

TO: All Staff

FROM: Zac Arif, Chair of Governors  
Terry Molloy, Headteacher

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> January 2011

### **CONVERTER ACADEMY UPDATE**

We hope that you have been able to access the information on Converter Academy Status on the school's website.

This note is to give you all some feedback on the meeting that we have had with Hank Roberts and Shane Johnschwager who represent the joint teaching unions in Brent (ATL, NASUWT and the NUT). Suzette Quinn and Suki Mundra were also present: The meeting was held as an integral element of the school's ongoing consultation process on Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> January at Claremont.

This is not by any means a detailed account of the discussions that took place in a meeting that lasted nearly three hours and we fully expect that the outcome of the meeting will be conveyed to union members by Mr. Roberts and Mr. Johnschwager. However, from the school's perspective our very full and frank discussion proved to be very useful. We now feel that we have a clearer understanding of some of the key issues regarding Converter Academies and how they are viewed by the unions; we also feel that we have a better understanding of what the local collective teachers' union position is and their commitment to representing their members and representing their views. We are also in no doubt about their willingness and intention to contribute to the consultation processes that any Brent school sets in motion regarding Converter Academy Status.

We also believe that we have been provided with a valuable opportunity to put our current thinking about the possibility of conversion in this local and national context.

We believe that this shared understanding of each other's positions was a valuable outcome of this consultation meeting.

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We are pleased to be able to report to all staff that by the end of the meeting we were able to reach an agreement over a key aspect of the whole consultation process. In short, we have agreed the following:

“We agree to gather the views of all of our staff on the issue of conversion to Academy Status in a secret, independently overseen, transparent ballot on the question of support or opposition to the proposal to convert to an academy.

We also agree that we will work closely with the major professional associations/trade unions to ensure full agreement over the form of that process.

We agree that the ballot will be differentiated between teaching and non-teaching staff and will be held at a reasonable time before any final decision was made”.

As a note of clarification it was ‘acknowledged’ by all present that such a ballot would need to be more encompassing than a simple yes or no response. We also acknowledged that this was not the only means by which we would gather staff views and recognise the value of making it possible for Governors to meet directly with the union representatives as part of the process.

What this means now is that the Governors will further develop their outline communication /consultation strategy and steps will be taken by the Governors to commission a ballot of all staff to ascertain their views. We have acknowledged the need to do this in a timely manner. Details of where the ballot will fit into the consultation process will be discussed at the Governors’ meeting planned for January in the time-line that was posted on the school’s website in December.

Finally, it was acknowledged by all present at the meeting that this is not a ‘vote’ on whether Claremont High School should or should not become a Converter Academy. The final decision rests, as it always has, with the Governing Body.

We will continue to post relevant information on the school’s website and remain open to any comments or views that you may have that you wish to share with us.

Yours sincerely,



Z. Arif  
Chair of Governors



F. T. Molloy  
Headteacher

cc: All attendees