

DEVON ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNORS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER –JUNE 2008

This is the last newsletter for this term, and although slightly long, you have the whole summer to digest the contents!!!

I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REMIND YOU THAT THIS IS THE LAST NEWSLETTER TO BE SENT VIA EAL DIST. FUTURE NEWSLETTERS WILL ONLY GO TO INDIVIDUAL GBS WHO HAVE NOMINATED AN INTERMEDIARY GOVERNOR OR STRAIGHT TO THE DAG WEBSITE

The order is as follows:

- Devon Association of Governors (DAG)
- Local Authority (LA)
- National Governors' Association (NGA)
- Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF)
- Gentle reminders – Primary
- Gentle reminders - Secondary

DAG

The draft proposals as to the future shape of Devon's local governance have been announced and the Boundary Committee proposes a single Unitary Authority. That said there is a possible two Unitary solution. It is important that GBs consult properly on the issue and are most strongly encouraged to participate in the consultation process. The full document and consultation process can be found at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/boundary-reviews and by highlighting Devon on the map. Further details and information will be provided at the beginning of Autumn Term.

The response to our web-based survey on your wishes for the 2009 Conference has been disappointing. We want to provide what you want – so please have your say. The survey will now run until 31 July and can be accessed via www.dag.gb.com, 2008 Conference page for onward link.

Ivan Godfrey will be holding 4 area meetings next term as follows.

Wed. Sept. 24th The King's School, Ottery-St-Mary - Axe Valley, Exmouth, Honiton, Ottery-St-Mary and Sidmouth LLCs

Thu. Sept. 25th Knowles Hill School, Newton Abbot - Newton Abbot, Teignmouth, Teign Valley and Dawlish LLCs

Tues. Sept. 30th Tiverton High School - Culm Valley and Tiverton LLCs

Wed. Oct. 8th Bridestowe Primary School - Holsworthy, Okehampton and Tavistock LLCs

A number of Clerks to Governors have indicated their wish to be members of DAG and it has been agreed to welcome all Clerks as interim members of DAG, until the constitution is amended at the next Conference, after which they will be full members

I make no apology for repeating this note from last month's newsletter, namely DAG is represented on a number of important LA bodies. They are of equal importance but one of the more influential is the Schools Forum. We are seeking an additional Secondary Governor from August 31 2008. A primary Governor has applied for election. I outline what the SF does below.

- Schools Forums were established by the Schools Forums (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and 2005 and the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2002.
- The Schools Forum has a consultative and advisory role in school funding and financial matters. It will not hold a budget, and Regulations do not allow it a decision-making role. However,
- The Forum must be consulted and agree if the proposed percentage increase to the centrally managed share of the Designated Schools Grant (DSG) is greater than the overall DSG settlement. If the Forum does not agree, the Authority can appeal to the DfES.

Therefore a duty is laid on the Local Authority to consult the Forum about any proposed change to the school funding formula, about the financial effect of such a change and, annually, about the following matters relating to the schools budget:

- pupils with Special Education Needs.
- Pupil Referral Units and "Education Otherwise".
- early years education.

- Insurance.
- any prospective revision to the funding scheme.
- arrangements for paying Central Government grant to schools
- arrangements for free school meals.

The LA may also consult the Schools Forum about any other matter relating to the funding of schools.

In addition we still seek a Governor from a Community School to sit on the Local Admissions Forum which is a mandatory body set up under the School Standards and Framework Act 1988. The Forum facilitates discussion between all admission authorities (Voluntary Aided, Foundation and LA Community Schools) on how best to organise admissions in the local area, in order to meet as many parents' preferences as possible, and to reach agreement about difficult issues, such as providing school places and sharing pupils with challenging behaviour. The Devon Forum meets approximately 3 times a year at regular intervals at County Hall, Exeter. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 20 November 2008 at 10.30 am.

I am pleased to say that the recent vacancy for a Primary Governor to represent DAG on the Schools Funding Issues Group (SFIG) has been filled.

