

DAG MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – MAY 2007

Welcome to the second of the new DAG Monthly Newsletters which reflects information garnered or received to 31 May 2007.

Following some feedback from the last letter, in order to assist you to find items of interest and ignore others, I have laid out this month's newsletter order as follows:

DAG
NGA
DCC
DfES

You will note that I have not included anything from professional unions or associations. This is because I want to keep the digest to a readable dimension. I have however included their website addresses should Governors wish to update themselves with the issues currently exercising or of interest to the various bodies.

Devon Association of Governors

There has been a very supportive response to our advice on Exeter Unitary bid. Thank you very much to those who have had their say – but we believe any case will be stronger the more GBs who have their say. I understand there have been several problems with downloading the word document. If you need a word version please let me know AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. Consultation completes on 22 June

Ivan Godfrey will lead the next set of DAG Area Meetings in last week of September / first week in October and the proposed venues will be (with the schools' permission) Clyst Vale CC: Tiverton HS; King's School, Ottery St Mary and The Park Community School, Barnstaple.

Following the success of the excellent docket on "Looking after Your Head", DGS and DAG have agreed a Joint Venture to produce a package on "Recruiting and Retaining Governors".

National Governors' Association

The NGA AGM is on *Sat. 17 November 2007: London.*

NGA in online conference: The Chair and four NGA Board members were invited to take part in an online conference, *Tomorrow's Leaders Today*, for NCSL's website. Each made a presentation, which was filmed as part of this online event on succession planning. The online conference, aimed at school leaders, governors and local authorities, will be live from 1st June.

Some schools are already experiencing problems in attracting candidates for headship and over the next three years the problem will get worse as significant numbers of heads retire. Appointing a head teacher is one of the most important jobs a Governing Body has to undertake, and thus Governing Bodies need to consider the whole question of school leadership (including headship) before it becomes an issue, not once it's become unavoidable. You may also need to consider options other than the traditional head such as co-heads or federations with executive heads and heads of learning.

In conjunction with the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), NGA is running a series of regional conferences on succession planning. The conferences include a keynote speech and practical workshops. The most convenient venue for the SW is at Bristol on Saturday 23 June at the Macdonald Hotel, Holland House, Redcliffe Hill, Bristol, BS1 6SQ. The conferences are for governors and governance professionals and are completely free of charge. If you would like to book a place you can download a booking form from www.nga.org.uk or email NGA on governorhq@nga.org.uk or phone on 0121-643-5787.

Herewith is a note received from the NGA:

“Jean McEntire is retiring from NGA in July. Jean was appointed as NGC's first Chief Executive Officer in 2002 and successfully managed its change from reliance on DfES funding into a self-funding body and was instrumental in its growth. Last year Jean oversaw the process of the merger between NGC and NASG, and in the past year she has played a major part in the development of NGA as the national voice of school governors.

I'm sure members share the Board's unreserved appreciation of Jean's work on our behalf and her enormous contribution to NGA's success.

We will miss Jean - but she has given NGA a great deal and does deserve a life! And indeed, nothing stands still and for NGA, it is time to look to the future. We have engaged a recruitment company to advertise and 'head hunt' on behalf of NGA. In fact, it is the same company that found us Jean - so its track record is good!”

There are some interesting programmes for Governors on Teacher TV and full programme information can be found at: www.teachers.tv/programmeguide

Week of June 3–9: *Just for Governors:* Special Needs (4.06: 11.00 and 19.00); Gifted and Talented (8.06: 19.30);

Week of June 10–16: *Just for Governors:* Health and Safety (11.06: 19.00).

Week of June 17–23: *Just for Governors:* Health; Duty of Care (18.06: 11.00 and 19.00); Travellers in Education: Inclusion (20.06: 19.45).

