

November 2012 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, 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. NGA Awards for Outstanding Governance

The NGA Awards, supported by the Department for Education, are open for nominations. Please nominate your governing body or clerk for these awards so that their hard work can be recognised and celebrated. The awards also help the NGA to gather good practice that we can promote across the country.

n|g|a Awards
For Outstanding Governance

You can read the case studies showcasing the 2011 finalists on the NGA website which will give you good examples of what we are looking for - www.nga.org.uk/awards2013.aspx.

The deadline for nominations is 17 December. You can download nomination forms from www.nga.org.uk/awards2013.aspx. Email awards@nga.org.uk for more information.

Outstanding Governing Body

Open to all governing bodies (LA maintained and academies) in England, including non-members.

Outstanding Clerk

Open to all clerks/academy secretaries in England and Wales (Welsh entrants need to apply via [Governors Wales](http://www.governorswales.org.uk)), including non-members.



B. Education News

1. Governance Debate in House of Commons

Wednesday 24 October saw the first debate on governance for over 18 months in parliament. The debate, secured by Neil Carmichael MP, covered a number of areas including: accountability, governance structures, training and payment for governors. The select band of MPs attending the debate all paid tribute to the work of governors and the important role they play. Neil Carmichael began by outlining his ideas for governing bodies to be smaller and more skills based. He stressed the key role of the chair of the governing body and that this role should, in his opinion, involve financial remuneration. A number of MPs questioned why there was no compulsory training for governors, something which the NGA has been campaigning about for many years. Concern was also expressed about the apparent accountability 'vacuum' created by the establishment of more academies and the lack of local oversight.

It was proposed that there could be a national 'recruit a governor' campaign. Elizabeth Truss MP, the new Under Secretary of State for Education and Childcare, in response also paid tribute to the work of the NGA and governors, noted the increased focus on governance in the new Ofsted framework and said the Government has no plans to pay governors. The Secretary of State for Education's comments about governance, made at the FASNA conference in July, were mentioned a number of times, with Ms Truss explaining that they were only meant to be a depiction of poor governance, rather than a statement of governance as a whole.

The NGA would like to thank those members who encouraged their MP to attend the debate.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm121024/halltext/121024h0001.htm#12102442000003>

2. Local school funding formula causing concerns

In some parts of the country, the effects of the amended local funding formulae are causing issues, especially in those counties which are less well funded; as the funding cake is smaller to begin with in those areas, whichever way it is cut, some schools will be receiving smaller slices than before. The NGA issued a [short statement](#).

The DfE has responded to these concerns by writing to all Directors of Children's Services to provide clarification and reassurance about the school funding arrangements in 2013-14. The letter confirms that the Department will review these arrangements and will make further changes in 2014-15 if it finds that the long-term consequences for schools are unacceptable.

The letter also confirms that the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) will continue to apply at -1.5 per cent per pupil in 2013-14 and 2014-15. To address the concerns that some schools and authorities have raised about a potential 'cliff-edge' in funding from 2014-15, the letter gives reassurance that an MFG will continue beyond 2014-15, although this falls in the next spending review period, there is no confirmation of the value of that MFG.

The Department hopes that this letter provides local authorities, schools, teachers and

governors with reassurance that the reform to the school funding system will be introduced very carefully. It can be found at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/financialmanagement/schoolsrevenuefunding/a00215225/school-funding-reform>

We know that many governors remain concerned about the impact of the funding changes both for the coming and future years. Please send any concerns to Gillian Allcroft.

The NGA is organising a meeting for any member who is a chair of a school forum to exchange information in our offices in Birmingham on 16 January 2013. To attend, please contact Gillian Allcroft.

The DfE has recently issued revised good practice guidance about the running of Schools Forums. This can be found at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/financialmanagement/schoolsrevenuefunding/schoolsforums/a0070290/guidance-for-schools-forums-on-their-role>

3. Statutory Policies Update

On 29 October, the Department for Education released a revised list of statutory policies. It also updated its 'need to know timeline' for schools and academies to enable schools to keep up to date with what needs to be done over the coming months and what might change.

