

- a) Urgent Matters - DAG Annual Assembly (All) : Extended Schools (governors involved with this work) : Governing Bodies that have made a difference (CoGs)
- b) Volunteers Sought (All) - Web Forum ' monitors '
- c) Consultations (All) - Workforce Remodelling
- d) Meetings in near future - DAG Annual Assembly (All) : NPQH (Personnel / CoGs) : Extended Schools (All) : DAG/DGS Conference (All)
- e) Arrived in schools (i) paper (ii) by e-mail

NB Governors are reminded that they can access information about the weekly distribution of e-mails / paperwork to schools by going in to <http://www4.devon.gov.uk/eal/distribution/index.html>

- f) New Items on Websites (i) DAG (www.devon.gov.uk/eal/dag)
- g) Papers available from me
- h) Brief items - New books for governors (All) : Freedom of Information (Personnel) : Future Teaching Standards (Personnel) : Budget Comparisons (Finance) : Teachers' TV (All) : Healthy Eating (All) :

a) Urgent Matters

(i) DAG Annual Assembly. Information + booking forms to return should have arrived in all DAG affiliated schools by e-mail this week. The Assembly will be held in the Main Council Chamber at County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter on Saturday April 16th from 10am to 1pm. The conference will be based around the theme " The 5-year Strategy for Young People – the Governors' Role in Devon's Vision for the Future " and will include an address on this topic and question and answer session with our Guest Speaker, Deborah Magill, newly appointed Deputy Director for Education, Arts & Libraries. There will also be opportunities to debate and discuss key issues of current concern. This is the chance for governors from your school to meet with governors from across Devon as well as LEA officers and exchange views and experiences.

Please help to ensure that all members of your Governing Body know they are welcome to attend the meeting. Please complete and return the form sent to your school to me by post or e-mail by Thursday, March 24th (indication of non-attendance also appreciated!). In addition to indicating which governors plan to attend you can submit a resolution for debate or indicate any issue / concern you would like raised at the meeting. Finally DAG invites nominations from any Governor from your Governing Body prepared to stand as a candidate for election to the DAG Executive. We would particularly welcome new representatives from East Devon and Mid Devon, areas currently not represented. Get in touch if you want to know more about what that involves. Acknowledgement of all applications will be sent to governors in advance. The agenda and information pack will be ready for collection on arrival at the meeting

(ii) Extended Schools Fran Butler, the Early Years & Childcare Development Officer with zero14plus who leads a team of 9 locally based District Co-ordinators working with schools, has produced an information pack for schools about setting up childcare services. Several schools have already received these packs. Any governing body interested in receiving the pack should contact Fran at fran.butler@devon.gov.uk. On this theme please also note the Extended Schools Conference in item d)

(iii) Governing Bodies that have made a difference to their school! A message from the National Governors' Council. " As part of a project to raise the profile of school governors, the DfES are working towards producing a media pack to promote school governance as a positive and meaningful contribution to the community. As part of this pack there will be a clutch of case studies of how GBs have made a difference to their schools. NGC has been represented on this project group and we have been asked if we can provide the DfES with some examples. So .. has your GB made a difference? This could be in many ways - for example, leading a bid for a building project, supporting the HT in reshaping the Leadership Team, redefining the Discipline Policy, developing links with the community. We are looking for a few paragraphs outlining the circumstances and the outcome and the DfES will then make contact to develop the study. Please contact Jean McEntire at www.ngc.org.uk if you can help.

b) Volunteers Sought

Judy Burgess is still looking for further governors/clerks/heads who would act as moderators for the new webforum discussion board. Please contact Judy (01392 383633 or judy.burgess@devon.gov.uk) if you can help

c) Consultations

NGC will be taking part in a debate about Workforce Remodelling at a Local Government Chronicle Conference in April. The focus is on changes beyond September 2005 and the issues are:

- how LEAs can make improvements happen and provide support to schools.
- how will the workforce agreement meet the needs of extended schools?
- how progress will be monitored and used to improve school performance.
- long term planning - best practice for staffing schools creatively.

Your views should be sent to NGC Chief Executive, Jean McEntire, at www.ngc.org.uk by the end of March please.

