



BEST Public Consultation

A summary of the question and answer sessions at the Southill, Shefford and Shillington public consultations.

1 Can you explain more about the connection between the Lower and Upper Schools

Perhaps part of the reason there is a question about the 2 or 3 tier systems is the potential for there to be very little connection between the upper and the lower schools. **BEST** would seek to redress this by having all Heads and Chairs of Governors as Directors and including upper school representation on the existing middle school/lower schools cluster meetings.

2 How will any new posts be financed – will it come from schools existing budgets?

New posts for staff working in the schools would come from existing schools' budgets and also new money from successful bids to deliver educational services such as a **BEST** Special School bid or – as is in place now the provision of Extended School Services. The move to 'commissioning' from local and national government would also provide monies for new posts. Many of these 'new' posts will replace the old as the strategies for raising pupil achievement and pyramid improvement embed. **BEST** will also be a charity and will attract donations and sponsorship as well as generating economies of scale.

3 Once the new LA is in place (i.e. Central Beds) can the LA decide to build a new Secondary/Upper School that might not be part of **BEST**?

Yes it could but this would not be undertaken without consultation with the schools in the pyramid. **BEST** would provide a meeting place for these discussions to take place. It would make much more sense to open a dialogue with all of the schools and local stakeholders together rather than individually. This would also make the schools' position in this process much stronger.

4 Is the real issue the transition of students from the Middle to Upper School?

The real issue is student performance at key stage 4 and then 5. This is the responsibility of all the schools in the pyramid. There may be key issues – the transition from year 8 to 9 may be one of them and teaching and learning another but without taking collective responsibility it is difficult to see how this problem can be successfully addressed. With a target of 80% of pupils to achieve 5 A*-C at GCSE we believe that only by collaborating from 2+ to 19 can the strategies required for this level of sustainable success be put in place.

5 Will OSTED inspect individual schools or **BEST** as a whole?

In the short term Ofsted will continue to inspect schools individually but it seems logical that in time trusts will also be inspected.

6 What is benefit would commercial partners gain from being partners with **BEST**?

Commercial partners will bring expertise and experience in the provision of educational resources. This may have pecuniary advantages but the main reason for the trust making such partnerships is the development of educational facilities and resources for the benefit of pupils. Working in partnership will enable the trust and the commercial partner to take a much longer term view.

7 How will the work of **BEST** be funded?

Please see the answer to question 2.

8 Won't the board of **BEST** be so big that decision making will be impossible?

The board will be large – possibly 60 people but these directors will delegate responsibility to a representative executive, the members of which will lead key strategy strands by working with members of the board. The day to day leadership and management of schools will remain with the Headteacher, the Senior Team and the School Board of Governors. BEST will seek to develop pyramid wide strategies such as, raising pupil achievement, children and family services, a single infrastructure and the development of facilities under the banner of developing an all through school.

9 Who will the Directors of Learning be? Will they be

The concept of directors of learning has significantly changed over time – a change of name 'Curriculum Leaders' and a change of emphasis. New posts would be created and these posts may be filled by existing staff – or by candidates from outside the pyramid. The posts however, could only be created by consent and within budgetary capacity. A group of schools, for example may decide that a Curriculum Leader may form a significant part of a strategy to raise pupil achievement. The schools would decide the job description/person specification and pay and conditions in detail. The successful applicant would then work for each of the schools involved in this collaboration. All existing staff would have the opportunity to apply. The resourcing of such posts may come from a variety of sources, re-allocation of existing monies, as part of a strategic bid for new money (special status), schools expansion or part of a successful bid for commissions from local or national government to provide educational services.

The difference is that schools would be working in collaboration and taking a wider view of the strategies and resources required to raise all pupils' achievement.



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