

Community through Diversity

Dear learners, parents and staff,

It is time for another summary of the progress Bedfordshire East Schools Trust Ltd has made over the past two months. More detail can be found at www.best-schools.org.uk.

BEST Headteachers and deputies with time-tablers met on the 10th of December and agreed a number of key principles. We were joined by Rosie Rattigan from the **Paul Hamlyn Foundation** and discussions centred on the **Learning Futures and Learning Away** projects undertaken by BEST. It was agreed that the projects in Spanish where year 9 and year 12 students learn together and the English project where year 11 and year 6 children learn together have been great motivators and all the children are making better progress than in traditional horizontal year group settings. It is very early days but there is enough evidence to move the initiative on. Next term BEST Headteachers will be looking at ways to further integrate learning. They will be seeking ways to integrate timetables for one week each term, two afternoons each week and on specified days to enable children and young people to learn together. These projects are an integral part of the development of three of our key strands; **raising achievement for all, seamless learning and community cohesion** as well as our principles of **collaboration, co-operation and all through learning**. In addition the Heads fully endorsed the **Academies** project where groups of CYP and sometimes their families will learn together and co-design a residential learning experience. The 'residential' will be the culmination of a 20 to 40 hour co-signed learning programme, the academies are being supported by **CBLA's Extended Schools** and will run from next term for subjects including, Family Spanish, Family Cooking, Sports Therapy, Production (arts), Mathematics, Cricket, Archaeology, Family History, Cheerleading, Media, and Community Gardening.

BEST is setting up a number of **community gardening allotments**; they already exist at Samuel Whitbread College, Langford Lower and Derwent Lower. We are talking with Robert Bloomfield Middle School, Raynsford Lower and Henlow Middle as well as Clifton Parish Council and Shefford Town Council. We aim to provide allotments for the community and children and young people on BEST land. If you are interested in working alongside CYP please contact best@swcc.beds.sch.co.uk

We are supporting these academies with a mixture of direct grant funding and competitions. Three competitions and a project have been launched this month. **Best Film, Best Photography, Best Poetry and Best Sustainable Energy and Transport Project**. Encourage your children and young people to enter these competitions and they can win themselves £50 in tokens and £450 for their school to start an **Academy**.

Our vision for an integrated **All Though ICT Infrastructure** continues to make progress. Detailed discussions with a number of possible partners have and are taking place. We are looking to partner with **Extra Step and Total Promotions**, who are catalogue and web-based promotional merchandising companies and **Viglen Ltd** who provide ICT services, infrastructure and learning devices to education. We are seeking to create a **BESTWebshop** so that our parents, learners, staff and community can purchase everything they need for effective learning, ranging from uniform and PE kit to high performance laptops and notebooks.

BEST is working alongside LowC Consultants, LowC Construction and CBLA to reduce the carbon footprint of schools, public buildings and to design and construct zero carbon buildings in Central Bedfordshire. We now have the partnership framework in place to take BEST schools into the 21st Century.

The **BEST Co-location Project** is fully underway. Planning permission is being sought to construct a purpose built nursery and suite of offices to deliver integrated children and family services in partnership with NHS Bedfordshire, Bedfordshire PCT, SCITT, Extended Schools and the Community Police. Demolition and construction are due to start in March 2010. The building will be an exemplar of low carbon construction and with its combined heat and energy pump will even be able to provide power to the national grid. We are working with our partners at LowC to develop and promote the **BEST Sustainable Energy and LowC Strategy** which promises not only to minimise carbon emissions (schools in CBLA contribute over 50% of the CBLA carbon footprint) but will reduce or eliminate any 'carbon tax' and significantly reduce energy costs. We have two other co-location projects in the pipeline and we are talking with two local children's nurseries to see how by working collaboratively and cooperatively we can improve children and family services and make a significant contribution to the delivery of the CBLA Children's and Young Peoples' Plan.

To this end BEST has joined with the CBLA 'Learning Transformation Team' and delivered a series of road-shows – the results of this consultation will be published in the New Year. The CEO of BEST has joined the other members of the Central Bedfordshire children's workforce organisations on the **CBLA Children's Trust Board**. BEST is now in an excellent position to help deliver the 18 CBLA priorities within the framework of Every Child Matters.

The BEST Festival at SWCC is really starting to take shape, so please preserve all the children and young peoples' work, performances and displays and have them ready for the week of 12th to 16th July 2010. Rehearsals will take place during the week of 5th to 9th July at SWCC – we will be providing transport to get work, performers and displays there. If you wish to be involved in the festival contact best@swcc.beds.sch.uk

If you would like any further details or you have any questions about BEST Ltd or the contents of this news update which are not answered at our website www.best-schools.org.uk then please do contact us at best@swcc.beds.sch.uk

Kind regards,

Ian F Kite

CEO BEST Ltd.