

NO TRUST

Campaign
Bulletin
November '09

in the Goldsmiths Trust

Lewisham Council is encouraging three schools - Addey & Stanhope, Deptford Green and Crossways - to form a 'Trust Federation' together with Goldsmiths and a "partner from the public or private sector".

The 'No Trust in the Goldsmiths Trust' campaign, supported by staff, parents and trade unions, opposes the Trust. We believe the proposal would damage comprehensive education in Lewisham.

89% NO to the Trust

The response to the first public consultation overwhelmingly rejected the Trust proposal.

89% of responses opposed the Trust and only 4% gave clear support. The consultants concluded that there was a clear "lack of enthusiasm for the proposal"!

Goldsmiths Council, the top decision making body for the University, also noted that the Trust was opposed by its own staff in the Department of Educational Studies.

For now, the governing bodies of the three schools have not pushed ahead with the next round of formal consultation needed to set up the Trust. We are urging governors to throw out the Trust plan completely.

A packed public meeting

Parents, staff and students came to a packed public meeting at the Goldsmiths Students Union on 6th October to discuss the Trust.

Former Children's Laureate Michael Rosen gave his support to the "No Trust" campaign. Writer Francis Beckett, author of "The Great Academy Fraud" explained why we had to oppose government policy encouraging the privatisation of education. We now plan to launch a parents' group for the campaign.

NO TRUST: Don't lose control of our schools

The Goldsmiths Trust would mean that parents, staff and the local community would have less say in the running of our schools.

Under the plan, a small number of Trustees would be given control of the three schools. A majority of the Trustees would be appointed by Goldsmiths and the 'additional partner' (who is still to be revealed).

The schools would no longer be accountable to an elected Council or individual governing body. Instead, control is handed over to the Trust.

NO TRUST: Don't break up Lewisham's schools

The Goldsmiths Trust is only one part of a plan to break-up Local Authority services and hand them over to unelected organisations.

We think that schools are run best by an elected Local Authority that is accountable to local voters. Instead, some in the Council want to give away services to be run by others - whether it be housing or education.

Already, Haberdashers' Aske's have been given control of more schools. Leathersellers may also move to set up a Trust of Prendergast schools. Schools should be working together, not competing with each other.

NO TRUST: This plan won't help education

It's not only our campaign that is saying that there is no evidence that Trusts help to improve education. Even the minutes from June's meeting of the Goldsmiths Council also accept that the case for the Trust has NOT been "fully made on the basis of present evidence".

We want local children to get the best education - but Trusts are not the answer. We want to work with governors in developing plans that will really help improve education.

NO TRUST: Keep control of admissions

There is one quick-fix to improving your position in exam league tables - selecting pupils. Trusts control their own admissions procedures. They could decide to select or exclude at the expense of other schools.

NO TRUST: A threat to jobs and conditions

Trusts also become the employer of staff and can also set their own local conditions of service. With school budgets facing cuts, staff in separate Trusts will be more vulnerable. Government ministers have also said that federations should be used to make savings by cutting jobs. But fewer staff means worse education.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Get in touch with the campaign: secretary@lewisham.nut.org.uk * 020 8314 7487
Spread the word: Tell local parents, colleagues, neighbours & friends why they should oppose the Trust
Make your views known: Write to school governors, write to local papers and say NO to the Trust!