

Children's and Families Services

A meeting has just taken place between the Steering Group for Children's and Families Services to plan their way forward in this area. It is an exciting opportunity for schools to work collaboratively across the pyramid providing pastoral care, SEN support, vocational and extended services for all of our children – 6237 approximately at last count!! This group are working hard to come up with a 'one stop shop' for social services and once their plan is complete and endorsed by the Founding Trustees this can then be taken to various sources of funding in the form of a bid. Who knows maybe this model for Children's and Families Services could then be rolled out countrywide!

Best Structure – Co-operative Model

The steering group have recommended the trust adopt the co-operative model for the structure of **BEST**. Full details can be found on the **BESTWeb** – www.best-schools.org.uk. Individuals as well as organisations will be able to join **BEST**, become councillors and be elected onto the **BEST** board of trustees. Initially, the board will comprise the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors of the founding schools and as membership grows, the regional councils will be formed and councillors will choose representatives to sit on the board. Membership will have five categories, schools, learners, staff, parents, community residents and organisations. Organisations and foundation schools will be able to become associate members and those individuals associated with the organisation/school will be eligible to become individual members. The representatives of the schools who implement the trust will have their first board meeting on 24th April 2009.

BESTaquisition

Six schools have now got as far as producing Statutory Proposals and Public Notices have been displayed in our local newspapers and schools to advise the public what they are proposing. At the end of this month these schools, being **Samuel Whitbread, Robert Bloomfield, Hitchmead, Langford Lower, Derwent Lower** and **Southill Lower** will meet with their Governing Bodies to make their decision. **Raynsford School** are able to avoid most of the legalities as being a VC school their status would not change. They have therefore already taken their vote to become an associate member as soon as **BEST** is up and running. The period of representation ends on 23rd March 2009 so Ian Kite is busy meeting with these teachers and governors to answer and discuss any questions they may have before this date. All being well and everyone happy our Trust, the **Bedfordshire East Schools Trust**, will be acquired on 1st April paving the way for some exciting projects within our founding schools and any others who would like to be involved.

Earth from the Air Another exciting project! We are currently looking at this exhibition and the educational value it would bring to all schools if we could have this locally. It is a collection of large photographs of the Earth from the Air along with captions and information relating to the picture, suitable for outdoor display, recently displayed at Oxford Castle. A small team of teachers at Samuel Whitbread are currently looking at writing some educational material to tie this exhibition in with the curriculum which would be fantastic for our schools! Take a look at www.wecomunic8.com

BEST Gardening and Catering Services

Following on from our discussions with the **Jean Christophe Novelli Academy**, we are due to meet once again with **Steven Kitchen**, their Executive Chef, to further plans to develop catering services and kitchenware at **Langford Lower School**. This will be our first catering project and we are all very excited about improving the educational experience of our children around growing harvesting and preparing food. It is the intention that **Langford Lower** will have a herb and vegetable garden which will partially supply the school's kitchen with seasonal healthy foods that the children will have grown themselves. We are also talking with **Gallifordtry Plc – Jon Chown, John Manno**x and **Karen Mann** about the possibility of rolling this scheme out at **SWCC**. **BEST** is also in discussions with **LandshareC4** to promote community involvement in this scheme. Incidentally, we are seeking the assistance of a keen gardener who might like to help with this project on a voluntary basis, perhaps for the odd school dinner at the end of a hard mornings work and a share of the produce! If you are interested please contact **Cathy Bailey** at CBailey@swcc.beds.sch.uk or telephone the office of **BEST** on **01462 701941**.

Whitbread Champions

We currently have four year 12 students from SWCC who are out there supporting our Lower Schools, working in their local community. They are doing a fantastic job and their work is very much appreciated. This initiative is all set to expand in the near future so that students at SWCC are getting back in touch with their own local community, to integrate with perhaps their own Lower School, whether it be through IT or Football training! Maybe as a base to work from in the snow or to provide help with establishing better communications, their commitment to this project so far is commendable.

SWCC Nursery and Co-location of Services

Further to our application for funding to redevelop the SWCC Nursery on a new site, this has now been provisionally approved by Beds CC to the tune of £225000, so as soon as we know what site we can use hopefully these plans can go ahead. Sites currently being looked at are the old caretaker's property at SWCC and the old Shefford Lower school building. Watch this space... Meetings are taking place this month to develop a co-location bid to the DCSF.