

Mr Derek Walpole
By email

Stuart Carlton
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Dear Derek

Reconsideration of the de-federation request

I write to set out my views on the continuing request for de-federation by the West Burton representatives. Before doing so may I first of all congratulate you and your fellow governors for the excellent work you do in overseeing such well-regarded schools delivering quality education. Equally I know you have approached every aspect of this de-federation issue with admirable care and diligence.

I have followed the development of this matter closely and feel that the situation has changed somewhat since the Board's original determination in July. It is clear to me from discussions I have had with the West Burton representatives that their resolve to achieve de-federation has been maintained, if not strengthened, over this term while the new transporting arrangements have been in place. I know that the Board were hoping that the successful implementation of this would remove people's objections but this has not been the case.

Their resolve is demonstrated by their financial proposal involving the patron arrangement that we have previously notified you of. The proposal by the West Burton group would deliver a balanced budget for the first 3 years given assumptions on pupil numbers. This is clearly a different position from our report to you in July. However the arrangement cannot be formalised so is high risk financially. I have explained this, and the other inherent educational risks of de-federation, to the group in some detail. I set out the clear expectations we would have of a new stand-alone West Burton Governing Board. In response I have received their formal confirmation that they still wish to ask that the BAWB board re-consider and reverse the original decision. Ultimately the risk of a deficit budget is one that rests with NYCC. Having carefully considered the position I can confirm that the LA would be prepared to accept the financial proposal as set-out by the West Burton representatives.

Despite the financial and educational risks the recommendation of the LA is to allow de-federation at this time. In making this recommendation we are taking the view that:

- 1) The transportation of pupils away from West Burton will never be accepted by the West Burton parents and community.

- 2) There is obvious parental and community discord which means the 3 school BAWB federation would lose West Burton support and this has negative implications for the education of all children.
- 3) I believe based on what I have seen and heard that the relationship between the parties is broken beyond repair as the West Burton parents and community have (despite your best efforts and unfairly in my view) lost confidence in the BAWB governance as evidenced by the formal complaint.
- 4) There is increased evidence of likely pupil removals (further submissions since July) through continued transportation away from West Burton.
- 5) Significant pupil withdrawals will bring increased budgetary pressure on a 3 school BAWB federation.
- 6) A significantly reduced pupil roll at West Burton would ultimately lead to the closure of the School. In this scenario the BAWB Board would be required to work with the LA to oversee the closure process.
- 7) I fear the BAWB GB could in future be deflected from normal governance responsibilities by virtue of ongoing community / parental complaint.

In conclusion therefore I am of the opinion that to allow de-federation of West Burton School would be the best course of action available to the BAWB Governing Board at this time. If you are minded to reverse the decision I consider that 1st April 2019 would be a suitable implementation date. Please give careful consideration to this letter at your Board meeting on 26 November.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized 'D' or similar character, followed by a horizontal line.

Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service