

## **DEVON ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNORS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – MAY 2009**

The order of this newsletter is as follows:

- Devon Association of Governors (DAG)
- Local Authority (LA)
- National Governors' Association (NGA)
- Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF)
- Primary Snippets
- Secondary Snippets
- Lipstick in schools

### **DAG**

**Chair / EO meet** for general discussions on 6 May

**EO and 3 Governors attend** the Clerks JE informal appeal on 12 May.

**DGS Link Govs meeting** at Barnstaple 14 May. **Please note a Link Governor's meeting at another venue has been cancelled due to lack of numbers. There is often criticism that Governor Training tends to be Exeter centric, so we should make every effort to support all training, wherever it is held.** A further meeting is planned for 3 June at Great Moor House.

**The closing date for response** to the latest Boundary Committee report is May 14. A full copy of the Boundary Committee's report is available online at:

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/boundary-reviews/all-reviews/south-west/devon/devon-structural-review>

You can express your views by: Using the Boundary Committee's online form at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk) or by writing directly to: Review Manager (Devon Review) The Boundary Committee for England, Trevelyan House, Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2HW. Tel: 020 7271 0512, Fax: DAG would be grateful if you could forward / copy any views to David Tall

**DAG Executive** meet on 21 May

### **CONFERENCE**

**The plans for the 2009 Conference** are all but complete. It will be held on 4 July at County Hall. We have secured the services of the author Sue Palmer, renowned for her book "Toxic Childhood", and we consider her attendance as something of a coup. In addition Chris Keates the Secretary of the NASUWT will also speak. Our third speaker is David Triggs the CEO of The Academies Enterprise Trust in Essex. Mr Triggs is also the Principal of Greensward Academy. These last two speakers have a national profile and we are again fortunate to have secured their services

**Online application** is now available. Although we anticipate a "sell out". to ensure your attendance you are advised to book now.

**The theme for the Conference** will be "Self improvement = School Improvement"

**Although it is planned to be an all day event** the programme has been designed so that Governors can dip in and out and attend at their convenience

**We are thrilled to have attracted some children from** Whitchurch Primary School, who will launch the day with their award-winning anthem D.E.V.O.N., and Mary Tavy PS's Gospel Choir, who will entertain us at lunchtime. We believe it very important that our children have the opportunity to show off their talents and the Conference is a great event to that.

**This year we are holding a Poetry Competition** and invite EVERY school to participate. There will be prizes for the winning schools from the 3 sectors and the LA have kindly offered to publish a digest of the poems the children produce. DAG has written to the Primary, Special and Secondary Heads' Associations inviting them to support this competition but Governors have a part to play too. The first words of the poem must be "Devon inspires me to.." **CLOSING DATE IS 30 JUNE 2009.** Please send entries to [dmmrtall@mydartmoor.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:dmmrtall@mydartmoor.freeserve.co.uk), or if you prefer please contact me for postal address I know of at least one PS who sees this competition as an opportunity of engaging post SAT children to hone their creative writing even more. Please encourage your school to participate. It would be helpful if you could let me know if your school intends taking part. Thank you.

**The Conference is once again being supported by NPS (SW).** DAG is most grateful for that support and to Cornwall and Devon Connexions and Pecorama, Beer who have offered generous prizes to support the day and particularly for their help to recognise our youngsters' contributions.

## **OFSTED INSPECTION PROJECT – SUMMER TERM 2009 PILOT**

Devon will be participating in a pilot in the summer term. This follows Ofsted's consultations in 2008 on new arrangements for school inspections and pilot inspections, which have taken place in a small number of LAs during the last year. There is quite a lot of information on this issue, which I have placed on the DAG Website

### **REPRESENTATIVES / LA COMMITTEES-**

**Governor vacancies have appeared on the Forum for Learning and Achievement; the Schools' Commissioning Forum: Schools' Organisational Forum and Schools' Funding Group.** If you wish to be a member of these important fora / committees please contact David Tall.

**Additionally** you will note from the website that several people double up on various Committees and it would be great to spread the burden / skills base, so if you have a particular interest, do please let me know and I will negotiate succession or even increased representation.

### **LA**

**SIP Summer term 2009 visits programme is detailed in the most recent Gold Sheet.** I am happy to send on individual copies.

