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Independent Schools and State Schools – an opportunity for collective solutions

Exploring alternative solutions for Independent Schools facing sustainability pressures and risk of closure

Good to see the press picking up on this very important issue - [that the closure of independent schools will have an impact on the state sector schools](#). And whilst this Schools Week article is driven from the covid-19 perspective, we should not lose sight of the pre-existing significant cost pressures that independent schools were and are facing, such as rising costs for teachers pay and teachers pension contributions, that will be contributing to the financial instability of some independent schools.

The scale of the impact on the state sector however – increasing pupil numbers needing places, may be further compounded, as it is happening at not only a time of challenging operating models due to social distancing etc, but also when many of the pending new free schools due to open in the next few years, that will deliver much needed places in some areas, are likely to have their opening dates delayed due to the building sector delays from the covid-19 pandemic.

I agree with the comments from Victoria FitzGerald (Briarsmead) of: ‘the whole sector – independent and state, working together to devise solutions that provide the best outcome for all pupils.’ Well considered school to school formalised partnerships and mergers should be looked upon as opportunities to enhance provision, enable continuity for pupils, protect places and strengthen each school within the partnership group; and not as something to be feared. The pupils’ requirements must be central and foremost in the search for the right solutions, and where closure becomes the ‘right solution’ all efforts must be taken to ensure education provision is available to all.

We cannot allow an increasing demand for places to have a detrimental effect on children’s education as it will be the most disadvantaged that bear the greatest burden.

As Victoria rightly suggests – finding creative collective solutions between independent schools and collective solutions between state and independent schools should be an option to be explored by any independent school facing a sustainability crisis.

Lock House Consulting Ltd, works with all types of schools to help evaluate and broker education partnership solutions that put children at the heart of the outcomes. If you or your school would like more information please do not hesitate to contact us at [Lock House Consulting](#) ‘opening possibilities in education’