I stated in the last newsletter, "You are reminded that from September 2008 it is mandatory for at least one member of any Recruiting Panel to have undergone training about Safer Recruitment." **I APOLOGISE BUT THIS INFORMATION IS INCORRECT.** No date has been set. However GBs are encouraged to proceed in anticipation of this measure becoming a legal requirement in the future. The process starts with the Headteacher needing to complete the registration on behalf of the governor. Log- in details will then be sent to the governor through the post. Heads can register governors at www.ncsl.org.uk/managing_your_school/safer-recruitment/howtoapply.cfm **Meanwhile** a course is scheduled for 4 September specifically aimed at those who are involved in the selection and recruitment process of adults to work with children and supports the DCSF proposal that all selection panels will include someone who has attended this training in the future. The cost per delegate for the one-day workshop is £45. Please note that those who have successfully completed the NCSL online Safer Recruitment training course do not need to attend this training workshop. Applications via <http://www.devon.gov.uk/sc-jun088024a.pdf>

Schools have an increasing responsibility for taking forward the Community Cohesion Agenda. A new toolkit has been produced by The Institute of Community Cohesion and funded by The DCSF **and** is due to be published early this term. The ICoCo website is also useful in helping schools to understand the new duty, and can be found at www.coventry.ac.uk/research/icoco and follow 'regional conferences – the duty on schools'

The Chairman, Vice Chair and EO met Judith Johnson on 12 June.

The Chairman and EO were privileged to attend the Annual Conference of Devon's Primary Head Teachers, on the 13 June. It was an inspirational event

The EO met Alyson Sheldrake, the new Director of Education, Youth and Children's Work for Exeter Diocese on 26 June to briefed her on DAG activities.

The Chairman and EO are attending the NGA Regional Meeting on 19 July. There is a further meeting on 4 October

DAG is pleased to recognise the following recent awards:

Hilary Green, the head of Southbrook College in Exeter, won the Ted Wragg Lifetime Achievement Award.

Olly White, from Kentisbeare Church of England Primary won the Primary Teacher of the Year Award

Sarah Felgate from Orchard Vale Primary in Barnstaple was Teaching Assistant of the Year.

Jan Baker from Orchard Vale and **Steve Maddern** from West Exe Technology College in Exeter were awarded distinctions as headteachers of the year in a primary and secondary school.

Tina Casson from Feniton Church of England Primary received a distinction as Teaching Assistant of the Year, **Karen Schulz** from Clyst Hydon Primary was awarded a distinction in the Teacher of the Year category and **Paul Adams** from Okehampton College was similarly recognised in the Governor of the Year.

Kentisbeare Primary was awarded a distinction as sustainable school of the year.

Commendations were awarded to **Lee Knight from West Exe Technology College** as outstanding new teacher of the year, **Holly Torvell from St Giles on the Heath Primary** as primary headteacher of the year, **Jenny Downing from Bowhill Primary in Exeter** as teaching assistant and **West Hill Primary** in the sustainable schools category.

The winners each received a Plato, the Teaching Awards symbol of excellence in education, and go forward to the televised UK ceremony held in London in October.

LA

GBs will be aware of the Unison strike planned for 16 and 17 July. Guidance on preparing for and dealing with issue is available on the Just4Schools website, www.devon.gov.uk/index/learning/schools/just4schools E-mails have also been sent to individual schools

Are you aware of, and made provision for, a potential doubling of energy prices in the next 12 months?

Devon County Council Local Authority, following consultation, have issued a Public Notice on the proposal to add, from 1 September 2009, a 25 day place Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) Unit for children aged 10-16 at Pathfield Special School in Barnstaple. The Public Notice and further information can be accessed on line at <http://www.consultationfinder.com/devon> by typing 'pathfield' into the 'title' box. Within six weeks from the date of publication of these proposals, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal up to and including **5:00pm on Thursday, 21 August 2008**, by sending the representations to Karen Crockwell, Senior School Organisation Officer, CYPS, Devon County Council, Room 120, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 4QG or by email: schoolconsultations@devon.gov.uk or by completing the on-line feedback form at the above website. The website will continue to be updated as matters progress.

NGA

The NGA Board Bulletin for July and the inaugural SW Regional Newsletter have been sent to all schools and are also on the DAG Website.

The following has been received from the CEO to the NGA:

"I am writing to ask you to take some time to take part in an opinion survey; the survey is being carried out by a professional Internet based survey company and the questions have been produced - and will be analysed - by a team at Bath University.

