



4th March 2021

Dear Parent / Carer,

I hope you are well and that you and your child are looking forward to the full reopening of schools next week. Thank you for all you continue to do to support your child's education through this period.

We wanted to write to you today to update you on the collaborative discussions we are having regarding the possibility of an exciting partnership between Brook Learning Trust (BLT) and Leigh Academies Trust (LAT). Under the proposals, BLT's three academies (The Ebbsfleet Academy, The Hayesbrook School and The High Weald Academy) would join with LAT from 1st September this year. No decisions have been taken but we wanted you to be fully aware of the discussions and the process, and to give you the opportunity to comment. At the moment, we are working together, and with the Department for Education (DfE) and Kent County Council (KCC), to discuss the merger and examine how increased size and scale, and the sharing of expertise and opportunities, will benefit our students and staff.

As you know, BLT enjoys a proud history and strives to provide the best possible opportunities for all students and staff at the three academies, and that is the overriding objective being sought through any partnership with LAT. LAT has a similar outlook, which has helped it develop into a strong Trust, respected at county and national level for the opportunities it creates for the students within its care, as well as for its staff. LAT was one of England's first multi-academy trusts and is responsible for 29 academies across Kent, Medway, Bexley and Greenwich. Serving 18,000 pupils and their families, it has an annual budget of £120m and employs around 2,500 highly talented staff.

Should agreement be reached, the merger will create an even stronger group of 32 LAT academies serving communities in the South East and helping to shape children's futures for the better, for pupils and staff at both LAT's existing schools and BLT's three schools. The pandemic has demonstrated the benefits of partnership and teamwork more profoundly than ever. Through collaboration, both trusts are determined to consider all possibilities in finding the best possible future for staff and students at Ebbsfleet, Hayesbrook and High Weald.

The Head Teacher Board (HTB) of the Regional Schools Commissioner for the South East and South London, part of the DfE, is due to decide whether to permit the LAT and BLT merger discussions to continue when it meets on 25th March. If you would like to make a representation regarding this, you can email RSC.SESL@education.gov.uk from Thursday 11th March until five working days before that meeting. Emails will not be responded to but we are assured that all will be considered. We will be sure to update you following the meeting on 25th March.

We would like again to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support of your child's school, and of Brook Learning Trust more widely. Please of course do let either of us know if you would like to discuss this matter and we would be more than happy to do so.

Yours sincerely,

Jeanette Batten
Chair, Brook Learning Trust

Simon Beamish
Chief Executive, Leigh Academies Trust

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