



Introductory meeting between parents and NET Academies Trust (NETAT)

Monday 15th September 2014, Longwood Primary School

Present: 25 parents, Maxine Evans (Chief Executive, NETAT), Takako Yeung (Director of Operations and Development, NETAT), Ruth Bird (Chair, Interim Executive Board), Jan Tringham (Interim Executive Head), Stephen Rodwell (Academies Officer, NETAT), Tula Smith (Senior HR Consultant, Essex County Council), Fran Johnson (IEB), Tosca Boothman (IEB)

What follows is a summary of points raised during the initial meeting between parents of children at Longwood Primary School and the academy sponsor for the school, NET Academies Trust. It was agreed that a follow up meeting with parents would be arranged for later on in the term.

- Introductions by NETAT representatives included an outline of the purposes of the meeting.
- Concerns were raised about the high turnover of staff at Longwood. Parents sought reassurance that this would not continue.
 - On the conversion date (1st January 2015), all current staff contracts and terms and conditions will be transferred over to the new employer, NET Academies Trust, via the TUPE process.
 - After this date, NETAT will work closely with the school, the governing body and new Executive Headteacher to ensure continuity in teaching, recognising that a high turnover of staff can be disruptive to pupils' learning. Investing in the professional development of teachers and support staff at Longwood is one way to promote continuity, and will form an essential part of the school's improvement plan.
- Clarification was sought regarding the appointment of the new Executive Headteacher and the likely changes in senior leadership at Longwood.
 - Typically, when an Executive Head is in place, one senior staff member, often called a "Head of Learning", will be responsible for the day to day running of his or her school and will be the 'face in the playground' for parents. The Executive Headteacher (to be formally appointed on 1st January 2015, and introduced before then) will be responsible for the outcomes of pupils across all three schools. He or she will also be responsible for strategic thinking across the three schools.

- Parents asked how the Executive Headteacher would spend his or her time in relation to the three Harlow schools. Would they spend more time in some than others for instance?
 - The new Executive Head will spend significant amounts of time in all three schools with the precise timings to be delineated over time once he or she has better acquainted themselves with the desires and needs of each school. This sharing of time across the schools will undoubtedly change in some weeks if unforeseen events occur.
 - Once appointed, the Executive Head will be accountable for the performance of all pupils across the three Harlow schools.

- Questions were raised regarding the current Year 6 pupils and whether plans for their successful transition to secondary school would be compromised or altered in any way, during or after the conversion.
 - Continuity for all pupils is of vital importance during the conversion process. Avoiding disruption to teaching and learning is therefore a major priority for NETAT in the months before and after January. A smooth conversion process will ensure that the progress and outcomes of each child are never compromised.
 - Jan Tringham confirmed that she has received the transition dates for this year from Stewards Academy, and would let parents know in due course.

- Parents asked for information regarding any planned changes to the "branding" of Longwood (e.g. school uniform, school name).
 - Improving teaching and learning at Longwood is the chief priority of NETAT and its partners going forward. What is most important is that the best possible outcomes are gained for every child in the school. Any subsequent decisions on school uniform or other "branding" changes will be made in consultation with the governing body, parents and staff. There are no changes of this nature currently planned.

- NETAT were asked whether there would be any interaction between the three Harlow schools.
 - NETAT envisages that staff at the three schools will interact throughout the school year, particularly through staff training days. Collaboration and partnership between the schools will be part of the Executive Head's agenda when he or she is appointed.

- After the conversion in January 2015, parents asked how long it would take for Longwood to move out of the "Special Measures" category.
 - NETAT expects Longwood to be making reasonable progress in the year after conversion. It will not seek quick fixes nor expect rapid transformation. Steady improvements are vital if progress is to be sustainable.

- Concerns were raised as to the lack of communication regarding the changes taking place and due to take place at Longwood.
 - NETAT aims to be a transparent academy sponsor. Additional changes or important information will be communicated to parents as soon as it becomes available, via letters, emails and further meetings.
- Parents were thanked for their attendance and contributions and invited to send any further comments or questions to Takako Yeung:
takako@nationaleducationtrust.net

Our websites:

National Education Trust (NET) - www.nationaleducationtrust.net

NET Academies Trust (NETAT) - www.netacademies.net