

National Governors' Association

BULLETIN BOARD

BB 2/08

1 February 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

NGA Spring Regional Meetings:

Full details of all meetings will be available soon.

North East: Tues. 5 February 2008 (18.30 for 19.00) Durham County Hall

South East: Fri. 14 March 2008 – Time and venue tbc

London: April 2008 – details tbc

East Midlands: Tues. 4 March 2008 (11.00–15.00) Leicester City – tbc

Yorkshire & Humberside: Wed. 12 March 2008 (18.30 for 19.00) Holiday Inn, Wakefield

East: Wed. 12 March 2008 (18.30 for 19.00), venue tbc

North West: Tues. 4 March 2008 (18.00 for 18.30) Swallow Hotel, Preston

West Midlands: Wed. 5 March 2008 (18.00 for 18.30) NGA Office, Birmingham

South West: Sat. 15 March 2008 (9.30 for 10.00), Bridgewater (exact venue tbc)

NGA Conference – Whose curriculum is it anyway? (Sponsored by the QCA): Saturday, 21 June 2008

NGA Annual General Meeting: Saturday, 8 November 2008

FOR INFORMATION

1 NGA News

NGA website: The public site, containing information on publications, events and activities, is proving its worth. The Members' area should be live this month (February). Look out for further information. And don't forget, if your association hasn't its own website, there will be the opportunity to have an easy to manage microsite within the NGA site.

NGA/NCSL Conference on Leadership Recruitment: The conference, held on Saturday 26 January, proved a great success. A short report of the event was circulated on nga-assocs on Monday. Demand far outstripped the available places and many people were disappointed. NGA hopes that a second event may be possible.

EGM: The EGM followed the Conference on 26 January. It was convened to address changes in the Articles of Association. Eight proposals were placed before members. Proposals 1–6 and 8 were carried and Proposal 7 was defeated. A short report of the EGM was circulated on nga-assocs on Monday.

Governance issues: The debate about governance has continued on the Board and among NGA members during January. It has also specifically addressed the case for mandatory induction training for new governors and governing body size. The Children's Plan (paragraphs 4.73 and 4.74) refers to 'review[ing] out training programme for governors ...' and addresses the issue of size, suggesting that 'smaller, more strategically focused' governing bodies are more effective. It indicates that the DCSF will be consulting on reducing the size of governing bodies. The consultation is promised for 'late spring'. ***Make sure your views are submitted.***

NGA is holding a second meeting with ASCL and NAHT about governance, in particular what heads should expect of governing bodies and what governing bodies should expect of heads. Issues will also be raised at a meeting of the Advisory Group on Governance on 6 February and with Schools' Minister, Jim Knight, on 27 February.

2 DCSF News

Education and Skills Bill: This Bill was presented to the House of Commons on 28 November but without any debate. As the Bill includes the raising of the school leaving age, it should be one to keep an eye on. To find out the Bill's timetable and see the details of the Bill go to <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2007-08/educationandskills.htm>.

School Improvement Planning Framework: 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.

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)

Note also: *Governors' Policy Briefing – Planning and Funding Extended Schools, June 2007*, at http://www.tda.gov.uk/upload/resources/pdf/g/governors_policy_briefing_june.pdf

Sustainable Schools: *A Governors' Guide to Sustainable Schools* can be found on TeacherNet at: <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=downloadoptions&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DFES-00445-2007&>

3 Meetings Digest – a quiet month for meetings

New Relationships with Schools Consultative Group (21.01.08): Jim Knight, Minister of State for Schools, attended the first part of the meeting. The Group discussed the Children's Plan and what this would mean for this group's future work. Other issues discussed were SIPs and local authority management of SIPs, the uses of Contextual Value Added (CVA) without 'confidence intervals' and the School Profile, questioning how useful this was. The feeling was that the value was not proven and that the task of completing it was burdensome.

North of England Education Conference (9-11.01.08): The NEEC was held in Cardiff this year, not very North of England but it gave an opportunity to compare the English and Welsh situations. The theme was Learning for Life and Professor John Field spoke of the long tail of underachievement in both countries. For Schools Minister, Jim Knight, the key word to describe the Government's strategy was 'mobilisation' – of parents, of schools, of children's services, and with employers – in order to address issues. Professor David Hopkins, until 2005 Chief Advisor on School Standards at the DfES, gave a lively presentation about Government policy. He addressed how the first attempts to raise standards had succeeded but then the graphs all hit plateaux, and explained that the current policy is to replace initiatives from the centre with encouraging schools to lead reform. Hence the emphasis on personalised learning, 'intelligent' (i.e. internal) accountability, networking and collaboration. Perhaps the most enjoyable and instructive part of the conference was the presentations by two sets of children, one primary and one secondary, on how they have developed peer support systems amongst themselves to provide support, tackle bullying and resolve conflicts – something England could usefully learn from Wales.

