



Heart of Yorkshire Education Group

Minutes of the Group Corporation Board Meeting

Held on 4th October 2022 at 4pm

In the Board Room, Castleford College

Members In Attendance: Ruth Baxter (RB), Nigel Brook (NB), Claire Corneille (CC), Dmitry Fedotov (DF), Andrew McConnell (AM - Chair), Ben Porter (BP), David Powell (DP), Martyn Shaw (MS), Richard Stiff (RSt), Neil Warren (NW), Sam Wright (SW - Principal and CEO).

Apologies received from: Yasmin Ayub (YA), Ruth Sacks (RSa), Vijay Teeluck (VT), Janet Waggott (JW)

In attendance: Lorraine Cross (LC), Lisa Macdonald (LM), Jason Pepper (JP), Antonia Praud (AP - Director of Governance), and Karen Sykes (KS)

Item	Action				
1	<p>Welcome</p> <p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. And a warm welcome was given to Charles Buchanan, the National Leader of Governance, supporting governance merger activities, attending as an observer.</p> <p>Apologies were received from YA, RSa, VT and JW which were accepted with consent. There were no declarations of interest for items on the agenda.</p> <p>There were no additional items of business to add to the agenda and governors noted the rules of confidentiality.</p> <p>The Board noted the staff governor election process for local board positions had been completed, and student governor elections were planned imminently.</p>				
2	<p>Minutes of the board meeting on 5th July 2022</p> <p>The Board resolved to approve the minutes, subject to editing the spelling for DF, in the meeting attendees.</p> <p>Matters Arising from the minutes:</p> <table border="1"><tr><td>1</td><td>Share the Health and Safety Policy soon.</td><td>The new Health and Safety Policy has been produced and will be reviewed by the local college H&S committees and the Group H&S committee for approval</td></tr></table>	1	Share the Health and Safety Policy soon.	The new Health and Safety Policy has been produced and will be reviewed by the local college H&S committees and the Group H&S committee for approval	1 2
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		in November. Governor ratification will then be sought.	
2	Share Plan for student voice activities.	HS and DF are meeting in October and will provide an update to the December meeting.	3
3	Complete the governor appraisal process before the summer.	The last two appraisals were completed before the summer break. It is proposed to complete the exercise again next Spring/Summer, after Governors have been in post for a year.	4
4	Marketing and branding strategy will be presented to the board in the Autumn term.	Included within the growth strategy and on the agenda for the December board.	
5	Governors will have an opportunity for involvement on the values in September.	Met and reviewed on 29 th September.	
6	Consider adding “through our people” to the mission statement.	Amended to begin “Our Staff”	
7	As per point 5	Met and reviewed on 29 th September.	
8	Amend the order on the pictorial diagram of the Strategic Objectives	Completed.	
9	Board review of the KPI and PI at a meeting in September	Met and reviewed on 29 th September.	
10	Presentation of the Group Growth and People Strategy, Curriculum Statement and Intent and the Finance Strategy in the Autumn term	People Strategy reviewed on the 29 th September. Growth Strategy on the agenda for the December board. Finance Strategy on the Agenda for the Spring board.	4
11	Review some of the wording used eg “within the college communities” Using the word “inspire” And “an”, “the” or “Yorkshire”	Proposing “serving all of our communities”	
12	Consider some qualitative measures within the plan	Governors reviewed proposals on 29 th September	
13	As in point 9	Met and reviewed on 29 th September.	

	14	Confirm a plan for learning walks at the next Curriculum and Quality Committee meeting	Governor Observations will have separate names. A Governor Learner Journey Lesson Observations (Local Boards – dates now available for review) B Governor Quality of Education Review Lesson Observations (Curriculum and Quality Committee – will be discussed at the first meeting)	5 6 7 8 9 10
	15	Review the staff survey results at Finance, People and Resources Committee	On the agenda for the first committee meeting this term	
	16	Conduct a review of structures and staffing levels at Finance, People and Resources Committee with update in the Autumn term	On the agenda for the committee meeting in November	
	17	Prepare a contingency plan	Will be presented to the Finance, People and Resources Committee	
	18	Review the Reserves Policy at Finance, People and Resources Committee	Will be reviewed by Finance, People and Resources Committee in the Spring term	
	19	Present a paper on the group risk appetite In the Autumn term	Met and reviewed on 29 th September.	
	20	The Chair to have individual conversations with board members about their terms of office and intention to step down from the board	Completed in the summer term. Proposal was to reset from 1 st March 2022.	
	21	Review the results from the last student survey at the Curriculum and Quality Committee	On the agenda for the first committee meeting this term	
	22	Finance, People and Resources Committee will review and report back for assurance to the board on the staff survey results and action plan	Will be presented to the Finance, People and Resources Committee and reported back at the meeting in December	

