

## September 2013 Bulletin Board

The National Governors' Association is an independent charity representing state school governors 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 governing bodies up-to-date on our work, 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 G.

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).

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### A. TES and NGA Joint Survey

The results of the annual NGA/TES survey of school governors have been published. A record 2400 governors responded to the survey over two weeks in July. The proportion of respondents who are academy governors has risen by ten percentage points to make up a quarter of respondents. Of these, 35% thought that becoming an academy had improved educational standards, with another 35% saying it hadn't. More academy governing bodies seem to be making use of the flexibilities given to academies to alter teachers' pay and conditions – 21% had done so this year compared with 4% last year. This still represents a small proportion of academy governing bodies, but as one respondent commented: "The freedoms given to academies will take time to be introduced but will eventually help".

Just over half of respondents supported performance related pay, but a third said they didn't think it would improve pupils' attainment. Only 61% said they'd amended their pay policy as required for September. This should be done before teachers' objectives are set – NGA members can go to the [Staffing section](#) of the members' area for guidance on this.

An encouraging 80% of governors reported using a skills audit, with the vast majority saying they found it helpful. Although only 8% of respondents said they'd carried out performance management of governors by the chair or a third party, this is an encouraging start to relatively new practice adopted from the private and charitable sector.

Less than half of respondents said they'd carried out a governance review this year. Of those who have carried at a governance review, 81% said it had made a difference. NGA now offers a [consultancy and training service](#) – available to all governing bodies in England – which includes governance reviews.

NGA Members can read more about the survey results in this month's *Governing Matters*.

## B. Education News

### 1. Education leaving age raised

The government has increased the participation age (commonly known as the 'school leaving age') to which all young people in England must continue in education or training. From **September 2013 this rises from 16 to 17, and from summer 2015 it will rise to 18**. This means that pupils who left year 11 in summer 2013 need to continue in education or training until at least the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. Pupils starting year 11 or below in September 2013 will need to continue until at least their 18th birthday.

However, young people do have a choice about how they continue in education or training post-16. This could be through:

- an apprenticeship;
- full-time study in a school, college or with a training provider;
- full-time work or volunteering combined with part-time education or training.

Schools are responsible for securing independent careers guidance for their pupils in Years 9-11 (extended to Years 8-13 from September 2013). This should include information about the full range of post-16 options.

[DfE statutory guidance](#)  
[DfE's facts page](#)

### 2. A Level and GCSE exam results

August saw the release of exam results for both A Levels and GCSEs. Analysis of A Level results by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) shows that the proportion of pupils receiving the top grades of A\* and A dropped by 0.3% compared to last year, but that the overall pass rate (A\* - E) rose slightly by 0.1% to 98.1%. The number of students opting to take science subjects has continued to rise, with these subjects accounting for 17.8% of all A Levels. A similar trend was seen in maths, but take up of languages continues to fall in all subjects except Spanish.

For more information on this story, see the newsletter from [30/08/2013](#).

[TES article: Rapid A-level reform is branded a 'huge gamble'](#), [BBC article: Warning to schools over multiple exam entries](#), [Joint Council for Qualifications website](#)

### 3. The DfE Statistical First Release on Special Educational Needs and NGA survey

At the end of July, the DfE published the Statistical First Release on Special Educational Needs (SEN) in England based on figures from January 2013. The analysis shows that the proportion of pupils with a statement of SEN has remained unchanged since at least 2009 (at 2.8%), but that the proportion of pupils who have SEN, but no statement, has decreased for the third year in a row to 16.0% (most of this is due to a decrease in pupils at School Action). 53.0% of pupils with statements of SEN are educated at mainstream schools compared to 53.7% in 2012), 39.6% attend a state-funded special schools, 4.9% independent special schools, 1.8% non-maintained special schools, and 0.7% pupil referral units.

You can read more detail about the statistics in the [newsletter](#), or the [full report](#).

## C. NGA News

### 1. NGA's Special Schools Advisory Group: please participate in our survey

The NGA has an advisory group for special school governors that has been considering a range of issues, including the recent changes to funding for special schools and the forthcoming changes to Special Educational Needs provision, including in the current Children and Families Bill. However, to inform our lobbying work, with the aim of improving provision for children with SEN, it would be extremely useful to have information from a greater number of special schools.

The NGA is therefore conducting its first survey of special schools: if you are a governor at a special school, please take the time to participate. It takes less than ten minutes to respond. It is open to non-members as well, so please forward the link to any colleagues at special schools.

Take the survey here: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NGA-special-schools-survey>

### 2. NGA Web Polls

The results of the last poll are in:

How confident are you that the governing body and headteacher are prepared for the implementation of the new pay rules?

24% Very confident (57)  
33% Confident (76)  
**38% Not confident (90)**  
2% Don't know (6)



**Please take the time to vote in the new NGA poll on visiting your school:**

*Last year, how many times did you visit your school (not including GB meetings)?*

### 3. NGA Board elections

The nominations are in, and voting is open. If you an NGA member, please take this chance to have your say in the running of our organisation. There are 10 candidates up for election for three places as general director. We also have elections for the East of England, West Midlands, and Yorkshire and the Humber regional directors.

Congratulations to Patrick Lowe (South East), Fred Manning (East Midlands) and Frank Ridley (North East) for being elected as regional directors!

Find out more about all of the candidates and the elected directors on our [Elections page](#).

## D. Dates for your Diary

If you would like us to advertise your local event, please email Laura Owen ([laura.owen@nga.org.uk](mailto:laura.owen@nga.org.uk)).

