

17 November 2011

Dear Parents / Carers

Decision In Principle Regarding Academy Status for Beaumont School

This letter provides an update to all parents, carers and families with students at Beaumont School about recent discussions and decisions regarding any future conversion of the School to Academy status.

Since September 2010, the Governing Body of Beaumont School has been considering the possibility of conversion to Academy status. Our deliberations have been reported in a number of editions of Beaumont Life.

During the course of these deliberations, the School has been successful in its planning appeal in relation to its development project for new Fields, Access and Buildings (the FAB project). Given the value of this project to the School (both financially and educationally) it was agreed that it was important that the Governing Body should focus on achieving a successful outcome here, before turning to the question of whether Beaumont School should apply to become an Academy.

We have deliberately not rushed into a decision regarding Academy status. Indeed, we have been intentionally cautious and careful in our discussions, believing it to be important to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of conversion very carefully. Nonetheless, we have recently come to the conclusion that now is the right time for Beaumont School to begin the process which (following consultation with all relevant parties) may in future lead to a conversion to Academy status.

Over the course of the past year, increasing numbers of schools have converted to become Academies, both in Hertfordshire and across the country. It is anticipated that, before long, the majority of secondary schools will be Academies. We have been carrying out a detailed examination of all of the factors relevant to conversion, in order to make quite sure that this is the route that Beaumont School should follow and to ensure that conversion would pose no major or insuperable problems for the School.

In brief, the Governing Body has concluded that:

1. We regard it as essential that there should be no change to the ethos and values of Beaumont School.
2. We believe that conversion will not result in such a change to the School's ethos and values.
3. We believe that a conversion will have no impact on teaching and learning in the classroom. There will only be a change to the framework within which this takes place. However, we will have the freedom to match our curriculum, teaching, learning and organisation to our school's needs.
4. As a result of conversion, whilst remaining a publicly financed school receiving money from the Government, it is anticipated that Beaumont will receive significant additional direct funding.

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5. The School can and will continue its close collaboration with other partner schools in the BeauSandVer Consortium, as well as other schools across St Albans and Harpenden.

In light of these conclusions, the Governing Body resolved as follows at its meeting on 3 November 2011:

“The Beaumont Governing Body at its meeting on 3 November 2011 agreed unanimously that, subject to confirmation from the Department for Education that there will be no adverse impact on the school in respect of its important 'Field, Access & Buildings Project', the school will register its interest as soon as possible with the Department for Education in becoming an Academy.

This will begin a process during which the Governing Body, building on significant work already done, will assess fully how Academy status might benefit the school and its pupils.

That process will be transparent and will involve extensive consultation with key stakeholders such as teachers, other staff, parents, carers and the school's pupils. Only at the end of that process will the Governing Body take a final decision on whether or not to apply for Academy status.”

In summary, the Governing Body has resolved that the School should proceed to register its interest in becoming an Academy with the Department for Education, provided that all relevant legal and site-related issues arising from conversion can be resolved with Hertfordshire County Council and the Department for Education in order to enable the FAB project to proceed, in parallel, to a satisfactory conclusion.

The registration of the School's interest with the Department for Education triggers the formal start of the conversion process. However, any final conversion does not occur until all of the relevant legal procedures have been followed. Following registration, we will undertake a further detailed examination of all aspects of Academy status.

There will then be a formal process of consultation with all interested parties – including parents, carers, students, staff and partner organisations – so that we can hear and discuss any queries and concerns. Following this, the Governing Body will decide whether or not Beaumont School should apply to become an Academy.

We wish to make it clear that no decision has been made at this stage to convert to Academy status. This decision cannot be made until there is full consultation and further detailed examination of the impact of any conversion.

We will write to you again as soon as we are able to provide you with a further update.

Yours sincerely



Mike Tidball
Chair of Governors



Elizabeth Hitch (Mrs)
Headteacher