

June 2014 bulletin board

The National Governors' Association (NGA) is an independent charity that aims to improve the education standards and well-being of children and young people through supporting, promoting, and challenging outstanding governance in all state-funded schools, including academies and free schools. As the only representative body for governors at national level, we take our responsibilities seriously; we want to represent governors as effectively as possible. This bulletin board is distributed to local governor associations and local authorities so they can keep their schools up to date with changes and developments in governance and the NGA. If you find this information useful and you're not a member of the NGA, please consider joining us; this is only a fraction of the material we produce for governors. See section I for details.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact [Laura Owen](#).

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A. Launch of the Inspiring Governors Alliance

The Inspiring Governors Alliance was launched on 15 May to encourage more skilled people to volunteer as governors, more employers to think about the benefits of supporting their staff to become governors, and more governing bodies to actively recruit governors for their skills.



The Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, opened the event in London exhorting people to volunteer in order to advance social justice, further economic efficiency and increase their own happiness. He described being a governor as a fulfilling chapter in one's life, the clear purpose of which is to make other people's lives better, saying "it is a shared enterprise, and how could anyone possibly say no."

Mr Gove castigated business for accusing schools of not servicing their interests in producing young people with the necessary skills for work; addressing employers, he said: "there is no excuse: if you care about employability of young people, you must get involved in governance." However, less helpful advice to governors was widely reported by journalists, to which [NGA has since responded](#) (see section E below).

The alliance was set up to celebrate and promote the importance of high quality school and college governance. It was co-ordinated by the Education and Employers Taskforce and its founding members are the NGA, the Department for Education (DfE), CBI, and SGOSS Governors for Schools and Colleges. Since then, many other partners, including employers, professional bodies, and school support services, have pledged support for the alliance. If your organisation would like to support the alliance, it's not too late: please contact info@educationandemployers.org, or phone 020 3206 0510.

www.inspiringgovernors.org

B. Education news

1. Results of the survey on school governing published

Many of you will be aware of the survey conducted by the NGA and the University of Bath on the state of school governing in England – thanks to everyone who took part. The data from over 7,500 participants from all types of schools was analysed and published in conjunction with the launch of the Inspiring Governors Alliance.

The findings of the survey highlight the increased importance of school governors under the new education system, and both the challenges of governing and of recruiting volunteers. It revealed that schools in disadvantaged settings or with low Ofsted grades are particularly struggling to recruit skilled people to take on the governor role – precisely where they are needed most.

Generally, governance practice is improving, with more challenge of headteachers by governors, and a great commitment to training and development. The report recommends that, although most governors are in paid employment and are professionals or managers, more should be done to organise governors on work-friendly lines, so that people in paid employment can participate more easily.

[Read more and download the research](#)

2. New Constitution Regulations statutory guidance

The DfE has published statutory guidance about the amendments to the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012.

As expected, the amendment requires all governing bodies of local authority (LA) maintained schools to be constituted under the 2012 Constitution Regulations or the 2012 Federation Regulations, as appropriate, by 1 September 2015.

3. New Governors' Handbook

At the same time, it published a revised version of the Governors' Handbook. The Governors' Handbook contains essential information that all governors and trustees need to know. It outlines what the legal responsibilities of school governors are, and how these fit together with the day-to-day responsibilities of the headteacher running the schools, the local authority, academy trust, and others.

The changes include:

- New section on changes to the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012 and the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012
- More information on the strategic/operational divide
- Updated information on external reviews of governance
- Updated content on careers advice

[Governors' Handbook](#)

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4. Updated need to know and myths and facts documents

The Department for Education have updated its Need to Know information and Myths and Facts documents.

C. Parliamentary news

MPs take further evidence on academies

The House of Commons Education Select Committee is continuing to take evidence on the academies and free schools programmes. The new Schools Commissioner, Frank Green, as well as the recently appointed South West Regional Schools Commissioner both gave evidence, with much of the session focussing on the role of the new regional commissioners and academy chains. You can read more about the session on the [NGA website](#).

D. Improving practice

1. NGA publishes a new skills matrix

NGA encourages all governing boards to use a skills audit to help them identify any skills and knowledge they still need to deliver their functions effectively. This is to enable governing boards to ensure they have sufficient expertise to carry out their core duties effectively. However, it is also important for governors to know their school and community, so skills relating to this are also included. You can find out more about the skills audit and matrix and download it free on [our website](#).

2. Succession breeds success

NCOGS has released an updated version of Succession breeds success to help governors secure a legacy for strategic leadership through good succession planning. It covers recruiting new members, developing the role of vice-chair, and becoming an effective chair.

