

Chair's introduction

Hackney Schools Group Board was established a year ago, to bring together all groups involved in the endeavour of learning for all Hackney's children. The aim was to foster a climate of learning where everyone, schools, early years settings, colleges, Hackney Education, elected members and the Council could all bring their strengths to a set of priorities that would generate even better learning for all children. The Board works with and through Hackney Education, the education service for Hackney Council, acting to generate ideas and promote long term excellent practice across the education system in Hackney.

We agreed on *belonging for all, leadership on school curricula and research, and reading for all* as our priorities. Action research about leadership and belonging involving six schools began in January with Professor Kathryn Riley. In February the two Panels leading discussion on curricula and reading for all began their work, and then in March everything changed. We knew we could not continue working as we had planned.

Throughout the lockdown the work on the leadership of *belonging for all* progressed and the result of this first project is now published and comes out with this newsletter. While schools stayed open and focused on how to support their children and families we turned, following the Black Lives Matter issues, highlighted by the killing of George Floyd, to another aspect of *belonging* and issues of race. The Board has worked with parents and carers from six Hackney schools to listen to their thoughts about race and belonging. The comments made by parents form part of the second publication this term entitled "Listening to parents talking about race." This was a powerful experience for the six schools which I hope will lead to positive and thoughtful change.

The Board will be continuing to work with school leaders and with



parents over the coming year, as well as commissioning some work on the curriculum. The Board was able to help schools by working with parents in a new and different way.

The online meetings with parents unexpectedly revealed a more equal atmosphere where everyone felt able to speak in a personal and intimate manner. I wrote up those views as a catalyst for discussion. Other parents and other schools will find views in common and views they disagree with. Please do share it with your staff and governors

This year our task will be to continue action research keeping belonging as an overarching theme for the other two priorities and with the Board taking a leading role in the work so that we add value to schools, helping with thinking at a time when reflection and listening are so very important.

How does Hackney Schools Group Board work?

Hackney Schools Group Board is a place for schools and other leaders in education to shape the culture and learning across the borough. It is there to support schools, and bring rigour to the thinking about change.

We work alongside Hackney Education and the Council to add value to schools' work. We do not want to duplicate but to supplement the work that is going on and influence its direction as well.

So far we have used two methods, facilitating action research with a group of school leaders that also linked them to leaders in other boroughs, and enabling discussions with schools' parents about race.

We hope to broaden schools' involvement so that eventually all schools can take part in one of these pieces of work. We want to make it easy for schools to take part, taking a single idea that can have a significant impact and help schools with their own thinking and action.

It is always important to know what headteachers think about this work and we will set up some virtual opportunities for you to log in and talk to us. You can also email Silvi Shrestha, Silvi.Shrestha@Hackney.gov.uk, Policy and Governance Officer.

Leading in a New Era: Compassionate Leadership for Place and Belonging

In this publication we report on the leadership journey of 16 headteachers during the early part of the Covid-19 pandemic. Six are headteachers from Hackney.

The publication represents only part of an ongoing story of extraordinary leadership challenges and ongoing uncertainties. Findings reinforce what we know about the importance of schools as places of belonging, and the links between a positive sense of school belonging and academic and social outcomes, such as health and well-being.

What has also emerged from this inquiry is a view of leadership as a highly relational and place-based activity, driven by deep wells of compassion. This school year the work will continue and expand to work with other school leaders who may wish to take part.

**Kathryn Riley, Professor of Urban Education,
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Listening to parents talking about race, next steps.

After a very productive pilot of the parental/carers engagement with six schools in the borough we feel the next steps are to expand on this work to:

- Support our schools to have conversations about race with parents.
- Create a space for all parents/carers to have a platform to express their fears, concerns and celebrations of their child's school journey
- Bring everyone together to make lasting and sustainable change in schools.

So next steps will be to:

- Expand the pilot beyond the existing schools
- Use many aspects of the model we have developed to work on other aspects of belonging for all
- Show how active listening to parents can bring about change and improvement, and help schools to see what parents really value and would be sad to lose in these challenging times.

Marisa Childs, Co-Chair, Belonging for All Panel

HSGB FORWARD PLAN FOR 2020-21

This academic year, the HSG Board meetings are scheduled to take place on the following dates;

- 24 September 2020
- 28 January 2021
- 29 April 2021
- 15 July 2021

The three panels will be meeting on the following dates, with plans to arrange further meetings from spring term;

- Reading Panel - 8 October 2020
- Belonging Panel - 5 November 2020
- Curriculum Panel - 26 November 2020

Headteachers, Principals and Heads of settings are welcome to attend the HSG Board meetings.