	23	Share the details of the new Local College Directors with Governors	Completed in July.	
	24	Provide governors with an update on the new Ofsted EIF	In the Principal's Update today.	
3	<p>Principal's Update</p> <p>Strategic Plan and KPI</p> <p>Governors reflected on the useful session and debate on 29th September. The Executive team confirmed they had made the recommended changes made to the strategic plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making clear the Local College Boards report formally to the Group Board, and informally will provide a report to the Curriculum and Quality Committee. • Strategic Objective three – “high performing culture” replaces “strong” <p>The board approved the strategic plan and associated KPI.</p> <p>Local boards are being asked to review the KPI and PI and feed back via their Chairs.</p> <p>Governors confirmed the need to amend the schedule of business so KPI are reported to the Board and relevant board committees.</p> <p>Group Values</p> <p>Again, there had been a really useful discussion last week. The four values, that are recognised by governors and staff, and which make them feel proud are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Ambition • Inclusion • Collaboration <p>These values are underpinned by short statements, which have 16 of the 17 key words embedded in them, that were identified within the staff focus groups and feedback forms.</p> <p>An infographic was shared, bringing this together, with the “Heart” emblem in the middle.</p> <p>Governors approved the new group values and questioned how they would be shared with staff. This will include induction, staff meetings, award ceremonies and could be included on staff lanyards/identity cards.</p> <p>Annual report</p> <p>Governors were led through the report, which provided information for both colleges, where possible. It was acknowledged that it had been</p>			

another busy and challenging year, and the regular business of the colleges had continued, despite the intensity of the merger project. Governors noted their thanks to all the staff involved, who had done a tremendous job to achieve the success seen in the previous year.

Highlights noted:

- Really strong enrolment numbers.
- Whilst apprenticeship numbers are lower than previous years, they are higher than expected after the challenges of the pandemic.
- To address behavioural challenges, remedial behavioural management was needed, especially at Castleford College. Staffing has been increased to support this and the increasing number of students that need mental health and student support.
- There has been a significant activity to maintain the engagement of learners.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has remained strong. The group are adapting our group quality review processes, and quality review weeks have been reinstated at the end of the year.

One disappointment for the group is the dip in retention last year. This is despite a huge effort from the student support team – and the number of students who withdrew across all three colleges, is being replicated across colleges in the region and nationally too.

Governors asked questions relating to this academic year and retention and the latest behaviour reports. It is too early for the first retention return, and there is still some flexibility for students (both enrolling and changing programmes). Staff are reporting that improvement has been seen in behaviour – and at Castleford particularly there is a positive vibe.

Staff are aware that at all three sites, they are reporting there are high numbers of students identified who have mental health issues or suicidal tendencies.

Governors took assurance from:

- The report identifying an increasing number of young carers. This had seemed low in the past.
- Feedback that neighbouring colleges have all reported they have identified similar trends.

Finance and Estates:

The creation of the Heart of Yorkshire Education Group in March 2022 marked a transformation in the scale of our operation. We expect the ESFA to assess our newly formed Group as having Outstanding Financial Health for the financial year ending 31 July 2022. The group is also unusual in being one of a small select group in the FE sector, with no borrowing.

