

## February 2014 Bulletin Board

The National Governors' Association is an independent charity representing state school governors from local authority maintained schools and academies. This monthly NGA bulletin board is distributed to local governor associations and co-ordinators of governor services who are members of the NGA so that they can keep governing bodies up-to-date on our work and the changes and developments in governance. So, please help to keep others informed by sharing and distributing this widely. If you are not a member of NGA and have found this bulletin useful, this is only a fraction of the information NGA produces for governors. Please consider joining us: see section H.

If you have any comments on this bulletin or suggestions for future editions, please contact [laura.owen@nga.org.uk](mailto:laura.owen@nga.org.uk).

### Contents:

- |                              |                                   |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>A. Cover story</b>        | <b>E. Dates for your diary</b>    |
| <b>B. Education news</b>     | <b>F. DfE consultations</b>       |
| <b>C. Parliamentary news</b> | <b>G. NGA partners</b>            |
| <b>D. NGA news</b>           | <b>H. NGA membership benefits</b> |

### A. Clerking Matters: NGA and SOLACE's survey of clerks

The National Governors' Association (NGA) has been working with Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and others to promote and support the work of governing body clerks. For school governing bodies to be effective, they need the support of a professional clerk to advise them on their duties and how best to fulfil them.

At [NGA's Summer Conference](#) on 6 July 2013, Lord Nash, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Schools, commented: "Professional boards also need professional support. Which means clerking that goes way beyond simply taking down the minutes" and that "the NGA and others have made a very persuasive case for a more skilled approach; with clerks recognised as having a responsibility for providing boards with sound advice on their duties and functions and how to exercise them."

As part of our [Clerking Matters campaign](#) we are conducting a survey of clerks. The survey is now open to all clerks in state funded schools in England (maintained and academies).

Please encourage your clerk to take part in the survey and forward the link onto other clerks. The results of the survey will be reported in NGA's [Governing Matters magazine](#).

Take the survey [here](#).

### Clerking Matters!

For school governing bodies to be effective, they need the support of a professional clerk to advise them on their duties and how best to fulfil them, but we understand that many schools struggle to find a good independent clerk. If you're in need of a clerk, or can offer your clerking services, have a look at our [Find us a clerk](#) pages, where you can register for free.

## B. Education news

### 1. DfE consultation on changes to governance regulations and guidance

The government has announced a consultation on changes to some of the governance regulations and advice for **local authority (LA) maintained schools**. The Department for Education (DfE) is proposing to make **all** LA maintained school governing bodies reconstitute under the 2012 Regulations by September 2015. Members can have a look at our [Q&A on constitution](#) for what this would mean for you.

In addition, the DfE is proposing that all non-elected governors (e.g LA/foundation) must in future be appointed on the basis that they have, in the opinion of the person making the appointment, 'the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.' Currently this is only the case for co-opted governors.

As was highlighted by the House of Commons Education Select Committee report, currently when there are too many governors in a particular category, the 'last in first out' or juniority principle, applies. The consultation proposes to remove this to give the governing body (or the body responsible for appointing, in the case of foundation governors) the responsibility for resolving any surplus.

The government also propose to amend the Federations Regulations to bring them into line with the proposed provisions above for the Constitution Regulations, as well as amend an anomaly relating to staff governor ratios.

None of these proposals will apply to academies. NGA will be replying to the consultation. If you would like to feed into the NGA response, please email [Philip.wood@nga.org.uk](mailto:Philip.wood@nga.org.uk) with your thoughts by Wednesday 12 February. You can view all of the consultation documents, and draft Regulations and advice, on the [Department for Education's website](#).

### 2. New Ofsted subsidiary guidance and DfE report on inspections

Ofsted has updated its Subsidiary Guidance (supporting the inspection of maintained schools and academies) for inspectors for 2014. There are a number of changes, with the main ones listed on the NGA's [Ofsted Inspections and Governance page](#). In particular, continuing its focus on pupil premium spending, inspectors may now recommend a review of pupil premium spending even where leadership and management is viewed to be 'good.'

The DfE released a report comparing the inspection outcomes of LA maintained schools with converter academies – specifically in relation to whether schools inspected in 2012/13 were more or less likely to retain or improve on their previous overall Ofsted judgement grade. The report indicates that schools that became converter academies were more likely to retain or increase their grading at their next inspection when compared to maintained schools of the same Ofsted grading. This applied both at primary and secondary level, and at 'outstanding,' 'good,' and 'satisfactory' gradings. The report doesn't seek to explain its findings and so it is difficult to draw conclusions as why this may be the case.

