

# National Governors' Association

## BULLETIN BOARD

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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

**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](http://www.nga.org.uk)

**National Events:**

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

**NGA Annual General Meeting:** Saturday, 7 November 2009, Birmingham (Venue TBC)

### FOR INFORMATION

#### 1 NGA News

**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 Newsletter:** Don't forget to look at the Newsletter on the NGA website for information, as well as reading the Bulletin Board. The Bulletin Board and Newsletter can both be found in the Briefing section of the website: [www.nga.org.uk/newsletterandbulletin.aspx](http://www.nga.org.uk/newsletterandbulletin.aspx)

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

The process for the awards for outstanding clerks and for governing bodies is well under way. Judging for the Clerks' Award and the Governing Body Award is taking place during January and February.

#### 3 Celebrating Governance\*\*

As members will know, there were more awards to governors in the New Year Honours List and NGA is establishing its award for Governance this year. However, we should like information on how governance is celebrated at local level. If your local authority has long service awards or any other way of raising the profile of governors, NGA would welcome details.

#### 4 Meetings Digest

**Ministerial Working Group on Governance:** Yet another mention to keep it in mind, but there is still no date for the final meeting has not taken place as yet. The last meeting will finalise the

Report, which, when published, should be followed by the promised consultation. Despite the DCSF's seeming lack of urgency now about this whole matter, ***please respond to the consultation.***

**Education Guardian/GTC Round Table Discussion (6.01.09):** The topic under discussion was the GTC's revised code of conduct for teachers, currently out for consultation. There was concern about how teachers were perceived in the ranking of professions and clearly there are real problems in working with other professionals who are slow to take on teacher concerns and who are difficult to reach. There is also an issue of ownership of the code and indeed with the GTC overall. Keith Bartley, Chief Executive of the GTC, explained that he spent much time reminding the Government that professional autonomy should not be undermined; but equally he has to spend time with the profession getting them to accept their responsibilities. (*See GTC consultation below*)

**North of England Education Conference (7–9.01.09):** Chaired by Baroness Estelle Morris, the event was hosted by a partnership between Wirral Council and the University of Chester. Many of the governors present owed their attendance in no small measure to the fact that the organising group included Jane Owens from Wirral Governors' Association. The provision of subsidised places for association chairs was the result of Jane's involvement.

As well as four keynote speakers, there were various master classes for delegates to attend. Some details of the session on education and school achievement in Finland may be of interest.

- The teaching profession is held in high regard; there is one teaching union, which includes headteachers; and teachers are treated as civil servants for salary purposes.
- Testing (monitoring) occurs in Y6 and Y9. There are no league tables, nor an Ofsted structure.
- Rural children attract £6000 each per annum; urban children receive £7500 each. All children have free school meals, transport and dental care. Every school has its own school nurse, social worker and Educational Psychologist.
- Mothers are not allowed to return to work until youngest child is 3.
- Pre-primary education is voluntary and intended for six-year-olds, who will start their compulsory education in the following year (aged seven). There is a 98% take up. Children's development is keenly monitored. Special attention is paid to individual children's readiness for school attendance, i.e. to the phase of their emotional, social and cognitive development. The early identification of problems in learning or other areas is essential in pre-primary education. There are many forms of support and often there is a need for co-operation between social and health sectors.

Other January events or meetings attended by NGA representatives (or for which NGA provided chairs or speakers) included: TDA Governors' Group, Human Rights Group, GovernorLine Management Board, National Heart Foundation Conference, Learning Outside the Classroom, DCSF New Relationships with Schools Consultative Sub-Group, NCSL Diversity Panel, Staffordshire governors, Bracknell Forest Governors' Conference, Lancashire Link Governors' Conference, House of Lords' Reception for the British Association for Fostering and Adoption.

## **5 Small, Rural Primary School Federation Conferences 2009**

The Department for Children, Schools and Families is hosting a series of events, which offer an opportunity to learn more about the benefits of both hard and soft federations and to hear about new policy developments relating to collaboration. The events, which are workshop based, will also feature plenary sessions led by officials from the DCSF and NCSL. The conferences, which are free, are aimed at head teachers and governors of small, rural primary schools, and are being held in four regional areas: Bristol, Newcastle, London and Birmingham. For more information on the events and to register please visit: [www.lewislive.co.uk/federationsconference](http://www.lewislive.co.uk/federationsconference).

