

19. June 2026

School

Politicians and administrators reach a consensus on grammar schools

Expert committees vote to retain Office 365 // Secondary schools are to be allowed to continue using Microsoft environments subject to amended conditions

The School Committee, at a special meeting, and the Committee for Digitalisation, IT and Innovation, at its regular meeting, approved an amendment on the use of centralised cloud services, which had been jointly initiated and supported by the CDU, Alliance 90/The Greens and the SPD.

Draft Resolution 113/2026, with an amendment to point 2, provides for grammar schools to continue operating their Office 365 environments under the supervision of the Digital and IT Department, with the backup and data protection licences being discontinued. Staffing requirements are to be met through internal administrative restructuring.

This decision will place the digital infrastructure at the three grammar schools in Bocholt on a new technical footing. Following an IT security incident in April 2026, triggered by a phishing email, a reorganisation of responsibilities had become necessary. Sustainable and data protection-compliant operations could no longer be guaranteed through the schools' existing administrative structures.

The resolution now adopted stipulates that the City of Bocholt, as the school authority, will assume binding responsibility for administrative management and the definition of IT security settings. To raise the level of security at the grammar schools, there will be a switch to paid Microsoft cloud licences, which include advanced functions for the automatic detection and reporting of system anomalies. According to the proposal, the initial annual costs for this amount to 1,200 euros for Microsoft licensing and 12,700 euros for anomaly detection.

""With this decision, we are laying a solid foundation in the grammar schools that meets the educational requirements of the schools whilst also guaranteeing the necessary IT security standards across the municipal school network,"" explains Björn Volmering, Head of the Education Department and First Councillor. City Treasurer Jennifer Menk, whose remit also includes the city's IT, adds: "It was important to us to find a solution that takes the grammar schools' wishes into account, whilst also minimising the risks to the entire IT infrastructure. By amending the resolution, we are also managing resources and costs responsibly."

The licences for external backups and data backups, originally estimated in draft resolution 113/2026 at an additional €41,800 per year, have been removed from the resolution. As the staffing requirements are to be met by the city's IT department through internal redeployment within the administration, without the creation of new posts, the remaining annual additional costs are lower than those in the original draft.

School heads and the city administration are in ongoing dialogue to discuss alternative technical solutions and to work together to implement the Microsoft Teams communication software in schools. The city council's approval is still required for the resolution to be implemented.



The figurative mark of the Bocholt town logo.

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