Week of June 24–30 – School Environment Week: Highlights from the *Future School* series throughout the week; *Managing Inclusion* (24.06: 18.00)

TTV can be found on Sky Guide 880, NTL 240, Telewest 240, Home choice 845 and Freeview 88. Freeview viewing time has changed; it is now from 11.00am until 1.00pm. Programmes can also be viewed online.

Devon County Council

Help needed.....

Devon Governor Services have been asked by the audit team, to put on some additional training for Financial Management Standards in Schools [FMSiS]. We are looking for any schools that can offer their premises and we are prepared to pay the school any charges incurred. We would need a room to seat 20/30 people theatre style and some light refreshments [tea/coffee+slice of cake]. The sessions would be 4-6pm or 6-8pm in July and Sept 2007.

If your school is able to help please email governor@devon.gov.uk Any help would be gratefully received.

Young people appoint Children's Champion

Devon's children and young people have a new champion - and they helped choose the right person for the job. The appointment of a new independent Chair for children, by children demonstrates a clear commitment to working with children to improve services.

Mary Nisbett is to take over from Councillor John Smith - who stepped in, on the death of the previous Chair, Professor Ted Wragg - as Chair of Devon Children's Trust Board, one of the most influential roles in improving services for children and young people in the county.

The recruitment process included a young person's panel. Trained up by Young Devon as part of the national Participation In Action scheme the young people are trained to undertake a variety of roles to enable them to effectively participate and make a difference. They will be presented with an accreditation certificate by Mary Nisbett for their involvement in the process.



Addie a member of the panel said "We are really pleased to have some one who knows such a lot about children and young people. She said she would want to talk to children and young people on their streets".

The Chair of the Devon Children's Trust is also called the 'Children's Champion' and as such is in a unique position to represent children, young people and their families.

Mary brings to the partnership considerable experience in the voluntary and health sectors. Mary began her career as a social worker in children's services before becoming chair for Exeter Primary Care Trust. She has an excellent record in developing services and has played a significant role in strengthening links between partnership organisations. As a founder Director of Westbank Healthy Living Centre she has demonstrated considerable commitment to supporting children to make a difference in their lives. She has led the development of a range of services for children including Familytime and parenting groups.

Mary Nisbett said: "The Devon Children's Trust is at the forefront of partnership working and I am thrilled to be able to champion the children and young people's agenda and am committed to making a real difference."

"Being interviewed and chosen by young people shows real passion from the young people themselves that they do care how their services work. I am delighted to be invited back to present them with their accreditation certificates and look forward to working with them in the future."

Please note that Guide to the Law is to be re-distributed via CD Roms twice a year.

Alternative Portfolio update.

I remind Governors of the Alternative Services Portfolio process which seeks Governors to sit on interview boards from 9 July. The interviews will take all week, but any time a Governor can give will be valuable. Governors have an opportunity to be involved in an important process.

Dr Virginia Pearson has been appointed as the Director of Public Health for the PCT. This appointment was made jointly by the LA and PCT

Steve Daw, former head of LA Capital Strategy Team has left to take up appointment with NPS (SW). (See April newsletter – re NPS (SW). Chris Dyer will be Acting Head of the team until further notice.

Department for Education and Skills

The School Census 2007 autumn collection has been delayed and rescheduled to 4 October. The delay is designed to provide schools with more time to populate their MIS systems at the start of the school year.

You are reminded that from 31 May 2007, teachers have the power, but not the obligation, to search pupils for knives, if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that weapons are being carried. Such searches can only be conducted with the pupils' consent. If that consent is not given then teachers will have to send for the police.

Special Educational Needs: separation of assessment of need from funding of provision

In its report on Special Educational Needs published in July 2006, the Education and Skills Committee recommended that assessment of need and funding of provision should no longer be carried out by the same body:

"There is an inbuilt conflict of interest in that it is the duty of the local authority both to assess the needs of the child and to arrange provision to meet those needs, and all within a limited resource. The link must be broken between assessment and funding of provision".
(Paragraph 99)

In its response the DfES rejected this recommendation, implying that the Committee had suggested that a new agency be created to make assessments (which it had not) or that there was no alternative to such an agency taking responsibility if local authorities were no longer to make assessments. It also made a series of other criticisms of the Committee's recommendation, saying that to take such a decision would be "a leap in the dark and would endanger the position of parents and children with special educational needs".