The whole exercise is being funded by the charity Business in the Community and School Governors One Stop Shop (SGOSS) with the support of the National Governors' Association; the NGA was involved with the survey design at the draft stage.

Results will be published in October, in time to influence the current Government review of governance.

You can find the survey at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=bG6bibzhS_2fKf1ydUyYJjTQ_3d_3d

The NGA believes that the results of this survey will be an important part of the review evidence and we urge governors to make the time to complete the questionnaire.

The NGA is using all its communication channels to distribute this request; we apologise if, as a result, you receive multiple copies of this mail.

Please feel free to pass this survey on to other Governors, but individuals should only complete ONE questionnaire even if they serve on more than one governing body.

Herewith a message from Bath explaining the background to the survey.

Dear School Governor,

A major piece of research is currently being undertaken concerning the governance of schools. The research is being supported by SGOSS and Business in the Community. School governors are clearly intimately involved with school governance and, as such, it is essential to obtain your insights and perspectives. The survey will take around 15 minutes to complete and your opinions would be extremely valuable.

In order to make providing your input as easy as possible, the team of researchers, based at the University of Bath, have constructed a survey that can be filled in online. All your responses will be treated in the utmost confidence.

DCSF

There are a number of consultations live on the DCSF website, www.dfes.gov.uk.

There is also a VERY important Ofsted Consultation which completes on 11 August. It discusses future inspection proposals and you are most strongly encouraged to have your say on www.ofsted.gov.uk There is an immediate link to the survey on the home page

Gentle reminders (Primary Schools)

Before you take a well-deserved summer break, herewith is a snap shot to what lies ahead in 2008 – 09, and beyond!!!

In September the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) starts life as a statutory phase of children's development, just like the Key Stages that follow it. It provides a play-based learning template that must be followed by all childminders and early learning settings, such as nurseries, children's centres, and school nursery and reception classes. EYFS aims to bring together the principles and language of existing guidance (birth to Three Matters, the Foundation Stage and national standards for day-care and childminding), making it easier for professionals to share information. www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/eyfs Ofsted will standardise all inspections of schools and settings in the EFYS.

From September, all Primary Schools will have to comply with new, nutrient-based standards for school lunches, which build on the food-based standards brought in last year. Schools will have to ensure that, over a period of between one and four weeks, energy and nutrients contained in an average school lunch stay within given limits. Nutrients covered include fats, carbohydrates, protein and fibre, along with vitamins and minerals such as sodium, iron, calcium and zinc. If you have not received guidance on implementation or have any questions e-mail info@sft.gsi.gov.uk: call 0800 089 5001 or visit www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk

September will also mark the halfway point of a two-year pilot in 10 LAs of so-called "single-level tests". In these selected pupils from Y3 – Y6 sit English or maths tests in December or June, as and when their teachers think they have reached a specific National Curriculum level in either subject. No firm decisions have been taken yet on the future shape of national testing. Watch this (and other!) space(s)

Meanwhile, from September 2009, Ofsted intends to introduce broad changes to the inspection regime. Before then they are conducting an online survey that will run for 3 months. **PLEASE HAVE YOUR SAY AND VISIT www.ofsted.gov.uk** and follow the online registration process

Remember it is only a little over 2 years (September 2010) before all primary schools are due to have foreign language teaching in place across KS2, with progression from Y3 – Y6. See www.primarylanguages.org.uk for more details.

Gentle reminders (Secondary Schools)

Selected Y7 – Y9 students are undergoing the single level test pilot mentioned above for PSs

From September Y7 is due to start following the new secondary curriculum and teachers should find there is a reduced amount of prescribed subject content. Y8 follows in 2009 and Y9 in 2010. Further information can be found at <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk>

In September Y12, with the exception of those taking maths, students will start A levels consisting of 4 units not 6, designed to challenge the most able and with a new A* grade available as well. Maths will be addressed in 2011

At the start of the new term Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) can be claimed online, phone and application form. www.direct.gov.uk/ema

Secondary Schools have one year left to comply with nutrient based standards outlined above for PSs.

In the same timescale teaching in most GCSE subjects will have to reflect new specifications, designed to update content and assessment arrangements in the 14-19 area. The exceptions are English, maths and ICT, which will not change until 2010.

Enjoy your well-deserved break.

David Tall Executive Officer to DAG
12 July 2008