**How ready are you for a 'critical incident' in your school or local community?** A Conference for senior leaders and school governors will take place on Wednesday 8 July at Buckfast Abbey £95 per place (including lunch) For further details please contact: Sally Skinner, 97 Heavitree Rd, Exeter EX1 2NE

Other training opportunities include:

#### **Succession Planning Workshops**

18.30 – 21.00, 19 May Great Moor House, Exeter

10.00-12.30, 21 May Buckfast Abbey

#### **Link Govs – Extended Services**

19.00 – 21.00, 14th May, The Barnstaple Hotel

3rd June, Great Moor House, Exeter These two meetings will include a DAG update

#### **'New Governors for Old Governors'**

9.45 – 15.30, 30 June, The Tiverton Hotel

#### **Clerks Updates**

9.30 – 13.00 16 June, Great Moor House, Exeter

18 June, Caddsdow Bus. Centre, Bideford

23 June, The Tiverton Hotel, Tiverton

25 June, Buckfast Abbey

**The Vetting and Barring Scheme**, which was designed to both improve and to extend the current employment vetting practices, scheduled to go-live on 12 October 2009 has been delayed until July 2010.

**DAG is grateful to Devon Primary Heads' Association** for the following information on Broadband Charges, the School Funding Campaign and the details reference TISP

### **\*\*\*IMPORTANT MESSAGE\*\*\***

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#### **Broadband Charges**

Further to the e-mail distributed to all schools on 3rd April, John Barnard, Head of Resource Strategies has issued further guidance as follows:

"As promised on 3 April, I am writing to give advice on how to deal with the recently notified broadband charges which as previously notified in the budget guidance issues 6 February, must be charged to your revenue budget and not against the Harnessing Technology Grant (HTG) which is a capital fund.

The issue was discussed at the School Funding Group this morning along with the reduced allocation by the LSC to Secondary Schools with post 16.

It was agreed that we would challenge DCSF on the use of HTG. In addition, SFG wanted to be clear on the outturn position of the 2008/09 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and the position of the 2009/10 DSG. It is now expected that the overall funding position of the 2009/10 DSG is better than anticipated and this may release funds that may be distributed to schools. The Devon Education Forum meets on 6 May and will consider options on releasing revenue funds to schools.

SFG were clear that I should write to you, to advise on how to proceed with the 2009/10 budget. We agreed that although schools must submit budgets to the Authority by 1 May, it should be based on costs known when Governing Bodies approved budgets last term (i.e. excluding the broadband revenue costs). If you have already submitted your budget there is no requirement to submit a revised budget.

Clearly, the broadband revenue costs will need to be funded but it is not clear yet whether permission will be given by the DCSF to allow some or all of the costs from the HTG. Also, additional revenue funding may be available to cover some of these costs. Further advice will follow after the DEF meeting of 6 May. At this stage please do not start to plan deficits or redundancies as it is likely that some or all of the costs may be mitigated."

### **DEVON CAMPAIGN TO IMPROVE SCHOOL FUNDING**

You will be aware from LA communication that arrangements for a centrally co-coordinated campaign are gathering pace and DASH/ DAPH and DAG have been asked to nominate representatives to a Task & Finish Working Group. The Group will be chaired by Peter Doyle, Head of External Affairs and will meet in the very near future, initially to consider how best to involve the wider school community in the campaign and report back to Devon Education Forum.

#### **Implementation of Targeted Intervention and Support Programme (TISP)**

##### **National Strategies Priority Schools**

As you know, this list is compiled by the National Strategies and falls within Categories C.1 and C.2 in TISP. The current National Strategies Priority list includes the following criteria:

- a] Schools that are currently in one of the Ofsted categories of Special Measures or Notice to Improve.
- b] Schools where standards are below the Key Stage 2 floor targets i.e.
  - below 65% L4+ in English or Mathematics
  - below 55% L4+ in combined English and Mathematics.
- c] Schools with combined L4+ English and Mathematics below 65% and on a downward trend in joint English and Mathematics L4+ over 3 years.
- d] Schools where attainment in English and Mathematics combined is above the national average but 2 National Curriculum Levels progress in English or mathematics is 10% below national average and there is a downward trend over three years in joint English and Mathematics at L4.
- e] Schools in the lowest 10% of CVA measures.

