

A Mathematics and Language School, Barking Road, London E16 4DD **Headteacher:** Charlotte Robinson

Telephone: 020 7540 5620 **Email:** info@rokeby.newham.sch.uk

20 April 2021

Dear Colleagues

We hope everyone has had a good holiday. As we welcome our students back to school, we want to share with you a document setting out the proposal for Lister and Rokeby to complete the process of becoming academies.

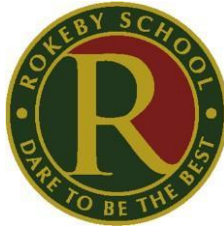
Consultation process

The Governors of both schools and the Federated Governing Board want to run a transparent and thorough consultation process. We will be holding staff meetings this week to talk through the document, and then will be scheduling another staff meeting in the week beginning Monday 3 May, which will give you a further chance to ask questions when you have had time to examine the proposals. We will also invite Union representatives to those meetings so that you have the chance to hear their views. Information about the proposal is also being shared with parents, and with the local community, and parents and staff will be asked to complete a survey so that Governors can take their views into account. The consultation will close on Monday 17 May so that Governors can consider responses before half-term.

The decision to complete academy conversion

This is an unusual consultation: most academy conversions involve either setting up a new Trust, or a school joining an organisation which it has not previously been part of. This conversion is instead the completion of a process which our schools have been involved in for more than seven years. The original reason for founding the NCST was to establish a strong local school partnership so that our schools could continue to improve, recognising that government policy meant that the Local Authority was no longer in a position to support schools in the way it used to. We are proud of the way that, despite the problems caused by the PFI issue, our school and Sarah Bonnell have been able to develop a genuinely collaborative model, and also to provide vital support for Eastlea School, which has now of course joined the Trust. Importantly, there has been no change to conditions for staff as a result of any school joining NCST as an academy. On the other hand we are already seeing benefits through increased opportunities for staff professional development, either through sharing training, working to support other Trust schools, or having opportunities for promotion within the Trust.

Following our consultation in 2018, we federated and became Foundation schools, in order to cement our partnership with Sarah Bonnell. This means that the Federated Governing Board is already the employer of staff, rather than the Local Authority, and the Federation already owns the land and is its own admissions authority. The choice for us at this point is therefore whether to academise,



A Mathematics and Language School, Barking Road, London E16 4DD **Headteacher:** Charlotte Robinson

Telephone: 020 7540 5620 **Email:** info@rokeby.newham.sch.uk

which will make it much easier for us to work as a Trust in the long term, or whether to stay as Foundation schools, which would mean us continuing with a split model of governance in NCST.

We recognise that in some quarters there is strong opposition to Academies, and it is important that everyone has the opportunity to consider the proposal. We hope that when you review the proposal, you will see that our academy conversion is the logical conclusion of our commitment to working in partnership as a group of strong, community-focused local schools. This commitment will not change, as it is written into our Governance Principles (attached to the FAQs). We also hope you will see that the NCST's record to date, and our clear commitments to transparency, protection for staff pay and conditions, sound financial management, and maintaining the distinctive identity of each of our schools mean that this is by far the most positive scenario for our schools, in a context in which the overwhelming majority of Newham secondary schools are already academies.

We look forward to speaking to you during this process, and please feel free to contact us directly if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Charlotte Robinson
Executive Headteacher

Anthony Wilson
Headteacher of Lister Community School and NCST CEO