



Department  
for Education

Regional Schools Commissioner's Office  
South East and South London

Trafalgar House  
1 Bedford Park, Croydon  
CR0 2AQ

20 December 2018

Dear Parent/Carer,

### **Academy sponsorship of The John Roan School, Greenwich**

I wanted to update you on progress with the conversion of The John Roan School, and some important developments in relation to arrangements for the school's sponsor.

Since Ofsted published their report last June, my team has been working closely with leaders and governors at the school, the local authority, the John Roan Foundation and local politicians to prepare for and facilitate the school's conversion to academy status. The proposed sponsor, the University Schools Trust, East London (UST) has been conducting thorough due diligence over the Autumn Term.

Having completed their due diligence, and after in-depth consideration of what is best for pupils, the trustees of UST have informed me that the trust is not in a position to sponsor The John Roan School. While I know this will come as disappointing news to many of you, I will now quickly consider a number of other suitable sponsors, taking into account representations from the local authority and John Roan Foundation. The UST has agreed to share all due diligence findings so far.

I hope to announce a new sponsor before the February half-term, along with the new proposed date of conversion to academy status.

### **Leadership and Governance**

I would like to thank Cath Smith for her hard work and determination over the last two terms. It is clear, however, that further improvement is still required, both educationally and financially, to ensure that children get the education they deserve. The level of industrial action has not only caused disruption to your child's education, it has also impacted on the capacity to deliver these improvements.

I have, therefore, sought approval from the Secretary of State to reconstitute the governing body as an Interim Executive Board (IEB) to lead The John Roan School until the point of conversion. This means that the current governors will step down and be replaced by a small group of experienced people, with the necessary experience and capacity to lead the school through this period. They will be tasked with stabilising the school, supporting the headteacher with improvements, whilst also leading on facilitating the transfer to a new academy sponsor. I have considered the membership of the Board carefully. The IEB will include a representative from the current governing body, and from the local authority.

The individuals who will form this board are:

- Steve Belk (Chair of the IEB) – Former headteacher and CEO of The Hackney Learning Trust
- Dr Anne Hudson – Former secondary headteacher in SE London
- Jackie Valin – Currently leading a Multi-Academy Trust in Wandsworth
- Florence Kroll – Director of Children’s Services, Royal Borough of Greenwich
- David Skinner – John Roan parent, outgoing interim Chair of Governors

You will hear more from Steve and the IEB in the new year, I’m grateful for the time they have volunteered, and for their wealth of expertise they bring to the school. Further information about IEBs can be found at Annex A.

I’d like to thank the outgoing governing body members, many of whom have served the school and community for a number of years, for their support and service to the school. The IEB will continue to work closely with the Foundation, and a new local governing body will be appointed once the school becomes an academy.

The past year has seen instability and upheaval for the school. My team and I are committed to support the school on its improvement journey. Securing the stability of an experienced sponsor, within a Multi-Academy Trust will bring the fresh start that is desperately needed for the school, whilst also retaining the important and historic ethos, and place within the Greenwich family of schools.

If you have any questions or comments you can contact my team at [RSC.SESL@education.gov.uk](mailto:RSC.SESL@education.gov.uk) .

Finally, may I thank you for your ongoing support and wish you a Merry Christmas.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. H.', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

**Dominic Herrington**  
**Regional Schools Commissioner for South East and South London**

## **Annex A: Interim Executive Boards (IEB) - Frequently asked questions**

### **What is an IEB?**

An Interim Executive Board (IEB) consists of a small group of experienced people who are appointed to replace the existing governors of a school for a short time, in order to secure a sound basis for future improvement in the school and promote high standards of educational achievement.

### **What does an IEB do?**

When in office, IEBs are the governing body of the school, taking on the responsibility for the budget, curriculum, staffing, pay and performance management.

### **Who appoints an IEB?**

Local Authorities (LAs) can apply to the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) on behalf of the Secretary of State (SoS) for consent to appoint an IEB in a school that is underperforming. The LA is then responsible for appointing appropriate IEB members and monitoring its performance. Alternatively, RSCs, on behalf of the SoS, also has powers to appoint an IEB reporting to him/her in a school. The IEB at The John Roan School has been appointed by the Minister on behalf of the SoS.

### **Why have we appointed an IEB?**

IEBs have proven to be an effective solution in schools where a step change in the leadership and management is required for a temporary period. We have chosen to appoint an IEB to The John Roan School in order to provide support to the headteacher to deal with the difficult circumstances facing the school.

### **Can Foundation governors be on an IEB?**

No. Regulations on certain matters including appointments of foundation governors do not apply in the context of IEBs (Education and Inspections Act 2006). So, such foundation governors may not exist in an IEB

### **Who is the IEB accountable to?**

The IEB is accountable to the RSC, on behalf of the Secretary of State. However, as the school is still operating in the maintained sector until academy conversion, it is important to ensure the Local Authority are informed about decisions that they have an interest in. The IEB at the John Roan School has a Local Authority representative to ensure that they are informed about the decisions taken by the IEB.

### **Why have I not been consulted on this IEB?**

As a maintained school which has been judged to have 'serious weaknesses' and overall effectiveness is deemed to be inadequate, the Schools Causing Concern Guidance makes it clear that, as the school has an Academy Order, a consultation [on constituting an IEB] is not needed.

### **Is an IEB just a vehicle for academisation?**

No. Whilst the IEB will be supporting the school and incoming sponsor working towards the conversion process the main responsibility of this IEB is to bring capacity to the leadership of the school and support the headteacher. The constitution of an IEB does not impact on the academy order, and the school will still become a sponsored academy.

### **What are the key duties of an IEB?**

The duties of an IEB can be summarised under three key roles:

- Being strategic leaders of the school
- Acting as a critical friend to the school's senior leadership team (SLT)
- Hold the headteacher and SLT to account and be accountable to any interested party for the school's performance.