

AYLESTONE BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE COLLEGE (ABEC) PROPOSAL REGARDING REVISION TO THE SCHOOL PLANNED ADMISSION NUMBER, FOR THE SCRUTINY OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY ADMISSIONS PANEL IN NOVEMBER 2009.

PROPOSAL –

That with effect from the decision of the panel, ABEC reduces its' Planned Admission Number for each incoming year 7 cohort to 150 students. In addition to this it is proposed that there will be a ceiling of 150 places for each ABEC school year group not currently at or above this figure.

The Governing Body of ABEC wishes the Local Authority Admission Panel to favourably consider the above proposal. In support of this request the reasons for the proposal are outlined below. Representatives of the Governing Body would be pleased to be available to answer any questions that arise from the documentation should the panel deem this to be necessary.

Reasons for the request –

- **Numbers of school age children in Herefordshire have fallen** and will continue to fall, the impact of this will continue to be felt until 2019 (Financial Paper at Forum October 2009).
- **The number of students in years R - 6 from ABEC recognised catchment schools does not rise above 150 for six years.** Customarily ABEC have recruited between 50 – 75% of these students as they leave primary school, in addition to students who wish to travel from outside catchment, and whilst it is recognised that new-builds are likely within the catchment, this may not increase student numbers for the foreseeable future.
- **ABEC has suffered mixed popularity over the last three years**, but following a positive Ofsted inspection in July 09, it is anticipated that popularity of the school will rise. Nevertheless there are insufficient students coming through the system to support a school of 900 students (as suggested by the current PAN of 180). The figure of 900 for the school size was suggested as suitable by the initial school review of 2006
- **In recent years the school roll has fallen in an unplanned way, subjecting the budget to intolerable strain**, as the staffing levels were not modified accordingly. Staffing costs rose to a significantly unsustainable proportion of the annual income. Accumulated surplus monies will be exhausted by the end of the calendar year 2009, bringing a deficit position by the end of the financial year 09-10.
- **In order to bring the school back to financial order, and secure excellent educational opportunities for the students on roll and those to come, compulsory staffing redundancies have been instigated during 08-09**, and will also be implemented during school years 09-10, and 2010-11. This measure will enable the school to meet the requirements of a licensed deficit agreement with the LA within a three year time-frame.
- **In order for the Governing Body to provide an excellent curriculum for students at ABEC, a new curriculum policy has been agreed and implemented, a new staffing structure to support the curriculum agreed, and a pay policy to meet the requirements of the**

aforementioned policies drafted. The redundancies as stated above, bring staffing in line with new agreed policies.

- **The above three policy documents have been constructed to accommodate falling rolls. Each policy meets the requirements of a school for 750 students aged 11-16.** This strategic forward planning will enable ABEC to develop into a mid-size high school well placed to meet the needs of the largely urban population within which it sits, whilst allowing a small margin for growth or accommodation of students from outside catchment.
- **In addition to the above strategies, the Governing Body has embarked on a three year plan for the refurbishment of the current school buildings so that temporary accommodation will be gradually phased out and more permanent accommodation will be refurbished to provide 'fit-for-purpose' teaching space.** This three year plan assuming a school roll of 750, will reduce fixed costs for rates, heating, lighting and repairs/maintenance, thus maximising the amount of income available to spend on intrinsically educational outcomes for students.
- **Creation of a school for 750 students will allow for a school that may be subscribed up to its' PAN, stabilises income and outgoings, and more importantly stabilises and maximises educational outcomes for all students.**

In the face of the local demographic indicators the above request would seem logical. The Governing Body of ABEC also strongly urge the panel to consider the importance of addressing the 'bulge' in numbers on roll (year 11 for Sept. 09 has 198 students, year 10 Sept. 09 has 191. Year 7, 8 and 9 for Sept. 09 each has 150 students or less). In order to stabilise staff levels and cost a sustainable curriculum, **it is vital that a sensible ceiling is placed on numbers in each current year group.** In this way numbers of teachers in each subject area and numbers of classrooms needed for the foreseeable future, will be able to be planned for and managed. In the light of this urgent necessity this second part of the admissions proposal is integral to the educational future of all students, and also imperative in reducing the need for constant changes to the school staffing levels.

The Governing Body awaits a decision at the earliest convenience of the Admissions Panel.

Sue Woodrow

Headteacher (on behalf of the Governing Body of Aylestone Business and Enterprise College)