Other January events or meetings attended by NGA representatives (or for which NGA provided chairs or speakers) included: Governors' Agenda Editorial Board, General Teaching Council (GTC), National Confederation of Parent Teachers Associations (NCPTA), Human Rights Advisory Group.

4 The NGA First Certificate in Governance

This distance-learning programme has been very well received. It is suitable for both new governors and existing governors, who require a refresher or update. It consists of a pack 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 pack of four modules is really good value at £9.50 + VAT (£11.16). Details and order form are posted on the NGA website.*

5 Recruiting Headteachers and Senior Leaders – a useful publication from NCSL

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 ordered in hard copy from NGA (£7.50) and can be downloaded free from the NCSL website: (www.ncsl.org.uk/publications)

6 Teachers' TV

Don't forget that governors who become Teachers' TV Associates can watch online previews of future programmes. Teachers' TV Associates are the channel's first point of contact at schools. By helping to promote the channel they get access to free previews, online discussion forums and invitations to special events, among other benefits. To learn more, go to www.teachers.tv/associates. Associates can access the previews through this web link.

On Monday 4th February, NGA Director, Doris Neville-Davies can be seen in a programme on Succession Planning.

Programme information can be found at: www.teachers.tv/programmeguide.

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 Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006: Independent Safeguarding Authority Scheme Consultation

The implementation of the Independent Safeguarding Authority scheme, under the terms of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 will introduce the most stringent vetting and barring service yet. The scheme will protect both children and vulnerable adults by preventing those who are known to pose a risk of harm accessing these groups through their work. The consultation seeks views on a wide range of policy issues that will ensure the successful implementation of the Act. This consultation is jointly published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Home Office, and the Department of Health.

The consultation can be found at: www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/

Responses may be made online to: www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/ or sent by email to: SVGAct-Policy.CONULTATION@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk. Written responses should be sent to: Consultation Unit, Area 1A, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2GJ.

DCSF deadline 20 February 2008. Deadline for comment to NGA 1 February 2008.

8 Confidence in Standards: Regulating and developing qualifications and assessment

In September, Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, announced that the Government would establish an independent regulator of qualifications and tests in England.

Confidence in Standards: Regulating and developing qualifications and assessment sets out the detail of these proposals.

The Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator will be the guardian of standards across the tests and qualifications systems, building on the regulatory work of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The QCA will grow into a development agency for curriculum, assessment and qualifications. DCSF invites views on its proposals.

The consultation can be found at: www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/

Responses may be made online to: www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/ or sent by email to: confidence.instandards@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk. Written responses should be sent to: Consultation Unit (Confidence in Standards), Area 1A, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2GJ.

DCSF deadline 10 March 2008. Deadline for comment to NGA 21 February 2008.

9 Home Access to Technology

This consultation seeks views on the proposed Home Access programme. This aims to ensure that all families with 5–19 year old learners in England have access to learning where and when they need it through access to ICT resources and support at home.

The consultation can be found at: www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/

Responses may be made online to: www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/ or sent by email to: home-access.consultation@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk. Written responses should be sent to: Consultation Unit, DCSF, Area 1A, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2GJ.

DCSF deadline 2 April 2008. Deadline for comment to NGA 16 March 2008.

10 Publications

Items available include:

- ◆ *Welcome to Governance*: New edition now available. 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, £6.00 to non-members. Discounts for multiple copies: 10% for 2–5, 15% for 6–20, 20% for 21–100 and 25% for 100+.
- ◆ *Food Policy in Schools – A Strategic Policy Framework for Governing Bodies*. The revised publication was launched in September to take account of the new standards for school food. Available free from NGA.
- ◆ *Extended Schools – a Guide for Governors I* is available free from NGA.
- ◆ *Papers*: The papers cover a wide range of topics providing detailed guidance and information on aspects of governance. Two revised papers were published in December 2007: *Governors who they are and what they do* and *Governors and Staffing*. *Governors and the Curriculum* and *Governors and the Role of Inspection* (revised February 2007) are also available. The other NGA papers are currently undergoing revision and will be available in 2008. Watch the website for more information. Price for all Papers: £3 to members and £4 to non-members.
- ◆ *School improvement through ICT – guidance for governors*. Hard copies of this guidance are available from NGA. It is also downloadable free from the NGA website.