[Performance of converter academies: an analysis of inspection outcomes 2012 to 2013](#)

### 3. Performance tables

The secondary school performance tables for 2013 have been published on the [DfE's website](#). A number of new features have been introduced:

- The key stage 4 tables now include 'closing the gap' data allowing comparison between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. A 'best eight' measure shows the average GCSE grade achieved by a school's pupils across eight particular subjects, including maths and English.
- The key stage 5 tables report academic and vocational performance separately for the first time. There are also new measures including average grade per entry for A Level, academic and vocational qualifications, and value added measures showing progress made by pupils in each qualification type.

If you have not used the information available to look at the results of similar schools, we would recommend you do so. The *Knowing your School* briefing notes which help governors to understand and ask the right questions about RAISEonline have been updated. Download it free from the [NGA website](#) and start interrogating your data.

### 4. Free workshops on Performance Related Pay

The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) is making available free training workshops for governors on the implementation of PRP (as well as financial efficiency and RAISEonline). Training will be available through providers licensed by the NCTL. Your local provider can be found online - [NCTL PRP workshop providers](#).

An updated version of *Knowing Your School briefing: Governors and Staff Performance* is now available. The updates reflect the introduction of performance-related pay and set out what governors need to be doing in response to the changes. The briefing can be downloaded free from the [NGA website](#).

### 5. Need to know timelines

The latest edition of the DfE's Need to Know [mandatory](#) and [useful](#) timelines for schools and governors was published this week. These timelines set out important information to help headteachers, principals, and governors plan ahead, prepare for, and implement changes during the academic year and beyond.

## C. Parliamentary news

### 1. Government response to the Education Select Committee report

On Monday 20 January, the government's response to the Education Select Committee's inquiry into '*School Partnerships and Cooperation*' was published. The inquiry looked at the differing forms of school partnership and cooperation and whether they have particular advantages/disadvantages reported last November and made a number of recommendations.

In particular, the Committee recommended that the government extends its primary chain grant to schools forming local authority federations. The NGA welcomed this recommendation as [our research](#) demonstrates that federation is an attractive option for many schools. We are disappointed, therefore, that the government has rejected this recommendation.

While we acknowledge that it is government policy is to encourage all schools to adopt academy status, there needs to be recognition that many schools, particularly, but not exclusively, small primary schools are not yet in a position to do this. Furthermore, many of the advantages conferred by multi-academy status for small schools are available to local authority maintained federations, without the additional back office work of running the business of an academy.

Emma Knights, Chief Executive of the NGA said 'It is extremely disappointing that the Department for Education continues to believe that whether a school is an academy is more important than joining a formal partnership, called a federation, governed by a single board. Federation – irrespective of whether an academy federation or a local authority maintained federation - brings with it advantages for pupils. Ofsted reported on this over two years ago in a report called *Leadership of more than one school* and more recently the Select Committee encouraged federations, but ministers see fit to ignore experience on this issue. It is very short-sighted of the Secretary of State not to be actively encouraging primary schools – 90% of which remain local authority maintained - to work together and formalise these arrangements by federating.'

In response to the Committee's other recommendations, the government has said that it will clarify the role of local authorities in relation to school improvement – as part of its consultation on the Education Services Grant (expected soon), as well as issuing revised statutory guidance on Schools Causing Concern. These will clearly be of interest to governors and NGA will report as soon as further details are published.

NGA's written evidence to the Committee can be [viewed here](#).  
[Education Select Committee website](#)

## D. NGA news

With calls for governance to become more professional, we want to know how you recruit governors when you have a vacancy. Please take part in our next poll on the NGA homepage:

*Have you ever tried approaching local employers to find a new governor?*

No, we have not considered that, but we'd like to know more about how to do that

Yes, and it was successful

Yes, but it was unsuccessful

## E. Dates for your diary

If you would like us to advertise your local event, please email [Laura Owen](#).

### 1. NGA regional conferences

This spring, we are holding conferences in the South East and West Midlands in place of their regional meetings. As these conferences have been so oversubscribed, they are now for members only. If you would like to attend, visit the NGA website for details on how to [join](#).