## **6 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 under Resources on the NGA website. Alternatively, email the office for a hard copy of the form – [governorhq@nga.org.uk](mailto:governorhq@nga.org.uk).*

## **7 Admissions: Single Point Entry**

Devon Association asked that this be included in the Bulletin Board, as a consultation locally had revealed that many parents were unaware of their parental rights and either schools were unaware or were not publicising the parental right to defer entry. This has also been brought into focus by the early recommendations of the Independent Review into the Primary Curriculum.

Compulsory school age is the term following a child's fifth birthday. Under the revised School Admissions Code, which comes into force on 10 February 2009, where a school admits pupils before compulsory school age it must also allow parents to request a deferred entry for their child until they reach compulsory school age. Where deferred entry is requested a place must be held for the pupil in question. The right to deferred entry applies whether the school uses a single or dual point of entry.

Jim Rose's Independent Review into the Primary Curriculum recommended in its interim report (published on 8 December) that:

“Entry into reception class in the September immediately following a child's fourth birthday should become the norm. The Review will explore how this might be achieved without unduly restricting parental choice, for example, by allowing parents to choose a period of part-time attendance.”

Unless there is another change to the School Admissions Code, even if a single entry point becomes mandatory, the parental right to defer entry to the term after a child's 5th birthday will take precedence.

The School Admissions Code can be found on the DCSF website via the attached link

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/sacode>

The final report of the Independent Review into the Primary Curriculum is expected to be published in Spring 2009. The review has a dedicated website which can be viewed via the attached link:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/primarycurriculumreview/>

## **8 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 the past Chair of NGA.

Programme information can be found by visiting the home page at: [www.teachers.tv](http://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**

## **9 General Teaching Council Staff Code of Conduct**

The GTCE is consulting on a revised Code of Conduct. This can be found at <http://www.gtce.org.uk>

This will take you to the homepage and follow the instructions for responding to the online questionnaire. *Closing date is 27 March 2009.*

## **10 NSCL/DCSF 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 at [www.ncsl.org.uk](http://www.ncsl.org.uk). Click on National Standards for School Leadership on the Home Page or 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.*

**NCSL/DCSF deadline 3 March 2009. Deadline for comment to NGA 16 February 2009**

## **11 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools: A World-Class Education for Every Child / A School Report Card**

In *The Children's Plan*, the DCSF out its ambition to make England the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. It has now produced two linked documents that set out further information and invite feedback. The first describes how the entire school system will need to change, and how individual schools will need to look beyond traditional boundaries, be outward facing and work in close partnership with young people, parents, other schools, colleges, universities and with other children's services. The second document is about School Report Cards, and seeks input on the principles that should govern the new report cards. Views are sought on both documents.

The consultation can be found at: [www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/)

Responses may be made online to: [www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/) or sent by email to: [21centuryschools.consultation@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:21centuryschools.consultation@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk). Written responses should be sent to: Consultation Unit, DCSF, Ground Floor, Area GB, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2GJ.

**DCSF deadline 3 March 2009. Deadline for comment to NGA 16 February 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/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/). Closing date: 10 February 2009. And **2020 Children's and Young People's Workforce Strategy**. The strategy describes how Government will work with partners to ensure that all in the workforce receive support and development needed to obtain the best outcomes for children and young people. The consultation is aimed primarily at parents and members of the workforce, but governors may have views to share and observations to submit. Details are given at: [www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/). Closing date: 10 March 2009.*

## **12 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](http://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: £8.00.

**For other NGA publications, visit both the Publications and Guidance sections of the NGA website [www.nga.org.uk](http://www.nga.org.uk).**

### 13 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](http://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](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](mailto:publications@tda.gov.uk) or by telephone on 0845 6060 323. (Reference no: TDA279/05.07/BEL/158)