If you have any queries then please contact your Primary Adviser.

#### **NGA**

#### **The following has been received from the NGA**

**Ministerial Working Group on Governance (21.04.09):** This was, we assume, the last meeting of this group. The meeting was given a presentation on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools – Implications for Governance. This covered aspects of governance in relation to the Children’s Plan and the anticipated White Paper on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools. The group discussed what was likely to be in the Governance Review Report, which is scheduled for publication at the same time as the White Paper (8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> May). NGA and most other partners at the meeting were fairly content with much of what was proposed, although there remains an issue about size. *(The general view is that ‘size is not important’ and is a red herring.)* As with the White Paper, ***please respond to the consultation.***

**Safer Recruitment online:** Because of the need to expand the number of people to whom the training is available, and the fact that NCSL remit is changing, the online database will move to a new host.

**Interview Panel – trained person mandatory:** Although DCSF has not yet announced a date when no panel must sit without a trained member, this will happen, so governing bodies should make sure that at least one member of the governing body and the headteacher have undertaken either the on-line training or the equivalent face to face training provided by their LA.

### **Parent Governor Representatives (PGRs)**

PGRs were created several years ago by the government as a means to represent parents in local authority committees relating to education and to feedback to parents. PGRs are entitled to speak on any matter under discussion in a committee and can vote on those issues relating to education.

The DCSF states on its website that “The role of the PGR is, primarily, to hold their local authority to account by consulting with and feeding back to parents on discussions and decisions relating to education.”

A number of members have raised the issue of PGRs in particular in relation to a lack of transparency in their appointment, but also in the sheer practical difficulty they face in carrying out their appointed task of feeding back to parents.

The NGA would be grateful for any information from members about the appointment process of PGRs in your area and the role they carry out.

Please email [Gillian.windass@nga.org.uk](mailto:Gillian.windass@nga.org.uk) with any information.

**The next NGA AGM** will be held on 7 November 2009 in Birmingham. DAG will be represented

**The NGA has produced a number of its weekly newsletters.** They have been e-mailed to all members for whom the NGA hold e-mail addresses, whilst the monthly Board Bulletin (BB) is sent to Local Associations. I always forward the BB to IGs, and place it on our website, but if you would also like the weekly newsletter please let me know.

### **DCSF**

**I receive a very useful monthly e-mail from DCSF.** If any of you would like a separate copy, please let me know and I shall try and remember to pass it on!!! Meanwhile I have extracted a couple of items of interest below.

**As part of the School Workforce Census (SWF)** pilots, schools may have been asked by their LA to record information about staff employed by the LA that visit schools regularly. In light of feedback, the Department has recognised the burden of providing this information is too great at this time. Schools therefore no longer need to record this information on their management information systems unless they wish to hold it for their own use.

Some schools may not yet have heard much about SWF because they have not been involved in the initial pilots and/or are in LAs sourcing data from central HR/payroll systems.

[Visit TeacherNet for more information about this change in requirements and the SWF](#)

**DCSF recently announced its intention to establish a 14-19 learner panel,** to help the department explore national policy development and delivery issues with learners on a regular basis. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) are now taking this forward. It is intended to have 15-20 part-time volunteer learners on the panel and hope to have a diverse range of participants across different types of learning provider, region, gender, age (13-20) and other demographics.

DCSF is particularly interested in understanding how the reforms feel from a learner's perspective, so no specialist interest or sector understanding is required. Nonetheless, experience of the reforms would greatly improve their capacity to contribute - for instance, Diploma learners, participants in the functional skills pilot, FLT or Extended Project learners, young apprenticeships etc. If you know of any potential participants or teachers and form tutors who might be able to invite applications from their learners, please forward them the attached recruitment materials, or point them towards <http://www.direct.gov.uk/nationallearnerpanel> where they can find further information. The expected time commitment is three full-day panel meetings over the next nine months, with some preparation and discussion work between sessions. All reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

**There are 9 live consultations currently** on the DCSF Website and whilst Consultations can be time consuming they are an important part of our democratic process. DAG is conscious that it may have a role to assist GBs in responding to consultations. DAG will NOT however participate in Consultations per se because it recognises that there will be a

variety of different considerations / ideas, and the Executive feels that it cannot fairly represent every view / counter view nonetheless it might be able to take some of the pressure off GBs and assist the process. We will look at developing this assistance in the coming year. Meanwhile GBs are encouraged to participate in all Consultations. Please note 4 of the consultations complete during May

### **PRIMARY SNIPPETS**

**You are reminded that from 1 April 2009 it is mandatory** for all first time heads to hold the NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headships) before they can be appointed.

