licence expiring in August 2017. Arrangements for the future of the transition agreement have not yet been put in place.

5. Governance Matters

- Board approved budget request for 2018 and took note that NAMER is being postponed to 2020 and eTIMSS to 2023. The budget will be amended accordingly and forwarded to the DES.
- Register of interest following disclosure in last meeting was signed
- Letters of appointment for members of ARC to be issued by Chairperson of Committee and letter of Appointment of Chairperson of Committee to be issued by chairperson of the Board.

6. Annual Report

Draft approved by the Board. The draft cannot be finalised until after C&AG audit report has been issued and actioned.

Accounts audited by Mazars were approved by the Board.

Letter of representation for Mazars signed by Chairperson and CEO.

The Statement of Financial Control was approved.

7. ERC policies

Board satisfied itself that HR related policies had been reviewed by Union representative.

- B4-17-1 (Working Hours) – Approved with following change: reference to Working Time Act to be inserted and “additional recovery time may be taken” to be changed to “may be allowed as agreed with supervisor”.
- B4-17-2 (Force Majeure) - Approved with following change: “or five days in a 36 month period” to be changed to “and five days in a 36 month period”
- B4-17-3 (Compassionate Leave) – Approved
- B4-17-4 (Staff Grievance) – To be amended and reviewed at next meeting. Insert definition of Grievance and add step 3 with review in front of Sub Committee of the Board.

8. Staffing

Board was informed that business cases for additional staff were being reviewed by DES and ERC is awaiting feedback.

The recruitment of two Research Assistant positions which recently became vacant was however sanctioned by DES with immediate effect.

9. Strategic Plan

In view of the lack of progress with CEO recruitment, the Board agreed to give some consideration to preparatory work on a strategic plan at the next meeting of the Board depending on developments.

The action plans referred to in the annual report will need to be considered in the strategic plan.

10 AOB

The Board formally noted that, where ERC policies weren't already agreed, policies put in place by St Patrick's College prior to the ERC become a statutory Body were to be used.

11. CEO recruitment

PT has drafted a letter to PA relating to the extension of his current appointment after the DES confirmed that the responsibility for the extension rested with the Board.

PT to issue letter to PA.

Appendix 1

**EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE
Board Meeting
5th July 2017**

Agenda

- 1. Minutes of meeting of 30 May 2017 – BMin3-0517**
- 2. Matters arising from the minutes**
- 3. Report on developments since previous meeting**
- 4. Updates on the transition agreement**
- 5. Governance matters**
 - **Budget 2018**
 - **Register of Interest**
 - **Formal appointment of ARC members**
- 6. Annual Report**
- 7. ERC policies**
 - **B4-17-1 (Working Hours)**
 - **B4-17-2 (Force Majeure)**
 - **B4-17-3 (Compassionate Leave)**
 - **B4-17-4 (Staff Grievance)**
- 8. Staffing**
- 9. Strategic Plan**
- 10. AOB**
- 11. CEO Recruitment**

1. We have been discussing possible collaboration with the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). NEPS have developed a prototype of a literacy test for use across the whole post-primary age range and has been formally asked by the DES to consult with the ERC about how its work might be progressed. Gerry and Emer have examined and commented on test content and David is looking at whether data gathered by NEPS from a small number of schools is suitable for item analysis.
2. The Social Inclusion Unit of the DES has requested further analysis of the power of various measures of disadvantage to predict low achievement at school level. Susan will start on this in the next few days and we expect that it will be completed before the end of the summer.
3. Anne and I met with people from the Educational Company of Ireland who have, for some time, been interested in a partnership relating to the marketing and possibly distribution of our tests. We updated them on developments and they undertook to prepare a written proposal for our consideration.
4. The person appointed Appeals Officer for the Special Needs allocation model was unable to complete the task for personal reasons and has been replaced. The new officer has convened a meeting of appeals panel, on which the Centre is represented, for next Friday (July 7).
5. Work has commenced on a national report on PIRLS and ePIRLS (2016) following receipt of provisional data. Consideration is being given to how best to engage with media before and after the launch of international and national reports towards the end of 2017.
6. Although we had previously indicated that Ireland would participate in eTIMSS in 2019, it has now been decided that participation will be postponed until 2023.
7. An appreciation of Tom was placed on our website recently.
8. I attended a meeting about PIAAC with the DES Further Education Section and the CSO. One issue needs to be resolved, probably between the director of the CSO and the Secretary General of the Department, but it looks like the CSO will take responsibility for the project.
9. The afternoon of June 29 was devoted to a staff planning session. Areas covered included data protection and Centre initiated research.

Alan Smith
26/9/17