#### South East Conference

Date: Saturday 1 March 2014

Location: Guildford

Time: 09.30 – 15.00

Keynote: Emma Ing, Ofsted Senior HMI

### West Midlands Conference

Date: Saturday 15 March 2014  
 Time: 09.30 – 15.00  
 Location: Birmingham

Keynote: Lorna Fitzjohn, Ofsted's West Midlands regional director

## 2. NGA regional meetings

The NGA holds regional meetings for members in the spring and autumn. If your school is a member of NGA, you can book a place [online](#).

Region	Date	Location	Time
East of England	25/03/2014	Stansted	15.00 – 18.00
East Midlands	25/03/2014	Nottingham	11.00 – 14.00
London	11/03/2014	London	17.30 – 20.00
North East	31/03/2014	Durham	17.30 – 20.00
North West	19/03/2014	Preston	17.30 – 20.00
South West	22/03/2014	Taunton	11.00 – 14.00
Yorkshire & Humberside	10/03/2014	Wakefield	17.30 – 20.00

## 3. Academies Show London

The next Academies Show takes place on Wednesday 30 April at the ExCeL Centre in London. For LA maintained schools and established academies, it is free to attend, and aims to provide visitors with a clear understanding of the process of converting, learn about managing a successful academy, and about the future of education policy from those who decide it.

Emma Knights, Chief Executive, will take part in an interactive session dedicated to providing the audience with answers to their questions about good governance. Also in attendance will be Philip Wood, Parliamentary and Advice Officer, who will be leading a seminar discussing Choosing the Best Governance Structure for your Academy, including: why you should consider governing in a group; improving your governance structure; the implications in relation to sponsored academies; and possible structures that you might want to think about.

## 4. Renewable energy conference, Monday 24 February 2014

Woodcote High School has taken advantage of the capital funding available to invest in renewable energy, and is hosting a free event to advertise the opportunities and advantages available to other schools. If you are interested in attending this free event at Woodcote High School, Meadow Rise, Coulsdon, CR5 2EH, contact Steven Callan 07850770347.

## F. Consultations since the last bulletin (closing dates are for DfE)

1. [Maintained school governing body constitution: regulation changes](#)

**Closing date:** Friday 14 March 2014

NGA is always interested in hearing governors' views on any subject; please email any comments, or copies of any submission you make to NGA's policy manager, [Gillian Allcroft](#).



## G. NGA partners

### 1. IAA Conference

The NGA is working with IAA on the governance strand of their national conference on Wednesday 5 March in London. It should be of particular interest to all those governing groups of schools. We'll be exploring how multi-academy trusts and federations are changing and growing in response to new demands, which all governors will find useful. If you are a governor of a MAT, please get in touch with us. Email [mark.gardner@nga.org.uk](mailto:mark.gardner@nga.org.uk).

For more information, visit the IAA website. Bookings can be made online or by downloading this form. NGA members have been offered a discounted rate of £175+VAT. You can take a colleague for £125+VAT, so you could ask if your headteacher or another governor also wish to attend.

### 2. Apply to be a National Leader of Governance

The application round for Cohort 5 National Leaders of Governance (NLG) is now open, and will close on 14 February. The deadline for endorsements is 21 February. Potential applicants are encouraged to refer to the [eligibility criteria](#) on the National College website to identify whether they meet the requirements for the role.

Applications must be made online. To do this, applicants will need to be a member of the National College. All governors are eligible to join the National College, and you can register [online](#). For further information, email [chair.ofgovernors@nationalcollege.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:chair.ofgovernors@nationalcollege.gsi.gov.uk).

## H. NGA membership benefits

Governing bodies can join the NGA to receive more benefits. Every governor will gain access to the members' only area of the website, and receive the weekly newsletter. Members also receive generous discounts off our publications.

**GOLD governing body membership: £260** ensures in addition that every governor receives NGA's magazine *Governing Matters*, free induction guides, additional event places, and is entitled to advice from the NGA, including **access to our legal advice service**.

**Standard governing body membership: £72** entitles you to five free copies of the bi-monthly magazine, discounts on publications, and a free place at members' events as well as the weekly newsletter and web resources.

**Make sure your association is receiving all its benefits.** If you have not yet given us the names, home addresses and email addresses of your executive members, or if these have changed, please send details to: [membership@nga.org.uk](mailto:membership@nga.org.uk).

