

National Governors' Association

BULLETIN BOARD

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1 December 2008

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*Bulletin Board contains dates for your diary, details of consultations and other papers in and out of the NGA office, for information and action, and a digest of some of the activities of NGA on current issues. Circulation currently is to NGA Member Associations and the NGA Board. Distribution is by e-mail and post. **Please share this information widely, through your email contacts and at local meetings, to keep governing bodies better informed of, and more involved in, current activities and national issues.***

FOR ACTION: NGA DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Very advanced warning:

NGA Spring Conference: Saturday, 9 May 2009, Leeds (Hilton-Leeds City).

NGA Annual General Meeting: Saturday, 7 November 2009.

Regional Meetings: where the date for a Spring Regional Meeting is known it can be found on the Events section of the NGA website, together with the minutes of the previous meeting. Visit: www.nga.org.uk

FOR INFORMATION

1 NGA News

Please note: The NGA Office will close for Christmas on 24 December and will re-open on 5 January 2009.

NGA Board Elections: The following people were elected as NGA Directors: Stephen Adamson, Colleen Arnold, Judith Bennett, Clare Collins, Terry Douris, Duncan Haworth, Paul Mason, Richard Thompson and Carol Woodhouse.

Thanks are due to all those who stood for election. And to retiring Directors great thanks are due for the time, commitment and expertise they gave to NGA.

The Short Report of the 2008 AGM and Conference is posted on the website.

NGA website: The members' area: **please note we are still lacking details of the executive members of some associations. Please remember to contact the NGA office with names, addresses and email addresses of your association's committee** so that they will be able to log into the members' area and receive copies of the NGA magazine *Matters Arising*.

NGA updates: Don't forget to look at *Updates* on the NGA website for information, as well as reading the Bulletin Board. The Bulletin Board and Updates can both be found in the Briefing section of the website: <http://www.nga.org.uk/updateandbulletin.aspx>

2 NGA Awards for Governance and Outstanding Clerks – 21 March 2009 ***

In conjunction with its well-established award for outstanding clerks, the NGA has this year introduced three awards celebrating the work of governing bodies. In launching the Awards the NGA aims to celebrate good school governance and spread examples of best practice throughout the school governor community. Anyone can nominate a governing body for consideration in one of

three categories: challenging circumstances, support for governance and exceptional projects. In each case the nominations will have to show real achievement and to demonstrate evidence for that achievement from beyond the school gates.

Nomination forms for both the Governance and Clerks Awards can be downloaded from the Events section of the website – or can be obtained from the NGA Office on 0121-643-5787 or by emailing: governorhq@nga.org.uk

NB: Deadlines for submission of forms: 5 December 2008 for the Clerks' Award and 12 December for the Governance Awards.

3 DCSF News

Education and Skills Bill: This Bill is still progressing through Parliament. It includes the raising of the school leaving age, so should be one to keep an eye on. For details, including the debates concerning the Bill, go to <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2007-08/educationandskills.htm>.

4 Meetings Digest

Meeting with Jim Knight, Schools' Minister (4.11.08): The meeting discussed the proposed School Report Card. It will be based upon the New York City model, but will be designed to fit the requirements of the English education system. More contextual information will be included. A White Paper will be published in the New Year to outline proposals. The School Profile will come to an end when the Report Card is in place. NGA raised the issue of compliance with statutory duties, including Workforce Reform: there are still schools not complying. The Minister said that compliance would be a part of the next Education Bill. There was also concern about accountability in regard to financial matters where there was partnership working or extended services. TDA had not issued any guidance for governors for a long time. There was to be a White Paper on 'Accountability and the 21st Century School', which would cover these matters, but there may be need for interim advice to be issued. Finally, with the move by LAs to a commissioning role, legal and HR services of LAs becoming less school-focused, and schools choosing to seek services from other LAs or elsewhere, there was a need for a method of discerning what was available and to share experience. The Minister suggested something akin to an Amazon-type website, showing what services are available and with the facility for governing bodies to grade services or to comment from experience for the guidance of others.

Ministerial Working Group on Governance: The last meeting of this group has been postponed until December. After the meeting, a Report will be published, followed by a consultation. ***Make sure you respond to the consultation.***

Meeting with Christine Gilbert, HMCI, Ofsted (20.11.08): NGA's CEO and Chair met with Christine Gilbert and Sue Gregory (i/c the current Ofsted Pilot) – a long sought meeting, but worth waiting for. The Pilot, which will look closely at governance, was discussed and NGA asked what form evidence of governing bodies' performance was envisaged. The HMCI emphasised the need for the governing body to see the SEF – and admitted that not all Heads shared the document, which was wrong. It was suggested by the HMCI that Heads might be asked how they developed the governing body's strategic role. There was great interest in the NGA/NAHT/ASCL joint document on expectations. The attitude towards governing bodies was very positive, which was heartening. Christine Gilbert suggested that she should meet with NGA twice a year to discuss issues. This first meeting did not attempt to cover all the issues governors might wish to raise but it was a good start and gave a sound foundation on which to build.