Some key projects were completed in the last year:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relocation of lower-level provision, to provide space to be able to expand the group offer in the future. • The new coffee shop at Selby College • Improved catering services • The relocation of the Foundation Learning Curriculum at Selby College to a larger and higher quality teaching space. • The expansion of the animal care suite at Wakefield College to accommodate the continued growth of this curriculum area. • Significant investment in the engineering accommodation at Castleford College. This investment was supported in part by HE capital and T-Level capital funding. • Investment in T-Level equipment across a range of curriculum areas including construction, IT, Care & Early years and Engineering. • Access controls at Selby College. <p>The board noted that the bid to the ESFA to expand the workshop accommodation and additional classroom space at Castleford College was unsuccessful and the team are reviewing alternatives as the demand for places and space is significant. This may include re-submitting a bid in the next round of funding.</p> <p>There are also plans to invest significantly in the IT Infrastructure across the group during the current academic year. The systems integration project has been delayed, but much of the challenge was outside of the group's control.</p> <p>The group is well positioned, with robust financial plans and curriculum development continues to be strong.</p> <p>A focus this year is to develop relationships with our external stakeholders, especially in Selby and wider district.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that the year ahead would again be challenging, as staff work to bring systems and processes together, and there is also an expectation of an Ofsted visit.</p> <p>Governors acknowledged the work that went into the annual report, and questioned how the contents could be shared, even on a summary basis (eg staff or external stakeholders). It was confirmed that LC and her team would create a summary report which would be distributed with staff and key stakeholders, as Wakefield College had done in previous years.</p> <p>Governors asked what impact the additional support for learners had had, which the college had invested in. It was agreed that a detailed report would be presented to the Curriculum and Quality Committee in their Spring meeting.</p> <p>Governors asked about the impact on staff recruitment, from both increased turnover generally, and the pressure of having more students retaking their maths exams. Learners were not as advanced on entry as some results suggested, and a clear impact can be seen in the larger group</p>	14
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	<p>sizes, which also puts additional pressure on accommodation. It was also noted that there was a higher number of new staff, as covid had temporarily slowed down the annual turnover of staff looking for opportunities, during the pandemic.</p> <p>Governors asked if there was additional funding or support to help schools and colleges, as high grades in maths nationally had been impacted, and governors were reminded that the college receives lagged funding and so would have to fund the support needed this year. The college is participating in an Integrated Education Partnership across the district, which is hosted by the council and looks at, attendance, funding and issues where patterns have been identified in the region.</p> <p>Governors questioned if the lower levels of staff retention was more than just delayed career and life moves, and asked for a staff wellbeing update. Staff had voiced concerns over student behaviour last year, but it appears to be settling more quickly this term. The Executive team had reviewed staff wellbeing at their meeting that day, and headlines included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff feel supported • Pupil attendance is challenging, as expectations shifted in the pandemic and changing perceptions and hearts and minds is not easy to achieve quickly. <p>Governors asked about comparator information, and the board were informed that Karen Sykes has joined an AoC HR panel. Whilst there is funding available, there is a shortage of key staff (youth workers, engineering staff etc) which adds to the complexity this year.</p>	
4	<p>Strategic Objective 2: Ensure our Curriculum Delivery is high quality, inclusive and ambitious and we provide an outstanding student experience</p> <p>Governors acknowledged that the apprenticeships results at Selby College had been hit by the number of withdrawals, and were below the predicted outcomes shared at the last meeting. Staff are working well against the action plan and the team expect to report a significant improvement this year.</p> <p>The retention rates are disappointing, and Governors were informed that staff really believe they could not have done more to support those learners, having gone above and beyond in many cases.</p>	
5	<p>Strategic Objective 4 – Deliver strong Finances to facilitate investment in our resources and our offer</p> <p>Governors were given a high-level overview of the results of the staff survey, and it was agreed the Finance, People and Resources Committee would drill down into the detailed report.</p> <p>The survey, run by York College, reported results for both Wakefield and Selby Colleges. There were a couple of areas where the results were lower than hoped , and it was noted that Selby College did not have a baseline, having not completed the survey before.</p>	17