Governor thoughts on remodelling are welcome at any time by NGC as they meet regularly with WAMG and the National Remodelling Team to represent governors' views. DAG is constantly forwarding governor views to NGC, but if you would like to make direct contact to Jean please do so. In particular NGC would like to know

- how governors feel the work on remodelling is progressing
- whether money is still the problem

- whether WR is having any impact, positive or negative, on collaboration with other schools or LEAs
- whether it is encouraging a sense of vocation in non-teaching staff
- how governors see remodelling developing beyond 2006

d) Meetings in near / not so near future!

(i) DAG Annual Assembly Sat. April 16th [see item a) (i)]

(ii) Governors Briefing - Understanding the National Professional Qualifications for Headteachers. To be held at The Devon Hotel, Exeter on 10th March 2005 from 6.30 - 9.00pm. Free. Paper copies sent to schools. ALL applicants for HT posts now need to have obtained or be working towards an NPQH, so governors need to be aware of the implications of this.

(iii) Extended Schools - The Emerging Future March 14th 10.00am - 4.00pm The Loop Centre, Bittern Rd, Sowton, Exeter. Free. This conference seeks to inform and enlighten about the developing national context within which Extended Schools are seen as being crucial. It will also examine how this is being delivered within Devon and how it will work at a local level. In particular, how does Extended Schools fit within the Children's Trust agenda? Contributors include: Phil Street, Director 'Continyou', Dr. Phil Norrey, Jon Bell, Devon LEA Extended Schools Manager. Governors very welcome. Lunch and refreshments will be available. To reserve your place at the conference please contact Hilary Burrow at hilary.burrow@devon.gov.uk

(iv) DAG / DGS 2-day conference on Oct 14th/15th on the theme ' The Child at the Centre ' - the implications for governors of the ' Every Child Matters ' agenda. Further details to follow.

e) Arrived in schools

(i) paper

- Governing Schools of the Future For the first time a comprehensive document of DfES views on the role / importance of governors. Worth a read!

- A letter sent in January from Dr. Phil Norrey about the budget including reference to the key role governor and headteacher members at the Schools' Forum played in securing cross-phase collaboration

- the February Spectrum

(ii) by e-mail

- Schools Support Services Board Newsletter, Issue No. 4, Spring Term 2005 See <http://www4.devon.gov.uk/eal/docs/feb05/0506025.doc>

- Report on a Year of Conversation A very full and helpful overview of the work undertaken and planned regarding the Vision for Learning in Devon. See: <http://www4.devon.gov.uk/eal/docs/feb05/0506016.doc>

- papers about the DAG Annual Assembly

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f) New Items on Websites

(i) DAG (www.devon.gov.uk/eal/dag)

- the DAG January Update

- DAG Executive Minutes and Reports Back January 2005

- NGC Meetings section - brief report on NGC Chairs' Conference January 2005 + Discussion Group notes on current topics

- NGC February Bulletin Board

g) Papers available from me

TEN papers (providing excellent summaries and comment) on

- (Secondary) Personal, social and health education in secondary schools This policy briefing summarises key points from the above Ofsted report, which presents findings of a survey conducted to evaluate the teaching of personal, social and health education (PSHE) in secondary schools. The findings of this report, which reiterates a number of concerns raised by Ofsted three years ago, are relevant to schools, parents and LEAs aiming to develop effective PSHE programmes for secondary school pupils.

- Summaries of HMI annual reports for primary / secondary / special schools

h) Brief items

(i) 2 recent publications of possible interest:

- " Recruitment and Selection - a practical guide for school governors and headteachers " by Jane Phillips. One of the most important tasks performed by any governing body is the appointment of a new headteacher or deputy. This book provides support and advice in making school appointments. It explains the principles behind making any staff appointment, with particular reference to those of the headteacher or deputy, lays out step by step the procedures that have to be followed in appointing a head or deputy, shows how best to assess exactly how the candidates meet your requirements, includes various documents that can be adapted for your own use, including the job description, person specification, advert, applicants' pack and forms for assessing candidates in the interview and their presentation. These documents are also available in rewritable form on CD-ROM for a small extra charge.

