

Questions from Parental Consultation 11/11/15

There were two parents that attended, four Governors, one member of staff and Head Teacher. Victoria Hatton from Brownejacobson (VP) and Jackie Parker from The Roseland Community College (JP)

1. Is Gerrans School committed or consulting?

The Academies Act 2010 requires governing bodies of schools considering academy status to consult with such persons as they think appropriate on the question of whether the school should become an academy. The school was undertaking this consultation now at an early stage. Technically, consultation did not need to take place until much closer to the proposed conversion date (i.e. before the funding agreement is entered into).

VH explained the process of conversion and made the analogy to buying a house. The application to convert was like an 'offer' and the acceptance was the granting of an 'Academy Order'. There would then be a process of due diligence and searches. The equivalent of 'exchange of contracts' was the signing of the funding agreement and returning this to the DfE. 'Completion' was the date of conversion to an academy.

The school is currently at the 'offer' stage. It has submitted an application to convert to academy status. However, this has yet to be accepted by the DfE (by the issuing of an Academy Order) and there is a lot of work to do before the governing body has all the information it needs to decide whether or not to go ahead with conversion. Consultation is an important part of that process.

2. Who chooses the Trust Board Members?

This would be determined by the working group, which is made up of Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of each of the schools. The working group had put together an application form for existing governors of the school to complete to indicate whether they would like to be considered for the posts of Member, Trustee and/or Local Governor. The working group would look at these applications and undertake a skills audit to ascertain who would be best suited to fill the roles.

3. Who checked to see if the Members are behaving?

Academies are overseen by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and the Regional Schools Commissioner on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education.

4. SLA - would we still be able to buy in from County?

We would have the choice just as we have it now.

5. Where do the savings that we will be making go?

They will go into teaching and learning.

6. Will the MAT stay at National Pay Scales?

Existing staff will transfer under TUPE, which effectively ring fences staff existing terms and conditions. New staff may be put on different contracts. JP stating that, at Roseland, the academy has stayed with NPS but did not introduce the Living Wage. It will be for the MAT Board to decide whether or not they stayed with NPS.

7. Will the fair funding formula still apply?

The school will continue to be funded in the same way as it is as a LA maintained school.

8. How in depth is the 'due diligence'?

JP explained what information was required from each school and once formulated this will be shared by the schools. It should be done by the end of November. The working group are due to meet in early December to disseminate the due diligence.

VH explaining that legal due diligence would also be undertaken, particularly on the land.

9. How many schools can you have in a MAT?

There is no limit. The Plymouth Catholic and Anglican Schools Trust (Catholic schools) have over 30.

10. Would we take on unqualified teachers?

We would generally take the best person for the job - as is done at present.

11. Is there training for the Board of Trustees?

Yes, training will be available.

12. Can there only be governors on the Board of Trustees?

The working group has made the decision to look at existing school governors first. Current Governors know the schools and education systems which is an advantage. There is about to be a skills audit for Governors in respect of the Trust Board. If this indicates gaps then the working party may decide to look outside the schools for others. They will not fill the spaces for the sake of it.

13. Questions were asked about Veryan school and their reduction of teachers - could this happen us?

At present our staffing level will stay the same. It will be for the MAT Board to decide in the future.

14. Do the benefits off set the down sides?

Governors will need to look at all the potential advantages and set these against the potential disadvantages when making their final decision, using the outcomes of consultation, working group meetings and due diligence to inform their decision. They will only decide to proceed if they think that it is in the best interests of the pupils and the school to do so.