	<p>Scores had dropped overall, and it was noted that the merger will have increased staff anxiety, and for many increased workload, in the period.</p> <p>Governors were informed that whilst results were lower than target at Wakefield, many remained above national benchmarks.</p> <p>Governor challenge: Governors questioned the engagement and response rate for the survey? There were 291 responses (44% of staff completed the survey at Wakefield College and 61% at Selby College) Governors confirmed concern that this was low for a survey and asked this to also be considered by the committee.</p> <p>Governors accepted that the timing of the survey was difficult – a couple of months post-merger. However, noted a positive that 95% would recommend the college.</p> <p>Finance report: Initial enrolment data looks strong. The main variance is down to not achieving the Adult Education allocation. Governors were reminded that a decision was made, pre-merger, to pause work on distance learning. Reviewing the drop in income for apprenticeships, governors noted that approx. £200k of funding that was missed last year, will be claimed in the current academic year. Wakefield College did not hit its allocation, but it was the first year of growth in Adult Learning and this was achieved without any subcontracting, that it had relied on in previous years.</p> <p>Start of Year position: Governors noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment figures continue to increase at Selby College. • The targeted support for students in vulnerable categories is increasing. • There is already a waiting list for students requesting counselling. • The group have raised the bursary threshold this year and reduced the distance for the travel bursary (from 2 to 1 mile), to offer support to more students. • The group are looking at running a food bank. • Wakefield College are offering free breakfasts and are extending the time this is available for, to make it as inclusive as possible. It is planned to extend this to Selby College. • There have been significant issues with transport as Arriva buses made the decision to cancel some bus services. This has created a lot of work for the teams at each college, and is particularly challenging at Selby due to the more rural locations and limited or no alternative travel options. The group are working with Arriva, and the local MP, and have made a decision to pay to provide some transport. The 	18
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	<p>group expects to see this issue impact the district further in the coming months. Currently, it is impacting 90 students, and approx. 30-40 had no way to access college. It is impacting staff travel plans too.</p> <p>There is a risk that there may be cuts to subsidies in the future.</p> <p>Governors questioned about the impact of the cost of living, and wellbeing on staff. The group are looking at what support can be offered, and some staff have been in touch with HR. The situation is being monitored closely.</p> <p>Job Evaluation</p> <p>The group are using a consultant and the project will commence on 17th October and run for three weeks. In November, the consultants will lead a process of moderation, appeals and validation of the results. Pay modelling will be completed in December, and the output will inform the pay recommendations in February.</p> <p>Supporting Futures Selby</p> <p>In line with the work on group values, KS has begun a consultation with staff. Ideally this will be completed this side of Christmas as staff will then be included in the job evaluation project.</p> <p>Ofsted</p> <p>The Executive team have looked at the changes for the new enhanced inspections. There is a new sub judgement, that is not grade limiting, but will be considered within the Quality of Education and Leadership and Management key judgements. There can be an additional inspection nominee – with a focus on skills.</p> <p>Governors questioned reporting lines and how the group are holding the senior staff to account for its “readiness” and it was agreed this will be via the Curriculum and Quality Committee.</p> <p>Headlines:</p> <p>16 – 18 enrolment is off to a good start. Numbers continue to be fluid. Adult enrolment looks positive at this stage in the year.</p> <p>Apprenticeships have faced a number of challenges but the year has begun well. The picture is variable by curriculum area and is being monitored closely.</p> <p>HE is an area for concern as it is a very competitive market place.</p> <p>Governors asked for an update at a later meeting or committee on priority skills areas, and whether the enrolments are in the right areas. It was noted that there has been significant demand for early years, IT and construction which are key industries in the district. Further updates will be provided.</p>	
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	<p>Governors asked if the recruitment in HE (approx. 21 students below target) was spread across all subjects or had hit one or two subjects in particular. They noted it was spread across all disciplines but would be reviewed at local board meetings.</p> <p>Overall results</p> <p>The pass rates are high. Wakefield College results are on par with results from before the pandemic. Selby College results are close to previous years and there are 93 results outstanding and so the results may improve. There is one department in particular that has underperformed and support is being provided from the group.</p> <p>Adult Education – they have not been impacted by the pandemic legacy in the same way. 162 awards are outstanding at Selby College but they should all come in and be positive.</p> <p>Withdrawals - At Wakefield College, 25% went for employment, 41% for health/ mental health or disengagement and 9% moved to an apprenticeship.</p> <p>Wakefield and Castleford Colleges review their AVAR scores 5 times a year and were predicting an 8% fail rate. This actual result was 7% which is positive. The process is being rolled out now at Selby College and staff had training in the summer.</p> <p>English and Maths results: Governors noted this was a mixed picture. The English pass rate was 99% at Wakefield College and 97% at Selby College. Maths was lower but remained strong at 90% at Wakefield College and 91% at Selby College. However, the percentage of high grades has dropped significantly (6% at Wakefield College and 5% at Selby College) and this will follow through into the improvement plan. This appears to be a national issue, with an 18% drop nationally in the number of 16-18 year olds achieving a level 4 or above for GCSE.</p> <p>A Level results were strong.</p> <p>HE pass rates performed on par with 18/19.</p> <p>Higher nationals – there was an increased number of pass, merit and distinction grades, however although the number of passes increased, they were generally lower grades. The curriculum team have reviewed the detail and it is because the foundation (pre requisite knowledge) in year one, was lower.</p> <p>At Selby College there were very high pass rates and the in-year retention was good.</p> <p>Higher nationals – 79% achieved a 1st, 2 (i) or distinction.</p>	
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	<p>Quality Improvement Plans: A number of action points have been closed off and were RAG rated Green. A couple of items will carry forward to next year (attendance and employer engagement, and apprenticeships)</p> <p>Apprenticeship Achievement rates – the group overall achieved 56.4% (Wakefield was 65.6%, just below the prediction and Selby was 37.8%). The Wakefield tracking and monitoring process has now been introduced at Selby College. This would see the group track as “Amber” – and anecdotally the national average is c. 59% so the group is just below, even with the inclusion of the merged results in the figures.</p> <p>Governors challenged what the group would do differently this year to support students with English and Maths, particularly those needing to re-sit. The department is working with an outstanding maths hub in Doncaster to improve practice.</p> <p>Finance Update The out turn should be significantly better than the last update the board received. The group will exceed its target for EBITDA and for cash.</p> <p>Governors thanked the team, especially noting this had been achieved with staff away.</p> <p>The roll out of the new finance system is largely complete.</p> <p>Governors asked if the improved outlook might impact on the projected financial health score. It would be challenging, even with the contingencies built into the budget. Good would continue to be a positive result.</p>	
6	<p>Chair's Update Governors noted one chair's action would be noted within the confidential section at the end of the meeting.</p> <p>The seal had been used on one occasion on a deed as part of the funding requirement from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.</p> <p>One written resolution was also noted, changing the seal to a new group seal for the Heart of Yorkshire Education Group.</p> <p>The Chair invited board members to the official opening of Castleford College on 18th November and to the two graduation ceremonies on 2nd and 4th November.</p>	
7	Governance Updates	

