

South West Region Memorandum



From: John Pay

To: All Regional Members

Date: 07 June 2010

Well on the way to the end of another school year with many schools well into examination mode and all the headaches that that brings. Weather has been good though and it is very satisfying seeing all the dried out sports fields being put to good use after the long cold and wet winter. SATs boycott behind us; a new government in place with education well on the Agenda; even a Department of Education again. I expect that as here in Poole all are waiting to see what the effects on school finance are going to be in the short and medium term. The Academies Bill has had its first reading in the Lords and raises many questions. Locally we are struggling with BSF problems (where has the money gone?) and a reorganisation programme around the age of transfer and a two tier education system (where is the money coming from?) We have our termly Association meeting shortly and we are hopeful that our Children's Services Director is going to give us some answers. Oh such exciting times to be a School Governor.

On the positive side we do now have a **Department of Education**, although their web site still refers to the DCSF. See www.education.gov.uk.

Our new Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, has written to schools inviting interest in becoming Academies with the possibility for outstanding schools being fast tracked. Further information can be found on the Department of Education's web site at www.education.gov.uk/academies from where you can also access the letters to schools. As was pointed out in the last NGA Newsletter, in all Michael Gove's communications no mention is made of the role of Governors in the decision to pursue academy status or not. The NGA Web Site now has an Academies Q&A sheet (similar to the SATs boycott very helpful Q&A) to help governors in considering academy status and this will be updated regularly over the coming weeks.

Many of the questions facing governors (also headteachers and other leadership team members) in their deliberations will be those that are always raised whenever a major school initiative is being considered, amongst which will be, for example:

- will (and how will) Academy status help improve the quality of our teaching and learning?
- what advantages (and/or disadvantages) will Academy status bring to recruitment/curriculum development/available finance?
- what impact will our Academy status have on our wider school community?

It is going to be interesting to see how many schools take up the offer of fast tracking so as to be established by the next academic year. Let us know of any signs of such activity in your area please.

I shall be attending the Children's Services Network and Local Government Information Unit's joint conference next week where the theme will be 'Stakeholder Governance under Threat'.

-2-

The growing diversity of schools - more academies, including the prospect of primary academies and free schools - and the pressure to 'professionalise' governance represent a serious challenge to the stakeholder principle established in the 1980's. The seriousness of this challenge and the pros and cons of the traditional model of governance together with alternatives will be presented upon and discussed. I would hope to formulate some sort of report on the conference and its outcomes in my next Update.

The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC) has launched the 3rd annual LOtC Awards for Excellence & Innovation. The Awards, sponsored by TUI-Student Division, recognise the commitment of educational establishments (e.g. early years settings, primary, secondary schools and colleges and youth organisations) in providing valuable and positive learning experiences for young people (0-19yrs) beyond the classroom.

Learning outside the classroom (LOtC) is about raising achievement through direct, hands-on, practical approaches to learning that bridge the gap between theory and reality. Whether it takes place in the school grounds, on visits to museums, art galleries or farms; through adventure activities or on cultural exchanges abroad, LOtC is a powerful tool that adds value to classroom learning and offers rich, memorable experiences to young people. These Awards are one way of recognising excellence in LOtC provision.

This year, the panel of judges are looking for nominations which showcase establishments that are working hard to create novel, innovative and inspirational approaches to learning beyond the classroom.

If you'd like to nominate an establishment or set a shining example and be in the running for the top national award and a trip to TUI Student Division's Chateau du Molay, please visit <http://www.lotc.org.uk/News-and-events/LOtC-Awards-2010> for details of how to apply. Closing date for nominations is 16th July 2010.

As you know, I always keep an eye open for sources of additional funds for schools and recently came across the Ernest Cook Trust which links nicely to the above theme. The trust offers grants to a variety of organisations, including State Schools, aimed at encouraging young people's interest in the countryside, the environment, arts and to improve literacy and numeracy.

The emphasis for schools is on pupils being actively involved and learning by the doing. Projects such as tree planting, fruit and vegetable gardening and schemes that encourage the continuation of rural crafts and skills are particularly encouraged. Most grants are between £1000 and £1500. Interestingly no application form is involved, simply a good letter describing the scheme and expected outcomes.

Questions (only) to grants@ernestcooktrust.org.uk and/or fuller details on the trust's website <http://www.ernestcooktrust.org.uk/>

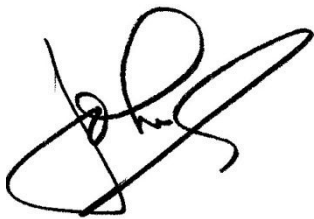
I hope that those of you who attended found our last meeting (March seems a long time ago) interesting and Madeleine Jarrett's, (NCPTA) presentation of use. Certainly the meeting was a very lively affair with considerable participation from all those present and this was very much appreciated by Emma Knights, our then new CE (although now well entrenched). Regional meetings are a good source of feedback and opinion and helps shape the direction and efforts of our Headquarters team.

Talking of which we welcome a new team member, Pardeep Mattu, who has joined us as Communications Manager. Communication is a key area of development for us and Pardeep brings to us extensive experience from her work with private and public organisations, these including the NHS, local authorities and education organisations. A sincere welcome from the South West Pardeep and we hope to see you at one of our Regional meetings sometime.

Make sure that you have the date of our next SW Regional meeting firmly in your diaries, this being **Saturday the 16th of October**. As usual, the venue will be the Taunton Express by Holiday Inn located just off junction 25 on the M5. At the moment I have an agreement from an officer of the then DCSF, who is now I am reasonably certain with the Department of Education, as our guest speaker. More news later once I have further/final confirmation.

I shall be attending the Children's Services Network and Local Government Information Unit's joint conference next week where the theme will be 'Stakeholder Governance under Threat'. The context of the conference is that with the growing diversity of schools - more academies, including the prospect of primary academies and free schools - and the pressure to 'professionalise' governance represent a serious challenge to the stake holder principle established in the 1980's. I would hope to formulate some sort of report on the conference and its outcomes in my next Update.

That's it for now - enjoy the last few weeks of term and (hopefully) a lovely summer.



(John E S Pay MBE – Regional Director SW)

Contacts:

NGA

Ground Floor
36 Great Charles Street
Birmingham
B3 3JY

Tel: 0121 2373780
Email: governorhq@nga.org.uk

John Pay

Tel: 01202 631835
Email: jpays13@aol.com

Colleen Arnold

Tel: 07928 337276
Email: colleenarnold@nga.org.uk