

May 2012 Bulletin Board

The National Governors' Association is an independent charity representing state school governors – one of the largest volunteer groups in England – from both 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 local schools up to-date. It is intended to update governing bodies on our work, the changes and developments in governance, and active Government consultations. 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 G.

If you have any comments on this bulletin or suggestions for future editions, please contact laura.owen@nga.org.uk.

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A. Cover Story

All Party Parliamentary Group on School and College Governance

Last year, an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on School and College Governance was set up by twenty MPs and Peers. NGA acts as the secretariat to the APPG, which is chaired by Neil Carmichael MP. The aims of the group are to raise the profile of school and college governors, to explore their changing leadership role, to act as advocates for the importance of good school and college governance, and to ensure governors' views and concerns are heard in Parliament. It provides a very good way for governors to raise issues of interest with MPs.

The next meeting of the APPG is being held on Monday 21 May in the House of Commons. It will be used to consult parliamentarians and other interested parties on a draft of 'twenty questions' which can be used by school and academy governing bodies to review their effectiveness. The list, developed with input from both NGA and Ten Group, is intended to provide actions that governing bodies can undertake in order to improve practice.

Invitations will be sent to MPs on the APPG mailing this week. However, MPs are more likely to engage with the issues when a local constituent raises them, and governors who encourage their MPs to attend will be invited to attend themselves. If you would like your MP to receive a direct invitation, please e-mail your address and your MP's name to education.governance.appg@nga.org.uk.

B. Education News

1. School Funding

On 26 March, the Department for Education (DfE) issued its latest consultation on school funding (this follows from the two consultations that took place in 2011). The DfE has decided to make no changes until 2015 at the earliest to the way in which it distributes funding to local authorities. This is disappointing as the Department has recognised that the current system is inequitable and requires change. What the DfE is consulting about now are changes to local authority funding formulas from April 2013, i.e. the way in which local authorities distribute funding to schools.

The DfE is proposing that LAs will only be able to use ten factors to distribute funding to schools and that Special Schools and special units attached to mainstream schools will all be funded in the same way via a mechanism known as 'place plus'. Deprivation funding will in future only be distributable using either Free School Meals eligibility or the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI). Protection for small schools will be made through a lump sum allocation as there will be no allowable specific 'small school' factors and— this lump sum must be the same for all schools whether primary or secondary.

The closing date for comments is 21 May 2012. The full consultation document can be found on the DfE's website via the attached link - [School Funding Consultation](#)

2. Need to Know Information for Governors and Headteachers

The Department for Education has released a document outlining the important information that is needed in order for headteachers/principals and governors to plan and implement changes throughout the academic year. They have also updated the myths and facts document, which addresses some of the misconceptions about bureaucracy.

Need to know:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/toolsandinitiatives/cuttingburdens/a00197719/timeline-2012>

Myths and Facts:

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/m/myths%20and%20facts%20for%20schools.pdf>

3. Improving attendance

The DfE's expert adviser on behaviour, Charlie Taylor, has written a report on improving attendance, in which he says the Government should move its focus away from 'truancy' and concentrate instead on attendance, as 'truancy' is not the only cause of pupils' absence. The report makes 13 recommendations including that holiday in term-time rules are strengthened, parental fines are made easier to understand and that attendance statistics are produced for the whole year and included in Ofsted reports. Full details can be viewed at <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications>.

Last week the Government published guidance on exclusions, which can also be viewed at www.education.gov.uk/publications.

4. Michael Gove MP at House of Commons Select Committee

The Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove MP, appeared before MPs of the Education Select Committee last week to give further evidence on a range of subjects, including school improvement and the national curriculum. He was asked about some of the issues that Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI), Sir Michael Wilshaw, had raised when he appeared before the committee in February, in particular what the middle layer between the DfE and individual schools should look like. The Secretary of State said that he was 'open minded' about any solutions, but that it had been shown that school to school improvement was one of the most effective methods, and he did not want another "bureaucratic" body, like some local authorities, to be put in place. He also revealed that eight academies had been issued pre-warning notices. He was also questioned about the curriculum, including sex and relationships education, on which he said: "If you look at the way in which we can encourage students not to engage in risky behaviour, one of the best ways we do that is by educating them so well in a particular range of subjects, that they have hope for the future."