	<p>Governors noted the update to terms of office for all board members (beginning new terms from 1st March 2022) and received the updated register of members for the board.</p> <p>Most governors have read and confirmed they had read and understood Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), but a final reminder was given to members to complete this activity at their earliest convenience.</p> <p>Governors were also reminded how to access the training log on Virtual College.</p> <p>Governors were all invited to a training session with Vicky Maybin from the West Yorkshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership and the date was confirmed as 7th November 2022.</p> <p>Governors completed their forms of Gifts and Hospitality for the 2021 – 22 year.</p>	20 21
8	<p>Risk Register, Risk Briefing and Emerging Risks</p> <p>Governors noted that in several instances, the assessed residual risk score for an entry on the draft register exceeded the stated risk appetite for the Group and brief position statement for each of these risks. It was noted that the risks were generally linked to external factors (cost of living, budget) pressures and difficulties nationally to recruit staff.</p> <p>Emerging risks:</p> <p>See confidential minutes.</p> <p>IT Infrastructure – the group have recruited two new staff and have attracted one member of staff back. This means the project for network migration next July is back on track.</p> <p>Governors questioned if the group should qualify for some support on rates or utility costs and noted that all educational colleges should not be left to grapple with increased costs when other educational settings are benefitting.</p> <p>Governors also questioned if there are any messages about social behaviour/ responsibility for staff and students eg not having heating on and windows open? It was noted that there are already plans to close down buildings during the holidays, and reduce opening hours, to limit heating costs.</p>	
9	<p>Briefing Papers</p> <p>Corporate Dashboard Wakefield College</p> <p>The college secured SDF2 funding through a partnership with West Yorkshire Colleges Consortium and are in the process of planning our delivery of the project.</p> <p>Schools' liaison activity has begun, with 24 school presentations booked with schools in Wakefield and Castleford.</p>	

