

DEVON ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNORS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER –SEPTEMBER 2008

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)
- Gentle reminders – Primary
- Gentle reminders – Secondary

THIS IS THE FIRST NEWSLETTER TO BE ISSUED USING ONLY TWO ROUTES – DAG WEBSITE AND THE DAG INTERMEDIARY GOVERNOR. WHEN YOU HAVE READ THIS PLEASE PASS ON TO YOUR FELLOW GOVERNORS

DAG

AREA MEETINGS

Ivan Godfrey will be conducting his most informative Area Meetings as follows:

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

Thu Sept 25th Newton Abbot College for the Newton Abbot, Teignmouth, Teign Valley and Dawlish LLCs

Tues Sept 30th Tiverton High School for the Culm Valley and Tiverton LLCs

Wed Oct 8th Bridestowe Primary School for the Holsworthy, Okehampton and Tavistock LLCs

The meeting will be from 7.00p.m. to 9.00p.m. The agenda will be based on the Autumn Term Checklist which should arrive in hard copy format in your school during the first full week of term.

This is the once-a-year opportunity for you / fellow members of your governing body to meet with governors from your local area under the auspices of DAG, to raise any matters of concern from your school and to share experiences.

I don't wish to determine discussion in advance of the meeting but I imagine the following points, amongst others, may warrant more detailed consideration:

- consultation on changes to governance
- headteacher recruitment and succession planning
- School Improvement Partners
- financial matters
- new school meals' requirements
- JE update

Coffee / tea + biscuits will be available before the meeting starts.

It is hoped that one or more governors (and/or the clerk) from your school will be able to attend. Could you please
- remind fellow governors of the date and venue of the meeting - let me know by replying to sueivan@godfreyi.freemove.co.uk who, if anyone, will be attending on behalf of your school
- let me know of any issues you would like to air /discuss with DAG / fellow governors

It would be helpful if anyone attending the meeting brings along a copy of the Checklist for reference.

Points raised at the meeting will be compiled and presented to the LEA, NGA and others. Once replies and comments have been received a complete feedback paper will be sent out to all schools, similar in format to the ones you should have received in school over the past year.

Please let me have a reply by Friday September 19th. It is really important to know numbers in advance of the meeting to ensure proper arrangements can be made!! I will acknowledge all responses some time after September 12th.

BOUNDARY COMMITTEE

As you all know 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 document and process can be found at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/boundary-reviews and by highlighting Devon on the map. In addition Devon and Exeter have provided statements on their position and these appear on the DAG Website, together points which DAG would encourage you to examine in the submissions. **Governors are encouraged most strongly to participate**

DAG REPRESENTATIVES

At the risk of becoming a bore I remind you DAG is represented on a number of important LA bodies. They are of equal importance but one of the more influential is the Devon Education Forum (formerly Schools Forum). We are seeking an additional Secondary Governor from now. I outline what the DEF does below.

- Schools Forums were established by the Schools Forums (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and 2005 and the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2002.
- The DEF 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 DEF 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.

GENERAL

DAG has learned of the retirement of Susan Trusler after 28 years as a Governor and 17 as Chair at St Giles School. We take this opportunity to thank Susan for her fantastic commitment to Devon Governance and wish her well in her retirement. If you know of similar colleagues, please let me know. DAG is keen to acknowledge, publicly, such outstanding service.

The former Professional Association of Teachers (PAT) is now known as Voice.

Knowles Hill School is now known as Newton Abbot College

The new academic year sees 2 new Federations in place. They are Tavistock Church Schools (St Peter's and St Rumon's) and that of Chulmleigh CC and Chulmleigh PS. They join The First Federation (Blackpool PS and Chudleigh Knighton PS); West Exmoor (Lynton, Parracombe and Kentisbury PS and that of Dartmouth CC and Dartmouth PS

The response to our web-based survey on your wishes for the 2009 Conference continues to be disappointing. We want to provide what you want – so please have your say. The survey has been extended to 30 September and can be accessed via www.dag.gb.com, 2008 Conference page for onward link.

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

LA

CLERKS' JE UPDATE

3 Clerks to Governing Bodies have been elected to represent the 70 or so Clerks who have appealed following the JE Review that took place last year. There is a requirement for 3 Chairs (from any schools) to assist the process by assisting the appeals as generic Line Managers. Should any CofGs be interested in discharging this responsibility could you please let David Tall know as early as possible.

Meanwhile comments and complaints being received from some individuals, headteachers and governors indicate that they are totally unaware of the establishment of the Equal Pay Group, or the communication pack sent to Headteachers, or the update provided at the last Devon Education Forum. Feedback is essential, so please let David Tall have any comments by the time of the next meeting which will be held on **Monday 13 October** at County Hall.

TRAINING COURSES

DAG naturally supports all forms of relevant training but particularly commends the new "New Governors for Old Governors" course on 25 September and the Heads, Chairs and Clerks day on 23 October.

Reading renewal

DCSF

You should be aware that Ed Balls has written to all HTs about improving standards in the 3Rs. His letter can be found via www.dcsf.gov.uk

There are 9 live consultations on the DCSF website

NGA

The **NGA Board Bulletin** for September is on the DAG Website. Your attention is drawn to their forthcoming elections.

GENTLE REMINDERS (PRIMARY)

The **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** starts life from now 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.

Primary Schools now 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

Remember it is now 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.

Primary School Improvement Partners (SIPs) will undertake two visits to schools this term. Within this visit, statutory targets for the end of KS2 in 2010 will be agreed. It is therefore important Governors and the HT discuss these targets before the SIP visit. A Primary Briefing Paper has been distributed electronically to schools

Assessment for Learning – Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP) is a new set of materials to support teachers to make accurate assessments against National Curriculum Levels. Funding has been made available and a round of training will be conducted in this academic year. Schools have been asked to prepare a plan detailing how they might

implement the APP over the next terms. Governors may wish to discuss with HTs the progress their school is making in introducing these materials.

GENTLE REMINDERS (SECONDARY)

This year's Y7s will now be in compulsory education or training until they are 17.

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>

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

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.

Welcome back, with apologies for the length of this missive

David Tall Executive Officer to DAG
3 September 2008