<http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Main/Player.aspx?meetingId=10666>

C. NGA News

1. May Poll

A new poll is now on the NGA home page! Please vote:

'Should there be a performance appraisal of governors?'

2. April Poll

Thank you to everyone who voted in the April poll on:

'How has the number of parental complaints changed since last year?'

32%	Increased a little	(48)	6%	Decreased a little	(9)
30%	No change	(45)	6%	Don't know	(9)
19%	Increased a lot	(29)	5%	Decreased a lot	(8)

3. Call to Election for the NGA Board of Trustees

The NGA Board is made up of 18 members; 9 Regional Directors, elected directly by NGA members in their region, and 9 General Directors, elected by the whole membership via postal ballot. Each year one third of places for General Directors come up for election.

The General Directors elected will take office following the AGM on 24 November 2012

All categories of NGA member are entitled to stand as candidates or nominate candidates for election. All candidates must be serving governors. The closing date for nominations is: 18:00 on 31 July 2012.

Nomination forms and details of what being an NGA Director entails can be obtained from the NGA office via email governorhq@nga.org.uk or by ringing 0121-237-3780. Alternatively details can be downloaded from the About Us section of the NGA website. www.nga.org.uk

D. Dates for your Diary

1. Yorkshire and Humberside Data Conference, Sheffield, Saturday 19 May 2012

This free event is open to anyone, not just NGA members. Please contact laura.owen@nga.org.uk for more information and a flyer for distribution, or visit www.nga.org.uk/events.aspx.

2. NGA Summer Conference in London, Saturday 16 June 2012

The NGA summer conference will be held in central London. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw will be giving the key note address. This is your opportunity to question the man in charge of the school inspection regime. Workshops will include academy governance; school financial management; special educational needs and disability; school improvement; and performance management.

You must book by 25 May. You can download a booking form at www.nga.org.uk/events.aspx.

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

1. [A Consultation on Improving the Assurance System for Financial Management in Local Authority Maintained Schools](#) **Closing Date:** Friday 11 May 2012
2. [Reform of Alternative Provision](#) **Closing Date:** Tuesday 15 May 2012
3. [Consultation on Revision of The Education \(Independent School Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2010](#) **Closing Date:** Tuesday 5 June 2012
4. [Review of Regulations and National Minimum Standards for Residential Family Centres](#) **Closing Date:** Tuesday 3 July 2012

To view the consultations, please go to <http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm>.

NGA is always interested in hearing governors' views and experience on these and other topics; please e-mail any comments or copies of any submission you make to NGA's policy manager: Gillian.allcroft@nga.org.uk.

F. NGA Partners

1. GovernorLine

There have been two key developments affecting GovernorLine, the free, confidential advice, information and support service for governors. The service is now available to governors of academies and free schools, Secondly, the website has moved to www.education.gov.uk/governorline as part of the general policy of reducing the number of government-funded websites. Remember that you can call free on 08000 722 181 or e-mail from the website.

2. National College for School Leadership: NLG Deployment

National Leaders of Governance (NLG) are highly effective chairs of governors who use their skills and experience to support another chair of governors to improve school performance. They have contributed to raising standards in their own school by providing appropriate support and challenge to their headteacher and by developing their governing body. For more information about NLG, click here:

<http://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/docinfo?id=178186&filename=national-leaders-of-governance-fact-sheet.pdf>

Details of the National Leaders of Governance who have been designated in the first cohort can be found on the National College website by clicking here:

<http://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/docinfo?id=176849&filename=list-of-nlgs.pdf>

If you would like to work with a National Leader of Governance, email chairofgovernors@nationalcollege.org.uk

G. 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.

Gold governing body membership: £250 ensures in addition that every governor receives the bi-monthly magazine *Governing Matters*; the school gets a free pack of guides, additional event places, and is entitled to advice from the NGA, including **access to our legal service**.

Standard governing body membership: £70 entitles you to five free copies of the 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. Members of the executive committees of local associations are entitled to receive a copy of the NGA magazine, *Governing Matters*, sent to their home address, to have access to the members' only section of the NGA website, and to have the e-newsletter sent direct to their email address. 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.