	<p>Selby College The college also secured SDF2 funding through a partnership with Y&NY Colleges, and are in the process of planning the delivery of the project. Schools' liaison activity has begun with 9 school presentations booked for Selby Schools.</p> <p>Our People</p> <p>Selby College The FE year end survey indicates that engagement levels and staff morale is a cause for concern, with 89% reporting they are proud to work at the College. The timing of the survey, a few months after merger, may have played its part. Further work will be done to identify the priority actions and the full survey responses will be reviewed by the Finance, People and Resources Committee.</p> <p>Wakefield and Castleford Colleges Two responses failed to meet the KPI target set, and responses have dropped overall. Again, staff will have been impacted by the merger and rising costs of living. Governors noted the low response rates and took some assurance that there are plans in place for governor review, and regular pulse surveys planned with staff across the year. Staff wellbeing is taken seriously by the board, and further updates were requested.</p> <p>Progress against the Quality Improvement Plans Governors were informed that the team were pleased with the progress achieved last year, with a number of the targets achieved during the year. Raising attendance in English and Maths is carried forward at each site, and more work is needed on the tutorial programme.</p> <p>Safeguarding Report, Policy and Procedures Governors received the annual report for the 2021/22 year. Training and compliance remains high. Governors approved the updated safeguarding policy, having confirmed it met the latest requirements of KCSIE 2022. One amendment was agreed, to change the contact details of the Lead Governor, Safeguarding, to DF's work email address.</p> <p>Use of confidential minutes Governors confirmed that the use of confidential items had been appropriate and can remain as confidential items, without the need to be shared in the public domain.</p> <p>Schedule of meeting dates</p>	22
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	Governors confirmed receipt of the schedule of meetings.	
10	<p>One confidential Item</p> <p>Staff members were thanked for their support and left the meeting.</p> <p>See confidential minutes.</p>	

Action Log

1	Amend the spelling “Fedotov” in the attendees of the July minutes	AP
2	Present the Health and Safety Policy to the Board	JP
3	Share Plan for student voice activities.	HS & DF
4	Present the Growth Strategy to the board	LC & SW
5	Review the staff survey results at Finance, People and Resources Committee	KS & Committee
6	Provide an update in the Autumn term on job evaluation, staffing structures and plans	KS
7	Prepare a contingency plan for rising staffing and other costs	JP
8	Review the Reserves Policy at Finance, People and Resources Committee in the Spring term	JP & Committee
9	Review the results from the last student survey at the Curriculum and Quality Committee	Curriculum and Quality Committee
10	Finance, People and Resources Committee will review and report back for assurance to the board on the staff survey results and action plan	KS & Finance, People and Resources Committee
11	Local boards to review the KPI and PI and feed back via their Chairs.	Local Board Chairs
12	Amend the schedule of business so KPI are reported to the Board and relevant board committees	AP & executive Team
13	Update on the roll out of the new values to Finance, People and Resources Committee	KS
14	Update on plans to expand the workshop accommodation and additional classroom space at Castleford College, including consideration of resubmission of a bid.	JP & LM
15	Update on summary report for staff and key stakeholders	LC
16	Impact report for additional support for learners	LM & CA
17	Staff survey – see item 10	

18	Committee to consider response rates to staff survey	KS & Finance, People and Resources Committee
19	Governors asked for an update at a later meeting or committee on priority skills areas, and whether the enrolments are in the right area	Curriculum and Quality Committee
20	Remaining governors to confirm they have read KCSIE	
21	Attend Safeguarding training on 7 th November	All available
22	Provide regular updates on staff wellbeing	KS
23	Make one amendment to the Safeguarding Policy	KS & CA