[Succession breeds success](#)

3. Free training on statutory duties to vulnerable children (London)

The UCL Centre for Access to Justice is running free training sessions for governors on the statutory duties owed to vulnerable children, including changes to the law relating to exclusions, disability discriminations, and special educational needs. [Find out more](#)

E. NGA news

1. NGA Manifesto and a letter to the Secretary of State

On 23 May, the NGA published a new manifesto in preparation for next year's general election. Since our last manifesto in 2010, we have been successful in raising the profile of school governance in the political agenda, in the view of schools leaders, and Ofsted. The NGA aims to raise the standard of governance to ensure an excellent education for every child in England. To this end, we are calling for:

1. The issue of school governance to be given greater prominence in central and local government policy making

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2. Induction training to be provided free for all new school governors and trustees
3. The government to provide financial incentives both to encourage effective collaboration and to schools wishing to join together in LA maintained federations as well as multi-academy trusts
4. Funding to be distributed in an equitable, objective and transparent manner. Three-year indicative budgets should be introduced for both capital and revenue funding and the level of school funding increased
5. The supply of high-quality headteachers and teachers to be given more consideration centrally and for the government to take affirmative action to prevent a serious staffing shortage
6. The promotion of professional governing board clerks
7. A reduction in the number of new initiatives from central government and a period of relative stability to allow schools to continue to improve.

[Download the manifesto](#)

Although the profile of school governance has been raised, we want to raise it further, and we have some way to go before all communications from the DfE recognises and respects the role of governing boards. Please encourage your local MP to get involved in governance or lobby them on the issues important to you. We have an All Party Parliamentary Group on Education Governance and leadership they can get involved in. Email [Mark](#) for more details.

At the launch of the Inspiring Governors Alliance, Michael Gove chose to use words of his own which were widely reported in part. It caused upset among governors, who felt that they unfairly characterised governing board practice, and NGA has therefore written to the Secretary of State to ask him to publicly correct the impression he may have inadvertently given.

You can download the letter from the [NGA website](#).

2. NGA poll

Thank you to everyone who voted in the poll:

What financial information would you most like to receive from your Finance Department that you are not currently receiving?

- 2% Cash flow forecast
- 15% KPI reporting (e.g. pupil/teacher ratio or liquidity ratio)
- 8% Graphical finance performance information
- 0% Fund analysis of carry forward balances
- 0% Balance sheet reporting
- 28% I already receive all the above
- 47% I would like to receive all of the above**

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Please take the time to participate in our new poll:

During your last Ofsted inspection, how many governors attended the discussion with inspectors?

Only the chair (or a substitute)

As many as possible, at the inspectors' request

None

As many as possible, at the governing body's request

Don't know

F. Dates for your diary

1. NGA summer conference and EGM 2014

Neil Carberry, Director of the CBI will be delivering the keynote address at the NGA summer conference on 'Employers and schools: working together.' We will also be holding two sets of workshops; for details, see [our website](#).

Date: Saturday 14 June

Location: ETC Venues St Pauls, London

Following the conference, we will be having an EGM to vote on proposed changes to the NGA board. See the [website](#) for details. [Book a place online](#) today – places are filling fast!

2. Greening Education 2014

The Greening Education conference will be held on Monday 9 June at the Mermaid in London. Members of NGA, along with public and third sector workers, are able to get fully funded tickets. To register your attendance, please email bookings@govtoday.co.uk using the code **NGA9**. For more information, see the [event website](#).

G. Consultations

These consultations have been released since the last bulletin. Closing dates are for the organisation consulting. NGA is always interesting in hearing governors' views. Please email any comments, or a copy of your submission, to [Gillian Allcroft](#), NGA's Policy Manager.

1. [Headteacher standards review call for evidence](#) **Closing date:** Monday 16 June 2014
2. [Setting the grade standards of new GCSEs in England](#) **Closing date:** Monday 30 June 2014

H. NGA partners

1. Take part in the Wellcome Trust pilot

Last month, we announced that NGA is piloting an innovative free new resource from the Wellcome Trust to help secondary school governors improve science and maths in their school. The pilot has now been launched, so governors can now:

1. Visit www.questionsforgovernors.co.uk to have a look at the questions.
2. Complete this [short evaluation questionnaire](#) about the website, and fill out their contact details at the end of the survey to receive updates throughout the pilot. These will include the final evaluation survey, so it's important that details are registered here.
3. Share the questions with their governing body – also see the guidance on [how to use the questions](#).

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If you have any questions or would like more information, contact [Ellie](#).

2. Happy 1st birthday to the FFT Governor Dashboard!

A very happy first birthday to the FFT Governor Dashboard! The Dashboard, developed in partnership with the National Governors' Association and the Wellcome Trust, provides a range of information to help governors support and challenge the school leadership team. It clearly displays information about results and pupil progress, subject performance, progress of pupil groups, school context, attendance and highlights some of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, making it the ideal overview for Ofsted inspections too.

All subscribing schools can download the Governor Dashboard from FFT Aspire and share it easily with governors, or governors can be provided with their own log in. The new Aspire has been enhanced to also include overviews of KS1, KS2, KS4 and KS5, providing a wealth of information in an accessible way.

Free online training to the Governor Dashboard is available from www.fft.org.uk.

Download [Knowing your School – The FFT Governor Dashboard](#)

I. 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 **free access to our legal advice service**.

Standard governing body membership: £75 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.

