

GFM Local Advisory Board Meeting Term 1 2024-2025

Meeting Information

- Date & Time: 2024-10-08 12:05:08
- Location: GEMS Founders School Al Mizhar
- Attendees: AT, IS, MI, FA, SA, MC, HB, HG (Apologies: MS, MB, KR, JM)

Meeting Notes

1. School Governance and Improvement

- **Introduction and Student Representation**
The meeting began with an introduction and acknowledgment of student representation for the first time in the history of GFM Local Advising Board. Apologies from members were noted.
- **Principal's Report**
The principal's report was discussed, highlighting student outcomes, recent awards, leadership updates, and future strategic plans. Key areas of focus include differentiation, Arabic and Islamic education, and learning skills.
- **Confidentiality and Distribution of Minutes**
The importance of confidentiality was emphasized. It was agreed that the minutes would be distributed to parents and uploaded to the website.
- **Student Involvement**
The role of student representatives in distributing minutes and actions to students was discussed. The importance of student feedback in governance was emphasized.
- **Arabic and Islamic Education**
Discussion on improving Arabic and Islamic education, including increasing Arabic sessions and making learning fun. A one-to-one meeting between the Arabic Leaders and parent member.
- **Books and Notebooks Pricing**
The issue of book sales and pricing was discussed. A suggestion was made to increase the price of notebooks while keeping textbook prices the same and making textbook purchases optional for parents.

Conclusion

1. Agreed to distribute minutes to parents and upload them to the website.

2. School Development and Governance

- **Textbook Proposed Plan**
Discussion on the proposed plan for providing textbooks to students instead of selling them. Parents can still buy textbooks if they wish, and students will pay for lost textbooks.
- **Bus Service and Pricing**
Discussion on the current usage of the bus service and plans to market it better and reduce prices. Mention of a successful Ramadan offer and the possibility of making it permanent.
- **Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP)**
Inquiry about the opportunity for the lab to review the SIP at the next meeting and the involvement of subcommittees in driving certain areas.
- **Lab Structure and Membership**
Introduction of the new lab structure, including roles and responsibilities. Discussion on the inclusion of support staff in the lab.
- **Subcommittees and School Development Priorities**
Explanation of the three subcommittees aligned with school development priorities: differentiation, Arabic and Islamic education, and learning skills. Members were asked to choose subcommittees.
- **Job Descriptions and KPIs**
Discussion on the importance of job descriptions and KPIs for lab members to formalize their roles and responsibilities.
- **Inspection Roles**
Clarification sought on the roles of lab members during school inspections.

Conclusion

1. The school will provide textbooks, and parents will only pay for notebooks and e-learning resources. *(Proposed)*
2. Negotiations to reduce bus prices are ongoing, and updates will be provided in the next lab meeting. *(TBC)*
3. The SIP is linked to the school development plan and will be reviewed by the lab in the next meeting.
4. A vacancy exists for an education member, and an election will be organized. The inclusion of support staff will be considered.
5. Members chose their subcommittees, and the importance of even distribution was emphasized.
6. Members were asked to review their job descriptions and KPIs and provide feedback within a week.
7. The roles will be detailed in the job descriptions, and further discussion will take place in the next agenda item.

3. Governance and Accountability

- **Operation Orientation Handbook**
Discussion on the LAB Orientation Handbook, which aims to guide governors on their roles and responsibilities. The handbook includes a document called 'The Gift of Good Governance'.
- **Subcommittee Roles**
Clarification on the roles and responsibilities of subcommittee members, particularly the challenge of being both a leader and a critical friend.
- **KHDA and DSIB School Inspection Framework**
Review of the KHDA or DSIB school inspection framework, focusing on the criteria for moving from 'very good' to 'outstanding' in 6.4.
- **BSO Inspection**
Discussion on the upcoming BSO inspection scheduled for April 2024.
- **Effective School Governance Award**
The school is applying for the Effective School Governance Award from Optimus Education.
- **Initiatives for the Year**
Encouragement for lab members to take on initiatives they are passionate about and see them through to fruition.
- **Prayer Time for Students**
Suggestion to allocate time for prayers during the big break for secondary students.
- **Governance Roles and Responsibilities**
Emphasis on the importance of lab members understanding their roles and responsibilities in holding the school leadership accountable.
- **Collating Evidence for Governance**
Suggestion to collate evidence per subcommittee against each element of the governance framework.

Conclusion

1. Ms. Danica will share the handbook with all lab members.
2. Other members of the lab should hold leaders accountable. (*critical friend*)
3. Lab members should read pages 104-106 of the framework to understand the criteria for (VG -> 0).
4. Lab members should prepare solid evidence to support the school's journey to 'outstanding'.
5. Ms. Danica will share the relevant documents with all lab members.
6. Lab members should consider intent, implementation, and impact when planning initiatives.
7. The suggestion will be considered and arrangements will be looked into.
8. Lab members should be clear on their roles and use the provided documentation to challenge and improve the school.
9. A simple structure will be put together and shared for review.

4. School Improvement and Planning

- **KHDA Inspections**
Discussion about KHDA not conducting official inspections this year and instead performing unannounced checks to see if schools are improving on previously noted points.
- **Education 33 Vision**
Introduction of Dubai government's Education 33 Vision, which outlines priorities such as Arabic and Islamic innovation, careers, guidance, and UAE universities.
- **Arabic Language Initiatives**
Discussion about various initiatives to promote Arabic, including decoration around schools, expos for teachers, parents, and students, and free sessions from the Ministry of Education.
- **Pick-up Time Management**
Concerns about the current pick-up time process and suggestions to improve it, such as introducing two types of Pink Passes for different permissions.
- **Reward Trips**
Feedback on the timing and location of reward trips, suggesting educational places like museums.
- **Multiple Teachers for Same Subject**
Concerns about having multiple teachers for the same subject in secondary school and its impact on students.

Conclusion

1. Schools need to be prepared for unannounced checks.
2. Schools should start planning ahead based on these priorities.
3. Sharing these resources will help encourage teachers and students.
4. Suggestions will be considered and discussed further.
5. Feedback noted and will be considered for future planning.
6. This will be reviewed to see if realignment is possible.

Next Arrangements

- [] One-to-one meeting between the Arabic Leaders and parent member.
- [] Distribution of minutes to parents and uploading them to the website.
- [] Negotiations to reduce bus prices will be updated in the next lab meeting.
- [] An election will be organized for the staff education member vacancy.
- [] Members to review job descriptions and KPIs and provide feedback within a week.
- [] Ms. Danica will share the Operation Orientation Handbook and the Effective School Governance Award documents with all lab members.
- [] Lab members should read pages 104-106 of the KHDA or DSIB school inspection framework.

- Preparation for the BSO inspection in April 2024.
- Lab members should consider new initiatives and bring them to the next lab meeting.
- Review and possibly implement the suggestion for prayer time during the big break for secondary students.
- A structure for collating evidence per subcommittee will be created and shared.
- Discussion of Pink Pass suggestions in the Ops agenda for XSLT on Friday.
- Communication about end-of-term reward trips to be sent out soon.