

DEVON ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNORS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER -MAY 2008

The newsletter order is as follows:

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

DAG

DAG is conducting a web-based survey on your wishes for the 2009 Conference. Please access the survey, which will run until 7 July via www.dag.gb.com, look for link under Latest Items. We want to provide what you want – so please have your say.

Clerks to Governors have been invited to have their say on whether they wish to be members of DAG. They have been asked to reply through the Have Your Say button on the DAG website. Please ask your Clerks to do just that.

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 and Primary Governor from August 31 2008 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 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 Tuesday, 15 July 2008 at 10.30 am. Finally

There is a vacancy for a Primary Governor to represent DAG on the Schools Funding Issues Group (SFIG). A few details are outlined below,

Purpose of the Schools Funding Issues Group (SFIG)

SFIG provides an opportunity for school representatives to acquire an understanding of the detail of educational funding. The group can take time to look at budget performance and options for change so that the Schools Forum can be confident in the basis upon which recommendations are made.

Objectives of SFIG

- Keep under review the “schools block” funding of the Section 52 statement.
- Monitor how well the formula is delivering what schools need in an equitable way.
- Consider options for formula change and take a lead on any local consultations relating to change.
- Consider the impact of any Government proposals and help to collate responses to Government consultations.
- Make recommendations to the Schools Forum on funding issues.

If you are interested in any of the above positions please contact me at your earliest convenience.

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. Headteachers need 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>

Primary School Governors are reminded that they should have discussed with the headteacher when the first School Improvement Partner (SIP) visit will take place in the summer term. Letters went out to schools last term with information on your SIP with the first visit due this term. This initial visit will only happen in the first year and essentially is a familiarisation visit. Information sent to schools contains prompts for the meeting to help to structure the dialogue. A more detailed article on the role of the SIP will be included in the Devon Governor this term. Chairs of governors, or other governors if the chair is not available, are welcome to attend all or part of the visit to meet with the SIP.

Books From The Devon School Library Service! The DCSF has funded a national initiative to encourage boys aged 5 - 11 to get the reading habit. During the summer term, Devon School Library Service will be delivering boxes of boy friendly books to all primary and special schools. The books have been particularly selected to appeal to boys, but girls (and grown-ups) will enjoy them too.

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’

You are reminded about the “Devon School Mix” which takes place on Wednesday 25th June 2008 when our primary and secondary schools will again congregate at Westpoint for an incredible day of Music and Dance, featuring a mix of professional musicians, community musicians and performers from primary and secondary schools. In total over 100+ concerts, performances and workshops will take place, representing every music genre from rock and Beat Box to Samba, Salsa and classical. This year’s theme is **Dance to the Music**, and you are encouraged to get out those dancing shoes and tango down to Westpoint. www.devon.gov.uk/dms-mix

Primary School Governors are reminded that the Government’s 14 nutrient based standards for school lunches will become law in September 2008. You should not the standards cover the WHOLE school day and so encompass breakfast clubs, mid-morning breaks, tuck shops, vending machines and after school clubs. Secondary and Special Schools and PRUs will be subject to the act from September 2009.

The Foundation Stage Profile (FSP) will be relaunched in September 2008 as the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

The Chair and EO met the Plymouth Association of Governors in early May, the EO attended their AGM in late May and we meet them, with Torquay’s Governors on 11 June

The Chairman, Vice Chair and EO will meet Judith Johnson on 12 June and the next day the Chairman and EO are pleased to be attending the Annual Conference of Devon’s Primary Head Teachers.

DAG welcomes the appointment of Alyson Sheldrake as the new Director of Education, Youth and Children’s Work for Exeter Diocese and in wishing her well in her appointment say how much we are looking forward to working with her. The EO is due to meet Mrs Sheldrake on 26 June to brief her on DAG activities.

Schools and individuals should have received updated details of the JE Appeals Process, but can glean more from the following websites

Job Evaluation - Appeals in Schools, May 2008

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/sc-may086011a.pdf>

Equal pay monitoring & Advisory Group - Terms of Reference

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/sc-may086011b.pdf>

Schools appeals flowchart

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/sc-may086011c.jpg>

Schools appeals procedure contact sheet

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/sc-may086011d.doc>

Evaluating new and changed posts policy and procedure

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/sc-may086011e.pdf>

Appeals procedure

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/sc-may086011f.pdf>

Are you aware of THE GILL BARNARD AWARD set up in memory of Gill Barnard, one of Devon's highly valued Kitchen Managers who sadly passed away in 2005, by the Children & Young People's Directorate who created an annual award for School Catering Staff? Schools are encouraged to nominate a member of their catering team who has taken the time and effort to demonstrate a child centred approach to their work in the busy school-catering environment. Nominations must be made by the Headteacher, in a summary of no more than 250 words explaining why they think that the nominee deserves the recognition of this award. The nomination by the Headteacher should also be supported by artwork from the children. So why not think about who may be a suitable candidate for this award in your school kitchen and enlist the support of your Headteacher and pupils in putting together an entry to impress the judges! To be considered for this award and trophy, entries must be received by the end of the summer term. The winner will be notified at the start of the autumn term.

Please send your entries to:

*Devon Catering & Cleaning Services,
Falcon Road, Sowton, Exeter EX2 7LB*

DAG sees this award as a wonderful opportunity to express thanks to a number of people who do not often get the recognition they deserve.

LA

One way to stay in touch with LA education related issues is through the Just4Schools website, www.devon.gov.uk/index/learning/schools/just4schools

Have you seen the letter of 3 June 2008 from Beverly Dubash on 'Narrowing the Gap' Managing Attendance, Reducing Persistent Absence and Developing a Whole School Attendance Policy – A Good Practice Guide?

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

NGA

The NGA Bulletin Board for June has been sent to all schools and is also on the DAG Website.

Please remember that the NGA intends responding to the consultation on governance, but that will only count as one reply despite the numbers represented, so we need as many separate responses to DCSF as possible. Information about the consultation will be circulated as soon as NGA has details. So far there is a growing consensus that a governing body of only six (in line with the Interim Executive Board model) is impractical and there is general agreement in favour of mandatory induction training or at least for a strong steer from DCSF and Ministers that there will be an expectation that all new governors participate in induction training. Individual Governors are encouraged to have their say. There is a dedicated webpage to this important topic on the DAG website. Individual governors may find the DAG discussion board facility useful to exchange views.

Following NGA's attendance at our Conference, I hold a number of spare copies of a Model Food Policy; booklets on Succession Planning and some concerning recruiting headteachers and senior leaders. I am running out of office space and will dispose of them via the local recycling unit at the end of June!! If you would like a copy please let me know before 30 June.

DCSF

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

David Tall Executive Officer to DAG
10 June 2008