

Riverside

Business and Enterprise College

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 11 NOV 2009

Our Ref: GO/TG

10 November 2009

Dr T Pringle
 Director of Planning and Commissioning
 Leicester City Council
 Children and Young People's Services
 Marlborough House
 38 Welford Road
 Leicester LE2 7AA

Dear Dr Pringle

The Governing Body wishes to make clear its position with respect to the publication by the LA of the notice to discontinue Riverside Business & Enterprise College.

The LA has for some years been aware of falling rolls and the difficulties in raising standards at Riverside since the last reorganisation of secondary education in the city ten years ago which resulted in the closure of Mary Linwood. It has previously failed to address the issue strategically and in partnership with the community and Governing Body. The earlier academy proposal was therefore seen as a positive response and a possible way forwards, which if the LA had chosen to support and back, could have contributed to the revitalisation of secondary education in the local area.

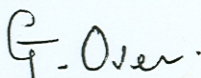
The Governing Body therefore reiterates its concerns and objections previously expressed and conveyed to the LA against the proposal for closure. We were assured by the former Director of Education, now Chief Executive, only three years ago that "closure was not an option". However, in the short space of two years we have progressed from the prospect of a new school that would be "a focus for the regeneration of the community" to closure, which the LA now states will contribute to "greater social mobility, inclusion and ultimately therefore improve community cohesion itself". The Governors consider that there is no sound evidence to support this hypothesis which they therefore refute.

This year's excellent GCSE results achieved by our students have only been begrudgingly acknowledged by the LA and attributed to "small class sizes" and with doubts about future sustainability. Praise indeed for the staff and pupils who have achieved wonders in circumstances not of their own making, and for the only school of four labelled National Challenge schools in the city to have achieved the national targets for GCSE results. We believe that good senior leadership, a clear strategic vision and targeted resources have led to this improvement, which we believe is also sustainable, and could, along with a new build for the school, have led to a turn around in pupil numbers.

It would appear that the Council is reacting to pressures from National Government to reduce surplus places with a distinct lack of vision and regardless of local needs. The closure of Riverside further reduces the choices for secondary education in the immediate neighbourhood and removes the potential for developing the earlier vision of education 3 to 16 years proposed by the Chief Executive.

The Governing Body further reiterates all its objections and concerns about the closure as previously expressed during the course of the consultations. It is the firm conviction of the Governing Body that the decision of the LA to pursue the closure of Riverside Business & Enterprise College is entirely misjudged.

Yours sincerely



Mr G Over
 CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

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 SYSTEM

Acting Vice Principal: Mr. G. Williams

Assistant Principals: Mrs. M. Champion, Mr. B. Kumar, Mr. L. Fairclough & Ms. J. Cooper