- " Exclusions - a practical guide for school governors and headteachers " by Margaret Jones. Exclusion is the most serious punishment that a school can enforce, and it is essential that it is done correctly and is properly scrutinised. This book provides guidance for any governor who may have to review an exclusion and for any headteacher who may ever have to exclude a pupil. It explains the principles on which headteachers can exclude pupils, the different types of exclusion and the procedures that have to be followed, takes readers through the

scrutiny processes for permanent and fixed-term exclusions and through the appeals procedures, explaining the issues that should be examined in these. It also contains case studies and model letters. Both books A4, paperback, 48 pages, £7.50 (Recruitment and Selection £11.50 with CD-ROM) plus £1.25 postage and packing. Discounts available for bulk orders. Save £2 by buying both books together. Post, fax or e-mail your order to: Adamson Publishing Akeman House High Street Stretham Ely Cambs CB6 3JQ tel: 01353 649238 fax: 01353 648184 e-mail: sales@adamsonbooks.com www.adamsonbooks.com

(ii) Freedom of Information Apparently some schools have been charging parents and others for the administration time in providing information requested under the Freedom of Information Act. This is ILLEGAL. The Act does not permit the charging of a fee for the administration involved in locating the information or checking for exemption, unless the total cost of the search is greater than £450 (Staff time costed at £25 per hour). This is unlikely to occur within a school/college environment. It would be permissible to charge for photocopying/printing (at the rate of 10p per sheet) plus the cost of postage. However, the County Council has decided to waive these costs where the total involved is less than £25. If a school/college has publications that they would normally sell, this may continue, but you should ensure that it has been included in your 'Publication Scheme'. DAG would be interested to hear about any requests schools have received re Fol

(iii) Future of Teaching Standards. NGC and NASG were invited to a 'round table discussion' in January with the General Teaching Council on The Future of Teaching Standards. This was the first of a series of such meetings being held with various stakeholders. The group was asked to consider the focus on governors and governance in existing teaching standards. The GTC representatives shared GTC ideas about the future of teaching standards and asked for governors' responses to these; and together the group discussed how a greater awareness of governance should be built into teaching standards in future.

(iv) Budget comparisons The proposed Financial Management Standard - developed in response to recommendations from the Audit and Accountability Framework Pilot study commissioned in 2002 - is a clear and consistent standard for financial management which schools can aim to achieve, and which, it is hoped, will provide a meaningful benchmark to encourage self improvement. It is proposed that from April 2005 schools should be able to receive external assessment against this standard in order to obtain an independent view of the financial performance of schools.

(v) Teachers' TV - for those of you with Sky the channel is 686. Any views on the governor programmes most welcome!

(vi) Healthy Eating A governor colleague has sent me this " Thought you and all our School Meals friends might like to tune into Channel 4, Wednesday next, 23 Feb. at 9.00 p.m.: "Jamie's School Dinners" (1st of 4). Radio Times: "I mean, what is happening there?" rages the star chef, who charges up to £25 for a main course at his London restaurant, Fifteen. "How can we have allowed a situation where we're asking schools to cook growing kids a meal for the price of a packet of crisps?.....I mean, we're rich b****rs in Britain - how can we tolerate it that our children have a diet so unhealthy they're likely to die before us? How is it that I meet all these 15 year olds who can tell me about drugs, but don't know what celery or courgettes taste like, let alone how to cook them?" And of Dinner Ladies: "Every school needs to value its dinner ladies more highly – which means paying them more. They need to be trained to cook, not just to reheat processed s**t which contains 30 ingredients, of which you've never heard of 25."

..... and finally

Alternative meanings

Balderdash - A rapidly receding hairline

Baloney - Where some hemlines fall

Gossip - Letting the chat out of the bag

Liability - A talent for fibbing

Paradox - Two Physicians

Parasites - What you can see from the top of the Eiffel Tower

A medieval knight and his men returned to the castle after a hard day's fighting. The knight informed his king : "Your Majesty, I have been robbing and pillaging on your behalf all day, burning the villages of your enemies in the north." The king looked perplexed. "But I don't have any enemies in the north." "Ah," replied the knight, realising his blunder. "I fear you do now."

Two television aerials met on a rooftop, fell in love and got married. The ceremony was awful, but the reception was brilliant.