Other November events or meetings attended by NGA representatives (or for which NGA provided chairs or speakers) included: Bichard Safer Recruitment Steering Group, Reading Association, Teach First Conference, Wakefield Governors' Conference, Hertfordshire Governors' Conference, Surrey Governors' Conference, Gloucester Governors' Association, Oxfordshire Governors' Association, London Co-ordinators of Governor Services Meeting, DCSF Advisory Group on Governance, NPQH Re-design Consultative Group, National Heads', Children's Services

Directors' and Governors' Group (HEG), National Centre for Social Research (Nat-Cen) (interview regarding referrals to the GTC), Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), GovernorsWales.

5 The NGA First Certificate in Governance

This distance-learning programme is suitable for both new governors and existing governors who require a refresher or update. It consists of four modules with accompanying questionnaires. The questionnaires may be submitted for assessment and a score of 70% on each questionnaire is rewarded with a certificate to evidence the achievement. The pack can act as an introduction to governance for a new governor and give the confidence to attend training courses to further develop knowledge. The Programme is administered and run by EduCare, experts in distance learning. *The cost of the pack of four modules has now risen to £15 + VAT (£17.63). **To purchase the package with external external assessment, feedback and a Certificate the price is £36.75 +VAT.** A link to the EduCare website can be found on the front page of the NGA website. Alternatively, email the office for a hard copy of the form – governorhq@nga.org.uk.*

6 Teachers' TV

If you visit the Teachers' TV website and type in *Just for Governors* you can view a programme which looks at the merits of face-to-face, distance learning and online Governing Training, with input from NGA's Chair.

Programme information can be found by visiting the home page at: www.teachers.tv and clicking on *Full TV Guide* at the foot of the page.

TTV can be found on Sky Guide 880, ntl 240, Telewest 240, Home choice 845 and Freeview 88. Freeview viewing time has changed; it is now from 11.00am until 1.00pm

CONSULTATIONS: NEWS and ACTION

7 Ofsted consultation – Indicators of a school's contribution to well-being

As signalled in the Children's Plan and in the well-being guidance, the DCSF and Ofsted have been working to develop strong school-level indicators of pupils' well-being. These indicators will improve the information available to schools to help them assess the well-being issues their pupils face, and to evaluate the school's contribution to promoting pupil well-being. Ofsted will be looking for evidence from all schools on well-being and therefore the indicators will apply to all maintained schools, primary, secondary, special and Pupil Referral Units, and to academies.

This consultation paper outlines the proposals about those indicators and invites responses.

The consultation can be found at: www.ofsted.gov.uk/Publications/080195

Responses may be made online to: www.ofsted.gov.uk/Publications/080195 or sent by email to: wellbeingindicators@ofsted.gov.uk. Written responses should be sent to: Well-being Indicators Consultation Response, Ofsted, Alexandra House, 33 Kingsway, London WC2B 6SE.

Ofsted deadline 16 January 2009. Deadline for comment to NGA 5 January 2009

8 NSCL consultation – National Standards for School Leadership

This consultation concerns the revised National Standards for School Leadership. It is posted on the National College for School Leadership website. As it is not currently easy to find, it might be useful to use this link: <http://www.ncsl.org.uk/publications-national-standards-consultation>.

There is hardly any mention of governors although it refers to strategic aspects of school leadership so there is a need for as many governors as possible to respond. Closing date: 3 March 2009.

*Also see **Statutory Guidance: The Roles and Responsibilities of the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services**. This consultation concerns updating the 2005 guidance. Details are given at: www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/. Closing date: 10 February.*

9 Publications available from NGA

Items available include:

- ◆ *What governing bodies should expect from schools leaders and what school leaders should expect from governing bodies.* The NGA has signed a national agreement with the Association of School and College Leaders and the National Association of Headteachers setting out how these important groups should work together. The agreement establishes ground rules for the relationship between headteachers and governing bodies. The document can be downloaded from the Guidance section of the NGA website: www.nga.org.uk
- ◆ *Welcome to Governance 2008-09 Edition.* This popular guide for new governors provides an overview of, and introduction to, the role and responsibilities of a governing body, with sections on meetings, school budgets, policies, development planning, visiting the school and much more. Price: Single copies – £4.00 to members, £8.00 to non-members. Discounts for multiple copies: 5% for 2–29, 10% for 30-99, 20% for 100-499 and 25% for 500+.
- ◆ *Papers:* The papers cover a wide range of topics providing detailed guidance and information on aspects of governance. The papers available are: *Governors and the Role of Inspection, Financial Responsibilities of the Governing Body, Governing Bodies and Staffing, Governors – who they are and what they do* and *Succession Planning*. Price for all Papers: £3 to members and £4 to non-members.

For other NGA publications, visit both the Publications and Guidance sections of the NGA website www.nga.org.uk.

10 Other useful publications.

Recruiting Headteachers and Senior Leaders: This publication outlines a seven-stage process, which provides a governing body with the practical guidance needed to find success in recruiting a headteacher. The publication can be downloaded free from the NCSL website: www.ncsl.org.uk/publications

School Improvement Planning Framework: (New Edition October 2008) To find out more about this useful tool visit the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) website. The framework can be downloaded or ordered in hard copy. http://www.tda.gov.uk/leaders/schoolimprovement_framework.aspx

Extended Schools Toolkit for Governors: This can be downloaded from TeacherNet or ordered online from the Training and Development Agency at: publications@tda.gov.uk or by telephone on 0845 6060 323. (Reference no: TDA279/05.07/BEL/158)