The Committee does not accept that separation of assessment and funding would inevitably require the establishment of a new agency or quango; that it would undermine the basis of the current statementing system; or that it would necessarily reduce local accountability for decisions, as the Government claims.

In an exchange between the Chairman of the Committee and the Minister of State for Schools during an Opposition debate on SEN on 30 January this year, the Minister agreed that if the Committee put forward proposals on the practicalities of implementing the separation of assessment from funding then he would reconsider the matter. The Committee has therefore decided to examine this specific issue once again.

On the presumption that local authorities would continue to fund special needs provision, the Committee is seeking views on the following issues in particular:

- How might assessment of special educational needs be undertaken other than by the relevant local authority without the establishment of a new separate agency for the purpose?
- How might local accountability for assessment be maintained if the local authority does not directly undertake the assessment?
- What other issues need to be addressed in order to make the separation of assessment and provision effective?
- What models from other countries could usefully be drawn on to demonstrate how separation of assessment and funding for special educational needs might be achieved?

Submissions should arrive no later than **noon on Monday 25 June 2007**. The Committee is not intending to take oral evidence on this subject.

A guide for written submissions to the Committee may be found on the parliamentary website at: <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/witnessguide.pdf>. Submissions should include at the beginning a short paragraph or set of bullet points setting out the main issues addressed in the memorandum.

A copy of the submission should be sent by e-mail to edskillscom@parliament.uk with an additional paper copy to:

Education and Skills Select Committee
House of Commons
7 Millbank
London SW1P 3JA

All Committee publications and press releases are available on our website:
<http://www.parliament.uk/edskills/>

DfES Consultations, which conclude before the next newsletter, are:

[Increasing the Leaving Age - Have Your Say](#)

This consultation invites YOUNG PEOPLE to comment on the Government's proposals to change the law so that they have to stay in education or training until they turn 18. Reach magazine explains what's behind the plans and asks young people what they think about them. If you are an ADULT and wish to comment on these proposals, please respond to the

Raising Expectations: staying in education and training post-16 Green Paper consultation, which can be found below on this website. Please send us your views by 14 June 2007.

Launch Date: 25 Apr 2007

Closing Date: 14 Jun 2007

Raising Expectations: Staying in education and training post-16

This Green Paper sets out proposals to require all young people to remain in education or training until their 18th birthday, from 2013. There are significant benefits to be gained from young people staying in learning for longer – for individuals, the economy and society. Introducing compulsion could be the way to get beyond our existing stretching targets for increasing post-16 participation. The document sets out for consultation our proposals for implementing such a requirement in a way that ensures everyone can benefit. The proposals apply to England only.

Launch Date: 22 Mar 2007

Closing Date: 14 Jun 2007

DfES Guidance to Schools on School Uniform Related Policies

This consultation document includes draft guidance on school uniform, dress codes and other rules on appearance. The guidance provides advice to schools and governing bodies on how to develop fair and reasonable uniform policies. An RIA, REIA and DIA attached.

Launch Date: 20 Mar 2007

Closing Date: 12 Jun 2007

Websites of interest

Parent Teacher Association www.ncpta.org.uk.

National Union of Teachers www.teachers.org.uk

Association of Teachers and Lecturers www.atl.org.uk

National Association of Schoolmasters, Union of Women Teachers www.naswt.org

National Association of Head Teachers www.naht.org.uk

Professional Association of Teachers www.pat.org.uk

I hope governors find this document useful.

Comments and ideas for improvement, gratefully received at
dmrmtall@mvdartmoor.freeserve.co.uk

Yours,

David Tall