

August 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 F.

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

Contents:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A. Cover story | E. DfE consultations |
| B. Education News | F. NGA Partners |
| C. NGA News | G. NGA membership benefits |
| D. Dates for Your Diary | |

A. Cover Story

Twenty Key Questions to challenge a governing body

At the All Party Parliamentary Group on Education Governance and Leadership (APPG) summer reception on 9 July 'Twenty key questions for a governing body to ask itself' were launched. The aim is one page of questions to engage as many governing bodies as possible in a simple exercise to reflect on their practice; good governing bodies will already be regularly reviewing their practice, but we want to spread this practice far and wide. These questions should enable every governing body to challenge itself and, if the answers derive from a genuine discussion based on the evidence available, decide when and how improvements can be made. There are other resources available to help governing bodies improve.

Please do circulate the questions widely and if any other organisations wish to endorse them please let us know; we are more than happy for other people to adopt them.

<http://www.nga.org.uk/Resources/Useful-Documents/Twenty-Key-Questions.aspx>

B. Education News

1. Teacher Appraisal Regulations

NGA members will be aware that from September the School Teacher Appraisal Regulations 2012 come into force replacing the previous Performance Management Regulations. The new Regulations considerably 'slim down' the previous Regulations, in particular, removing the previously statutory limits on classroom observation for appraisal purposes.

The DfE initially proposed that appraisal review statements should be forwarded when a teacher applied for a job at another school. Thankfully, the DfE took notice of the widespread opposition to this proposal and did not take this option forwards. Instead, it decided that when a teacher applies for a post at another school, the new school, as part of the reference request, has the right to seek information about whether the teacher has been subject to capability in the last two years.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2012/115/contents/made>

2. Free School Meal Pilot Study

A pilot study on free school meals has revealed that giving all children access free school meals (FSM) can improve attainment, but that there may be other more cost effective methods of doing so. The research, which ran for two years from 2009, compared two approaches, one which allowed all primary age pupils to have free school meals (universal approach) and took place in Durham and Newham, and another that extended the entitlement to FSM to those families receiving working tax credits and on an income below £16,040 and applied to primary and secondary pupils (extended approach) which took place in Wolverhampton. Researchers then compared the outcomes between pilots and to a sample of pupils not in either pilot study.

The researchers looked at the impact of the pilots on: take-up of school meals, eating habits at home and school, over-all well-being and body mass index and behaviour, attendance and academic performance.

The researchers found that there were more positive effects from the universal approach than the extended approach. In the universal approach more pupils took up FSM compared to the extended approach. In addition, in the universal approach pupils' made on average 4-8 weeks more than comparator pupils. Neither approach resulted in improved attendance. Improvement in behaviour was more difficult to gauge as the study did not include qualitative assessments of classroom behaviour. There was no evidence of an impact the types of food consumed outside school, although there was evidence that those in the universal pilot areas changed their lunchtime eating habits. No significant health benefits were observed.

The researchers concluded that of the two approaches the universal approach produced more benefits, but was not as cost effective as some other approaches to improving pupil attainment. The full report (all 156 pages) can be viewed via the attached link.

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-RR227.pdf>

3. “The Need for Better Governance” - Michael Gove’s speech to FASNA

At the beginning of July, the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, made a speech to FASNA (Freedom and Autonomy for Schools – National Association). In the speech, Mr Gove explained what he thought good and bad governance looks like - Good governance is smaller governing bodies, with people who are on the governing body because they have a skill, rather than because they represent a ‘political constituency’. Bad governance consisted of “a sprawling committee and proliferating sub-committees” with “local worthies who see being a governor as a badge of status, not a job of work.”

The NGA recognises that not every governing body is excellent, and indeed that some are ineffective, but do not recognise the Secretary of State’s comments that some governing bodies are influenced by “fads and anecdote, not facts and analysis.” The NGA would have preferred the Secretary of State to put forward a coherent strategy for improving governance, rather than simply criticising and dismissing current governors.

