

Ernest Bevin College and Sixth Form Centre



A Specialist Sports, Mathematics & Computing College

Beechcroft Road, Tooting, London, SW17 7DF

Tel: 020 8672 8582 Fax: 020 8767 5502

e-mail: mail@ernestbevin.london web: ernestbevin.london

Principal: Tracy Dohel

25th May 2022

Dear parents/carers,

Ernest Bevin College – Joining United Learning Multi Academy Trust (MAT)

Since 2018 when we received a Requires Improvement grading from Ofsted, the Government's schools regulator, the governing board of Ernest Bevin College, has been carefully considering how best to secure a positive future for the college. We know how much students, parents, staff and the wider college community appreciate the college's historic strengths and its importance as a strong local school. The past few years have seen us address a number of issues which have begun this road back to success and we are very grateful for the support that we have received from across the college in doing so.

Building on what we have already achieved, the board has decided that the best future for the college is through academisation and by joining a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) with the experience and expertise to support us going forward and accelerate the progress that is underway. As such, we are now beginning an engagement exercise with key stakeholders and beginning our due diligence with our preferred MAT. I am now delighted to let you know that last week we agreed to start the process to join United Learning.

This is a very important decision and it is being made because we believe, through joining a MAT, the students and the college community will benefit from all the knowledge and resources a MAT has to offer. The governing body is certain that for the college to continue it needs a level of support that we can only access by joining an established MAT to provide the help and challenge we need.

This is an exciting opportunity and positive step for the college and has particular benefits for staff and we look forward to them being a key part of the next phase in the schools journey. We are a relatively small school and this has a direct impact on our ability to recruit, retain and offer high quality development opportunities to our staff, which has an impact on the teaching and education we can provide for our students. We expect that, as part of an academy trust, staff will have access to a greater level of support – for example, access to a dedicated team of subject and leadership specialists who can support the curriculum and drive up the teaching and learning standards in our college – as well as access to a far wider range of professional development opportunities. We strongly believe this will directly benefit your child.

In reaching our decision we have spoken with the Local Authority, regulators and a range of MATs. We shared the outcomes of these discussions at the full governing board meeting on Thursday, 19th May and we were unanimous that our preferred MAT was United Learning who run ten successful London secondary schools, including Lambeth Academy, The Hurlingham Academy and Paddington Academy, and a number of primary academies.

Over the next half term, we will be engaging with stakeholders to finalise our decision to become an academy and to join United Learning. At the same time, United Learning will be undertaking its due diligence to ensure that we both agree that we are a good fit for each

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other. Our hope is that this part of the process can be completed by the summer holidays leading to a transition into United Learning during the next academic year.

To support this, we will be holding meetings with key stakeholders, including parents and staff, to seek views on our move to become an academy. At these meetings, we will be very happy to take questions, explain our thinking and hear from colleagues at United Learning.

The meeting will be held as follows:

9th June – 6pm in the main College hall.

On Monday 6th June a Forms link will be sent for you to confirm your attendance at this meeting.

If you are unable to attend the meeting but have any questions or points you would like to make to us, please send these to mail@ernestbevin.london.

The governing board will carefully consider the outcome of this exercise and a full report will be published setting out our response to any points of significance made to us.

Thank you for your continued support of the college. As a governing board we are unanimous in our view that this is the right future for the college and we look forward to working with everyone across the college community in bringing it to fruition.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Langan
Chair of Governors

25th May 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Introduction to United Learning

We are very pleased to have been chosen by the governing board of Ernest Bevin College as the preferred future home for your school. As a Group of schools with a strong presence in London we are excited about the potential support that we can bring to the staff and students at the College in assisting them to continue to improve after what has been a challenging few years for every school.

Our initial discussions with the governing board and with Tracy Dohel have been extremely informative and we look forward to continuing these with parents and staff as we conduct our due diligence.

There are over 80 schools in United Learning; each with its own identity and ethos that chime with the community it serves – context matters, and one size does not fit all. Our Group includes co-educational and single sex schools (including for boys) as well as all-through and primaries. Many of our schools have existed for decades and have a strong legacy, others are entirely new and have developed their own character and identity. In London, our schools include Lambeth Academy, The Hurlingham Academy, Paddington Academy and Newstead Wood School. Each of these, for example, is excellent in its own right and has its own very specific identity and ethos but is strengthened by the support and collaboration it receives as part of our Group. We provide our schools with central resource and support – both educationally and in wider functions – where they need it. But we are equally clear that, in areas where a school is already strong, our role is to encourage and facilitate it to continue to thrive.

Our school improvement approach offers a range of models for collaboration bringing benefits to staff and students: opportunities for professional development and progression for staff through strong local and national networks at all levels; opportunities for students that go beyond what any single school could offer – for example, programmes bringing students from different schools together to challenge themselves in new ways; and Group-wide musical performances in major venues like the Lyceum Theatre, Southwark Cathedral and Copper Box Arena.

Our Heads run our schools and make decisions in the interests of what is right for children and young people. We are united in putting children first; but our scale gives us significant capacity to get behind schools and support them to succeed.

As a group, we have four strategic aims:

- **Great places to learn** – because of the educational quality of our schools, their development of the whole person and the preparation they offer for life, the pastoral care they offer and the quality of the environment and relationships.
- **Great places to work** – because our schools offer an excellent professional experience, high quality relationships with students and other colleagues, excellent professional growth and opportunities and a high-quality working environment and resources.
- **A great Group to join** – because of the quality of support we offer schools with compliance, the ‘back office’, education and school improvement and the high-quality collaboration between schools.
- **A great contribution beyond the Group** – because United Learning has a commitment to local communities, the national education system, and the wider world.

Over the next few months, we will be completing our due diligence of the school so that it can join us during the next academic year. We look forward to our colleagues spending more time in the school during this process.

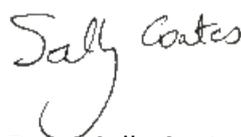
We appreciate that parents may have questions they wish to ask us about United Learning and what it means to be part of our Group. We are therefore looking forward to meeting with parents at 6pm on Thursday 9th June at Ernest Bevin College to tell you more about us and our approach to running our schools.

As you will understand, it is still relatively early days in our understanding of your school so we may not be able to give you full answers to some of the very specific questions you may have. But we hope that, in meeting you, we will be able to assure you of our commitment to Ernest Bevin College and its future.

Yours sincerely



Sir Jon Coles
Chief Executive



Dame Sally Coates
Director of Secondary Education