

National Governors' Association

BULLETIN BOARD

BB 3/08

1 March 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:

South East: Fri. 14 March 2008 (13.00–15.00) Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, Russell Square, London (preceded by QCA consultation meeting, beginning at 11.00)

London: April 2008 – details tbc

East Midlands: Tues. 4 March 2008 (11.00–15.00) Babington Community College, Leicester City

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

East: Wed. 12 March 2008 (18.30 for 19.00), Priory Hotel, Bury St Edmunds

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 (10 for 10.30), Haygrove School, Language Unit, Bridgwater

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

NGA/CSN/NCOGS Conference – Effective Governance in a Changing World: Monday, 2 June, London (details tbc)

NGA Annual General Meeting: Saturday, 8 November 2008

FOR INFORMATION

1 NGA News

NGA website: Recent work on the website means that the plans for log-ins to the Members' area should proceed soon. Please remember to contact the NGA office with names, addresses and email addresses of your association's executive committee so that they will be able to log-on the website and receive copies of the NGA magazine. 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.

Governance issues: It appears that the DCSF consultation on governance will be delayed and any changes resulting from the consultation are not likely to come into force until September 2009. The delay should not, however, cause governors to set aside consideration of the issues. We are being given more time to marshal our thoughts so let's use it well. The meeting with Schools Minister Jim Knight was cancelled at the last minute so NGA was not able to discuss members' views on the issues of governing body size, on mandatory induction training or on the governance proposals in the Children's Plan. These will be raised in person when we do next meet the Minister, but in the

meantime, the Chair of NGA has written to Jim Knight to ensure he knows the strength of views on these issues.

The second meeting held with ASCL and NAHT, looking in particular at what heads should expect of governing bodies and what governing bodies should expect of heads, was very successful. There was complete unanimity on almost every detail and the three associations plan to issue a joint paper, which should be very useful in obtaining a common understanding between heads and governors.

Home Office Green Paper – another governance issue: The Home Office has published a Green Paper, *The path to citizenship: next steps in reforming the immigration system*. Under 4.5 *Active Citizenship*, in paragraph 171, migrants awaiting citizenship are encouraged to make a contribution to the community by ‘undertaking voluntary work, or becoming a school governor, for instance’. In the response form (question 6), becoming a governor sits alongside raising money for charities or a school, running or helping with playgroups and running a sports team. This does display some lack of understanding of school governance! NGA’s Chair has written to Jacqui Smith to raise concerns, but please respond to the consultation and make your views known. *See details under Consultations*.

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

Meeting of Heads’, Education Officers’ and Governors’ National Organisations (HEG) (01.02.08): The meeting discussed the Children’s Plan and in particular Parent Councils and the proposals on governance. There was disquiet about what the role of parent councils might be and whether they may create more problems than solutions and, on governance, about what the Children’s Plan meant by ‘effective’ governing bodies. Single Status Agreements were also discussed. It was felt that there would be redundancies because of the financial implications – and losing support staff just as schools approached implementing the proposals in the Children’s Plan was of grave concern. Other issues discussed included school admissions, lesson observation grading, single level tests and Dedicated Headship Time.

The HEG meeting was followed by the meeting with ASCL and NAHT, mentioned under *NGA News*, which addressed the expectations of heads and governing bodies. The document to be drafted will be presented at the next HEG meeting before further dissemination.

Ministerial Stakeholder Group on Behaviour and Attendance (21.02.08): Sir Alan Steer, whose Report was the starting point for the work of the MSG, attended the meeting. He has begun a review of where matters stand currently. He is to produce an update on actions taken and the perceived effects, to consider if there are any new issues that have come to the fore and to look at how schools working in partnerships, with each other and with other agencies, are moving towards

better outcomes for children and for schools. Concern was expressed that ‘old’ academies, which were regulated only by their original agreements, could not be required to belong to partnerships. It was suggested that it might be possible to use the Education and Skills Bill and through enabling clauses to bring these academies into the fold. In discussing Day 6 provision for excluded pupils, the problems of rural areas were raised. As yet there is no totally satisfactory solution. The final point discussed was cyber-bullying of pupils and staff; there are plans to meet with service providers to press for a more responsible approach on their part.

Other February events or meetings attended by NGA representatives (or for which NGA provided chairs or speakers) included: Advisory Group on Governance, Governors’ conferences in Bradford, Chester and Crewe, Training and Development Agency (TDA) Governors’ Group, Eastern Region Co-ordinators of Governor Services, Independent Safeguarding Authority Information Road Show, Allegations Review Stakeholder Reference Group, NCSL Primary Leadership Group, Teaching Awards Panel meetings, NPQH Re-design Consultative Group, a meeting with Baroness Howe to brief our President on NGA’s stance on various issues which will come before the House of Lords.

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 Programme is administered and run by EduCare, experts in distance learning. *The pack of four modules is really good value at £9.50 + VAT (£11.16). Please note this can rise to £36.75 + VAT to include external assessment, feedback and advice and a Certificate. 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*

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.

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 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. Please copy any responses to NGA

8 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.

9 The path to citizenship: next steps in reforming the immigration system.

This Home Office Green Paper invites responses on its proposals regarding immigration and citizenship. The document is available on the Home Office website in Word or pdf format. Click on ‘quick links’, then ‘Have your say – contribute to a public consultation’ and then ‘The path to citizenship: next steps in reforming the immigration system’.

Responses may be made by email to: ImmigrationReform@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk. Written responses should be sent to: Immigration Reform Consultation Responses, Border and Immigration Agency, 11th Floor, Apollo House, 36 Wellesley Road, Croydon, CR9 3RR.

Home Office deadline 14 May 2008. Deadline for comment to NGA 26 April 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.