**Remember it is now just 18 months (September 2010)** before all primary schools are due to have foreign language teaching in place across KS2, with progression from Y3 – Y6.

**4th - 10th May is Deaf Awareness Week** when organisations working with deaf people across the country invite everyone to '**Look At Me**'. The theme aims to improve understanding of the different types of deafness by highlighting the many different methods of communication used by deaf, deafened, deafblind and hard of hearing people, such as sign language and lipreading. Supported by over one hundred deaf charities and organisations under the umbrella of the UK Council on Deafness, Deaf Awareness Week involves a UK wide series of national and local events. "The UK Council on Deafness are delighted to coordinate the all-inclusive Deaf Awareness Week campaign, promoting the positive aspects of deafness, social inclusion and raising awareness of the huge range of local organisations that support deaf people and their family and friends." Visit the Deaf Awareness Week website at [www.look-at-me.org.uk](http://www.look-at-me.org.uk) to find details of events, examples of good practice, publicity materials and much more...

**International Walk to School Week 2009 18th - 22nd May** The theme for this year is "Walk 'n' Talk!", encouraging children to Walk'n'Talk enjoying and exploring the social side of walking to school. More details at [www.walktoschool.org.uk](http://www.walktoschool.org.uk)

During Walk to School Week this May, the Sustainable School Travel team invite your pupils to create a cartoon strip of a real or imaginary walk to school. See the competition entry form for details, or look at our website: [http://www.devon.gov.uk/school\\_travel\\_plans.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/school_travel_plans.htm)

The winning entries from each year group will receive a £15 book voucher. Runners up will receive a £5 book voucher. Competition entries to be sent to: [School Travel Plans Lucombe House County Hall Topsham Rd Exeter EX2 4QW](mailto:School Travel Plans Lucombe House County Hall Topsham Rd Exeter EX2 4QW) by Monday 1st June

The Tree Council is promoting a Walk in the Woods from 1 – 31 May. There are walks, talks and events and information can be garnered from [www.treecouncil.org.uk](http://www.treecouncil.org.uk)

Have you registered register for the Flora Cooking with Schools initiative? See [www.cookingwithschools.com](http://www.cookingwithschools.com) to do so.

### **SECONDARY SNIPPETS**

**You are reminded that from 1 April 2009 it is mandatory** for all first time heads to hold the NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headships) before they can be appointed.

**4th - 10th May** is Deaf Awareness Week - see above

**The nutrient-based standards for secondary** schools will come into force from September 2009. The chief executive of the School Food Trust, the organisation charged with transforming school food, has written to headteachers and caterers to clarify some myths around the new standards, and highlight some achievements ahead of the deadline in September.

**The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC)** has given its backing to the Humanities Diploma, which will be available in September 2011. Representatives from the RSC will join a panel of experts who are developing the Diploma's content

**And finally...** According to a news report, a certain school in Newcastle was recently faced with a unique problem. A number of 12-year-old girls were beginning to use lipstick and would put it on in the bathroom. That was fine, but after they put on their lipstick they would press their lips to the mirror leaving dozens of little lip prints. Every night the maintenance man would remove them and the next day the girls would put them back. Finally the Principal

decided that something had to be done. She called all the girls to the bathroom and met them there with the maintenance man. She explained that all these lip prints were causing a major problem for the custodian who had to clean the mirrors every night (you can just imagine the yawns from the little princesses). To demonstrate how difficult it had been to clean the mirrors, she asked the maintenance man to show the girls how much effort was required. He took out a long-handled squeegee, dipped it in the toilet, and cleaned the mirror with it. Since then, there have been no lip prints on the mirror.

There are teachers.... and then there are educators!!!!

David Tall

Executive Officer to DAG

3 May 2009