It did mean that governance got rather more press coverage than usual and NGA’s Chief executive, Emma Knights, appeared on Radio 4’s Today programme

4. APPG Summer Reception – keynote speech by Sir Michael Wilshaw HMCI

In addition to the launch of the twenty questions (see cover story), the APPG summer reception heard a short speech from Sir Michael Wilshaw (Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector). Although Sir Michael covered much of the same ground as at the NGA’s June conference, there were some additions in relation to feedback to full governing bodies following an inspection. This was not a public speech so only a summary of the main points is available on the NGA website - [Sir Michael Wilshaw summary](#).

C. NGA News

1. July Poll

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

‘Has your governing body revised your school’s Teacher Appraisal policy?’

30% Yes we adopted DfE model policy (48)

18% Yes, we amended our previous policy
(29)

46% No, not yet (72)

3% No, we have no intention of changing it (4)

3% Don’t know (4)

2. August Poll

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

‘Is your governing body planning to reconstitute following the introduction of the new Constitution Regulations in September?’

3. NGA Board Elections

General Directors

The closing date for nominations was 31 July 2012. There are ten candidates for three General Director posts. The candidates are: Sylvia Bosworth, Terry Douris, Brent Fitzpatrick, Susie Hall, Stephen Hopkins, Andy Kent, Patrick Lowe, Jim Lott, Oumou Sall and Harry Ziman.

Candidate statements, photos and the ballot form will be available on the NGA website in the next two weeks.

London Regional Director Election

We had one candidate for election, Richard Thompson. In accordance with the London Regional Constitution, Richard has been elected Regional Director and will take office following the NGA's AGM in November 2012.

D. Dates for Your Diary

London Regional Event: 'Holding Schools to Account' – Saturday 6 October

The London Regional Meeting, on 6 October, will feature a keynote presentation from Tom Winskill HMI, Ofsted, on Inspecting Governance under the new framework from September 2012. The event will start at 10.00 and finish at 12.30 – other speakers to be confirmed.

Although this meeting will be open to non-members of NGA, priority will be given to members.

NGA Autumn Regional Meetings – check the NGA website for updates

Region	Date and Time	Venue
North West	Monday 17 September, 18.30 – 21.30	Swallow Hotel, Preston
Yorkshire & the Humber	Tuesday 18 September, 19:00-21:00	Holiday Inn, Wakefield
West Midlands	Wednesday 19 September, 18:30-20:30	Birmingham (TBC)
North East	Monday 1 October, 19.00 – 21.00	Durham County Hall
London	Saturday 6 October, 10.00 – 12.30	London
East of England	Saturday 13 October, 10.00 – 13.00	Stansted (TBC)
East Midlands	Wednesday 17 October, 11.00 – 15.00	Northampton (TBC)
South West	Saturday 20 October 11.15 – 15.00	Holiday Inn, Taunton (TBC)
South East	Tuesday 23 October, 11.00 – 13.00	London (TBC)

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

1. [Replacing LAGSEG: Funding academies and local authorities for the functions that devolve to academies](#) **Closing Date:** Monday 24 September 2012

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

2. [A-Level Reform Consultation](#)

Closing Date: Tuesday 11 September 2012

To view this consultation, please go to <http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/news-and-announcements/130-news-and-announcements-press-releases/926-have-your-say-on-a-level-reform>

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

F. NGA Partners

National College for School Leadership

The National College is asking for expressions of interest for chairs interested in becoming National Leaders of Governance, please email chair.ofgovernors@nationalcollege.gsi.gov.uk. The application round to recruit 100 more NLGs opens on Monday 3 September: <http://www.education.gov.uk/nationalcollege/index/support-for-schools/national-leaders-of-governance.htm>



School Governors' One-Stop Shop Survey Results

The School Governors' One-Stop Shop is a DfE funded charity dedicated to recruiting and placing school governors. Its services are free to schools, LAs, volunteers and employers. If your school's governing body has vacancies, or is seeking a volunteer with particular skills, contact SGOSS on 0207 354 9805.



Visit the SGOSS website at: www.sgoss.org.uk
<http://www.sgoss.org.uk/publications.html>

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 NGA's magazine *Governing Matters*; free induction 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 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.