

National Governors' Association

BULLETIN BOARD

BB 11/08

1 November 2008

2nd Floor, SBQ1, 29 Smallbrook Queensway, Birmingham B5 4HE

Tel: 0121 643 5787 Fax: 0121 633 7141

E-mail: governorhq@nga.org.uk

Website: www.nga.org.uk

*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 Annual General Meeting: Saturday, 8 November 2008, Cumberland Hotel, London. The formal AGM Notice and accompanying documentation (including the audited accounts for 2007-08) were posted to Chairs (or the main contact) of Associations on 1 September. All documentation is also available to view in the Events section of the NGA website:

<http://www.nga.org.uk/events.aspx?cardid=34> There are still a few places left for the conference. If you would like to attend please let the NGA Office know by Noon on Thursday 6 November at the latest.

FOR INFORMATION

1 NGA News

NGA Board Elections: The NGA is your organisation – Please make sure you vote!

Associations – don't forget there will be no opportunity to vote for NGA Board Members at the AGM. All votes must be posted, emailed or faxed to the NGA to arrive by Thursday, 6 November. Further details below.

There are 16 candidates standing for election for nine General Director places. The candidates are: Stephen Adamson, Vanessa Aris, Colleen Arnold, Judith Bennett, Mark Blois, Pat Colling, Clare Collins, Terry Douris, Duncan Haworth, Peter Martin, Paul Mason, Violet Rook, Paul Rosen, Richard Thompson, Joyce Woodham and Carol Woodhouse.

The candidates' 250 word statements can be viewed on the About Us section of the NGA website. A ballot paper has been included in the AGM mailing to associations, but can also be downloaded from the Elections page of the website or obtained from the NGA Office via email at:

governorhq@nga.org.uk or by telephone on 0121-643-5787. The closing date for receipt of ballot papers is 2pm Thursday 6 November 2008. <http://www.nga.org.uk/NGAElections2008.aspx>

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>

NGA Association Subscriptions: Only a very small number of associations have not yet paid their subscriptions or been in touch with Gillian Windass at NGA about payment. **Please address this as soon as possible.** If you do not think you have been sent an invoice please contact Gillian at gillian.windass@nga.org.uk.

Please note: Associations who have not paid their subscriptions are not eligible to vote in the elections for the NGA Board, or to take any formal part in NGA meetings.

Associations with ‘capped’ subscriptions: because of the change in voting rights, most associations will be allocated votes in accordance with their subscription level, but ‘capped’ associations must provide a list of their members, so that they can be allocated the correct number of votes. The number of members will not be enough: we need names, please.

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

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>. *Also see under Meetings Digest.*

4 Meetings Digest

Business in the Community Conference (14.10.08): This conference saw the publication of the Bath University research on school governance and the BITC report on governance. Many of the conclusions of the Bath research could have been provided by NGA members (and indeed 5000 governors did respond as a result of NGA’s request to members – thank you). One issue that may prompt members’ comments was a suggestion that governors should not act as the strategic decision-making body (leaving strategic decisions to head teachers) but should have a scrutiny role. The BITC report again contained much that we would approve of (the importance of good clerking and of training) but strongly advocated business governors – with ‘business’ skills – as one might predict, as opposed to the representational, stakeholder model. NGA’s CEO was one of the speakers and promoted the importance of governing bodies and NGA’s views on the issues. John Dunford, General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) also spoke – and both promoted and used as the basis of his presentation – the joint NGA/NAHT/ASCL document on governing bodies’ expectations of school leaders and school leaders’ expectations of governing bodies. The final speaker was to have been Ed Balls, but he was elsewhere announcing the end of KS3 SATs.

Ministerial Working Group on Governance (23.10.08): This fourth meeting of five, gave an opportunity to the group to discuss all the issues and review where there was unanimity and where there remained disagreement. There is a lot of agreement but a small minority have some issues with size, composition and compulsory induction training.

Meeting at the House of Lords (23.10.08): NGA’s CEO and Chair met with Baronesses Howe, Sharp and Walmsley to draft two amendments to the *Education and Skills Bill*. One amendment would put into Regulations the advice, currently only in Guidance, that Schools’ Forums should

have parity in numbers of governors and head teachers. The second addressed the issue of the local authority as 'parent' for looked after children: currently an individual parent can be subject to sanction, but the local authority cannot.

Other October events or meetings attended by NGA representatives (or for which NGA provided chairs or speakers) included: NGA Regional Meetings, East Riding Governors' Association, National Education Trust (Creating a Successful School in the 21st Century), CRB Consultative Group Conference, ISA Implementation Team Education Consultation Group (Home Office), Co-ordinators of Governor Services Annual Conference, British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society Conference, NCSL Succession Planning Advisory Group, General Teaching Council, Standard School Year, Human Rights in Schools, Leicestershire Governors' Association, Centre for British Teachers (CfBT), Teaching Awards National Final at the London Palladium, BBC News 24 (responding to the ending of KS3 SATs).

5 National Teaching Awards – Governor of the Year

The winner, from a very high calibre field, was Einir Roberts, Chair of Governors at Harrietsham Primary School, Maidstone, Kent.

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 on the front page of the NGA website. Alternatively, email the office for a hard copy of the form – governorhq@nga.org.uk.*

7 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

8 Road Safety

Brake, the road safety charity is asking school governors to get their schools involved in Road Safety Week 2008 (10-16 November) and to urge children, families and teachers to protect the ones they love on the roads. Go to <http://www.roadsafetyweek.org.uk> for details and suggestions on how to raise awareness. There is a free Action Pack.

CONSULTATIONS: NEWS and ACTION

9 Legislation for Sure Start Children's Centres

The Government is consulting on proposals to give Sure Start Children's Centres (SSCCs) a specific statutory legal basis, as part of the forthcoming Education and Skills Bill. The purpose of the proposed legislation is to establish SSCCs as a legally recognised part of the universal infrastructure for children's services, so their provision becomes a long term statutory commitment and part of the

established landscape of early years provision. The proposed new duties reflect current good practice as shown in existing guidance issued by DCSF, rather than creating any new requirements on local authorities or other service providers.

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: SSCClegislation.CONULTATION@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk. Written responses should be sent to: Consultation Unit, Ground Floor, Area B, DCSF, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2GJ.

DCSF deadline 6 November 2008. Please copy responses to NGA

10 A New Way of Handling Parents' Complaints about School Issues

The Children's Plan committed the Government to look at ways of improving the current arrangements for parents' complaints. The consultation invites comments on handling parents' complaints to their child's school affecting their child, including those which concern bullying. The DCSF is asking for views on ways to improve: handling of complaints at school level; the place of mediation services to resolve disagreements early on; and possible new arrangements to consider complaints that cannot be resolved at school level.

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: parentscomplaints.consultation@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk. Written responses should be sent to: Consultation Unit, Area GB, DCSF, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2GJ.

DCSF deadline 21 November 2008. Deadline for comment to NGA 7 November 2008

11 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

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 have signed a national agreement with the Association of School 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+.

- ◆ *Food Policy in Schools – A Strategic Policy Framework for Governing Bodies*. The revised publication was launched in September 2007 to take account of the new standards for school food. Available free from NGA. <http://www.nga.org.uk/gdncedocs.aspx>
- ◆ *NGA/Defra – A Strategic Policy Framework for Governing Bodies, Catering and Food Procurement Supplement*: The NGA in partnership with Defra has produced a supplement to the Food Policy Document, looking at issues surrounding food procurement and sustainability. The document is available to download from the NGA website via the attached link. <http://www.nga.org.uk/gdncedocs.aspx>
- ◆ *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.

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

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)