### 1. Regional Conferences free for all governors:

This autumn, NGA is holding free regional conferences in the North West and the East Midlands. Both conferences will open at 10.00, and close at 15.30.

**The North West Regional Conference** will take place on Saturday 5 October in Liverpool. Stephen Twigg MP (Shadow Secretary of State for Education) has been confirmed as the keynote speaker.

**The East Midlands Regional Conference** will be on Saturday 12 October in Derby.

Both conferences will also be hearing from Ofsted about inspections of governance, and from Paul Charman (Fischer Family Trust) about understanding your school's data. Paul has worked closely with the NGA to develop the Knowing your School briefings on RAISEonline and the FFT dashboards. In the North West we will also be considering how to best obtain pupils' views and in the East Midlands how best to use your school's Pupil Premium funding to close the gap for disadvantaged pupils.



Our regional conferences are **free** and open to **non-members**, although if they are overbooked priority will go to our members. Bookings are now open on the NGA website. Bookings for the North West will close on 21 September, and East Midlands will close on 28 September. These conferences are often over-subscribed, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

[Book onto a regional conference](#)

## 2. NGA Regional Meetings

Bookings are now open to NGA members for the autumn 2013 regional meetings! Please book your place [online](#).

The lead item for the meetings will be about understanding the quality of teaching in your school, and how to get the most out of school visits. Delegates will also get an update from Emma Knights (NGA's Chief Executive) or Gillian Allcroft (Policy Manager) on the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) and assessments in primary schools. The regional meetings are a great way to meet new governors and talk about local issues. We will also be discussing effective practice around pupil premium reviews, pay policies, financial efficiency, and clerking.

These meetings are for NGA **members only**. For more information about NGA membership see section G.

Region	Date	Time	Location
East of England	Tuesday 15 October	15.30 – 18.30	Bury St Edmunds
London	Tuesday 8 October	18.00 – 20.00	Central London
North East	Monday 14 October	18.00 – 20.30	Durham
South East	Tuesday 8 October	13.00 – 16.00	Central London
South West	Saturday 19 October	10.30 – 14.00	Taunton
West Midlands	Wednesday 16 October	18.00 – 20.30	Birmingham
Yorkshire and the Humber	Tuesday 22 October	19.00 – 21.00	Wakefield

## 3. NGA's Annual Conference and AGM

This year's AGM and annual conference will be held on Saturday 16 November at The Merchant Adventurers' Hall, Fossgate, York YO1 9XD. Places are limited for this event, so please do book early to avoid disappointment. Our previous conferences have been oversubscribed before the closing date.

Key note speaker:

**Graham Stuart MP** (Chair of the Education Select Committee) on The Role of the School Governing Body

**Sir John Holman** (Senior Fellow for Education at the Wellcome Trust) on School Performance Indicators

**Brian Lightman** (General Secretary of Association of School and College Leaders) on the Great Education Debate

Bookings close on Saturday 2 November. Book your place [here](#). This conference is for members only.

## E. Consultations since the last bulletin

1. [Primary assessment and accountability under the new national curriculum](#)

**Closing date:** Friday 11 October 2013

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](mailto:Gillian.allcroft@nga.org.uk).

## F. NGA Partners

### 1. Chairs of Governors Leadership Development Programme Scholarships

The NGA works with Eastern Leadership Centre (ELC) to deliver the National College's Chairs of Governors Leadership Development Programme. We are offering the programme at the RRP of £350; however the DfE pays for some chairs of governors to take part and in July Lord Nash announced at the NGA summer conference that the DfE is increasing its funding for the National College governance programme. This means the number of scholarships available is increasing for this scheme. If you are a chair or an aspiring chair of governors, find out more and register your interest early or at [www.leadinggovernance.org](http://www.leadinggovernance.org).



This term the partnership will be running the programme in the following areas:

Bedford and Central Bedfordshire, Birmingham, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Coventry, Derby, Essex, Herefordshire, Hertfordshire, Gloucestershire, LB Barking and Dagenham, LB Enfield, LB Havering, LB Newham, LB Redbridge, Leeds, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Luton, Milton Keynes, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Northumberland, Nottingham, Oxfordshire, Peterborough, Sandwell, Southend-on-Sea, Stoke, Suffolk, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire.

Paul Fleming, Vice Chair of Governors at Holmer Green First School is a participant in one of our groups running in Buckinghamshire and he had this to say;

*As Vice Chair of Governors I was happy to be asked to participate in this programme to improve my leadership credentials. My employer endorsed my participation and the learning forms part of my personal development plan at work. The blended learning approach suited my learning style and was a good mixture of theory and practical. The content was varied and interesting and linked to both my role as a governor and to my work life. In fact some of the tools are used by my*

business on a regular basis. I particularly enjoyed the school based project and as a school community, we are making best use of the learning by conducting a skills audit of the governing body and creating a new vision statement for the school. Whilst the learning is at time intense, I would recommend it to fellow vice chairs and chairs of governors both new and experienced.

There are other licensees who work in different regions of England: You can find their details on the [National College website](#).

## 2. Zurich Municipal's School We'd Like Competition

In association with the Guardian Teacher Network, [Zurich Municipal](#) runs the *School We'd Like* competition, which will launch for a second time on the 24 September 2013. The competition gives primary, secondary and special schools the chance to win £5,000 by coming up with an inspirational idea that will change their school for the better. [Click here to find out more](#) and how to enter.



## 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. 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).

