Educational Research Centre
MEETING OF THE BOARD
17th January 2018

A meeting of the Board of the Educational Research Centre (ERC), was held on January 17th 2018 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 6 – 1117**

The minutes of the last meeting were adopted provided that in item 12 ERC was replaced by PA and AC. Minutes to be signed at next meeting.

2. **Matters arising from previous minutes**

No matters arising

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

On the development report the Governance meeting of January 17th was indicated has having taken place. It was in fact postponed to an unconfirmed date.

4. **Proposed Change of Reporting Arrangements with DES**

PA reported that there is currently a reshuffle taking place in the DES and a suggestion has been made that the ERC should report to the Central Policy Unit rather than CAP. Alan Wall was expected to talk to the Board about this matter but had to cancel attendance to the Board meeting. He expects to speak to the Board at its next meeting. One implication of this move might be that it coud facilitate work not relating to primary and post primary schools. This may have an impact on funding as the ERC may be asked to get involved in more projects.

5. **Governance matters**

PA gave an update on Charity Status: he and and AC were due to discuss the matter with DES but due to the cancellation of the meeting the process for application is further delayed. The ERC solicitor is of the view that the Charity Regulator's concerns about Public bodies availing of Charity status should not deter us from applying for the status as another system will have to be put in place to deal with the likes of the HSE which would also be available to ERC.

It was noted that a review of Code of Practice 2016 implementation status is due to happen shortly and an update will be issued to the Board in due course.
Work on the 2017 annual report will also have to start shortly. The Financial Statement and Statement of Internal Control for 2017 will be issued to Board members before the next meeting for approval at the meeting of February 28th.
An updated work programme for 2018 will also be issued.

A number of complications have arisen in relation to payroll calculations by DCU and the Board will examine proposals for alternative solutions at a future meeting.

The solicitor has communicated with DCU and Archbishop's House in relation to the Test Department premises.

6. **Accounting Policies**

The Board was informed that as HSM had been appointed for two years they will draft the Financial Statement for the 2017 accounts. Year-end information is being prepared and will be issued to the accountants week commencing 22/01/17.
Quotes have been requested for a financial audit, once the financial statement has been finalised.

7. **Staffing**

The Board was updated in relation to staffing matters as follows:

- The replacement of an Associate leaving on Maternity leave has been approved. In this case there is scope for a secondment and this has been discussed with Anne Looney
- The EO position in the test department is to be advertised shortly
- No further updates on the other cases with the DES
- Concerns from staff were noted in relation to the immediate resource implications which would arise in the event of the position of CEO being filled by an existing member of staff. It was noted that this eventually, should it be the outcome of the open competitive process, would create immediate work load problems which would have to be addressed with the DES.
- The CEO contract will expire in February and needs to be further extended, pending the appointment of a replacement. The chair will issue relevant correspondence on behalf of the Board.

The Board agreed a request from IFUT to meet the Board. It was agreed that this should be facilitated at the next meeting on the understanding that what was involved was information and listening exercise and not a negotiation which would be a matter for the Executive.

8. Protected Disclosure Policy

The reviewed document was adopted.

9. Board Self-Assessment

It was noted that some assessments are still outstanding. A reminder was issued to the Board that the Assessments needs to be returned and analysed before the next ARC meeting, as the analysis will impact the ARC's work programme for 2018.

10. Strategic Plan

The Board noted that the broad goals of the ERC as defined in the Statutory Instrument should form the basis of the Strategic Plan, at least for the first one. The Board also recognises that the staffing part of the strategic plan is very urgent. However, with the delay in recruiting the CEO and the potential change of reporting authority, it did not consider that it was feasible that the strategic plan will be ready for Q2 2018. Notification of delay is to be made to the DES. An early task for the new CEO will be to lead the drafting of the Strategic Plan, which will now need to be completed for Q3 2018.

11. AOB

There was no other business.

12. CEO Recruitment

PA and JC withdrew from the meeting at this point. It was noted that although this was not recorded in previous board meeting minutes, PA and JC had withdrawn from all discussions on this issue at previous meetings.

An update was provided by the chair. The advertisement has been was issued through various media. It was agreed that Anne Looney will be asked to sit on the panel. Other panel members will be PT and MM, a HR consultant and either H.Hislop or A.Wall. Sigmar will sit on the interview to take notes.

Appendix 1

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE
Board Meeting
17th January 2018
Agenda

1. Minutes of meeting of 29 November 2018 – BMin6-1117
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. Accounts 2017
7. Staffing
8. Protected Disclosure Policy (B1-18-1)
9. Board Self-Assessment
10. Strategic Plan (B1-18-2)
11. AOB
12. CEO Recruitment

Appendix II **Developments since meeting of November 29, 2017**

1. I attended a NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service) conference and met with a group of psychologists to discuss ongoing collaboration.

2. The national report of PIRLS 2016 was launched in the Clock Tower on December 6, 2017.

3. The Working Group set up to propose a model for resourcing schools to provide support for students with additional care needs (i.e., the support currently given by Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) completed its report.

4. Minister Bruton was briefed on the Centre's evaluation of the Digital Learning Framework trial with which Jude is helping.

5. The Teacher Education section of the DES responded to the note prepared, in September, by Susan on evaluating CPD related to well-being. A meeting is scheduled for later in the month to see if a proposal can be agreed.

6. A further report based on data from TIMSS 2015 (*Inside the primary classroom: What happens in Fourth Class?* was published.

7. A paper reviewing strategies to address educational disadvantage by Susan and others is now available on www.erc.ie.

8. I met with Minister Bruton's press officer before Christmas. I gather that she had similar meetings with representatives of other agencies. Her main concern appeared to be ensuring that she had advance notice of publications.

9. I attended a Governance meeting with AC on 17 January.