List of policies:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/toolsandinitiatives/cuttingburdens/a00201669/statutory-policies-for-schools>

Timeline:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/toolsandinitiatives/cuttingburdens/b00216133/need-to-know-schools/useful>

C. NGA News

1. NGA Poll

Please take the time to vote in the NGA poll:

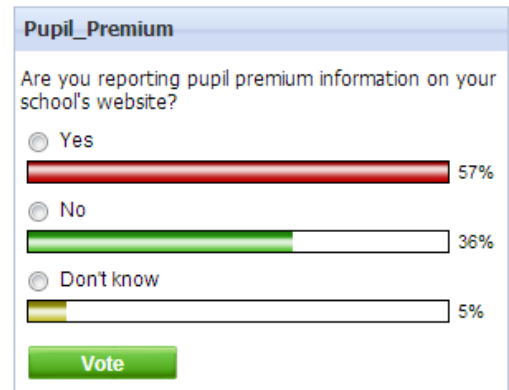
How important is it for clerks to governing bodies to have a guide to the law?

With the Department for Education planning to replace the Governors' Guide to the Law with a handbook, the NGA believes a guide to the law must be retained for clerks who are the advisers to the governing body on legal and procedural issues. We have been contacted by a number of members who want us to lobby for this, and now we are trying to ascertain how much support there is for a Clerks' Guide to the Law within the school governance community.

The results of last month's poll:

'Are you reporting pupil premium information on your school's website?'

57%	Yes (137)
36%	No (87)
5%	Don't know (13)



2. NGA Top Tip

Do you use a skills audit? The NGA has a model one that is available to NGA members. The skills audit is a valuable tool for governing bodies. It allows you to see what skills the governing body already has, but may not have known about and also enables you to assess what skills you might be missing. You can then use this to direct your governor training/development, or use it to advertise a position next time you have a vacancy. Don't just fill in the skills audit; make sure you make use of the results

3. NGA GOLD membership

On 1 November, the new service for NGA GOLD members was launched. There is now a dedicated advice line and email address that will take GOLD governing body members straight through to the advice team. In addition to other benefits, GOLD membership is the only NGA membership which provides access to the advice service (including the legal service). More information can be viewed here - [GOLD membership](#).

GOLDline: 0121 237 3782

Email: GOLD@nga.org.uk



4. Chair's Development Programme

The NGA and Eastern Leadership Centre (ELC) have formed an exciting new partnership to provide national training for chairs and aspiring chairs of governing bodies on behalf of the National College for School Leadership. Our partnership is offering you a high-quality development programme, based on ELC's many years experience of delivering governance and leadership development and the NGA's expertise on governance. We are one of twelve successful licensees who will be delivering the National College's programme. Given our governance expertise coupled with ELC's many years experience of delivering governance and leadership development, both to governors with GEL and more broadly to school leaders, we hope you will consider this partnership to be a strong one.

The Chairs of Governors' Leadership Development Programme provides opportunities for chairs and aspiring chairs to develop their leadership skills. With school improvement as a key theme across the programme, it has been designed to help you focus on the essential elements of being an effective chair. The September 2012 Ofsted framework places greater emphasis on effective governance: this leadership programme provides a robust framework through which you can support and lead your governing body with confidence.

The programme begins with a 360° review – where a number of people who work with you in different ways are asked to comment on your abilities against a range of competencies – which is called a diagnostic by the National College. This will help you to tailor the activities to suit you, with a mentor to support and guide you through the programme. Some of the programme will be available from the comfort of your own home and other aspects undertaken at your school. There will also be a number of face-to-face sessions at a local venue.

Currently we are preparing to deliver the programme at a price below the RRP of £350 across the East of England, but we are also able to work in other areas if local partners – local authorities, dioceses, teaching schools or other schools partnerships/alliances – invite us. Currently we are preparing to offer the programme alongside local partners in:

Bedford, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Central Bedfordshire, Derby, Enfield, Essex, Gloucestershire, Harrow, Herefordshire, Hertfordshire, Leeds, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Luton, Milton Keynes, Newham, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Northumberland, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Peterborough, Southend, Stoke on Trent, Suffolk, Thurrock, and Worcestershire.

If your area is not listed you can still register an interest with us, as we are also talking to a number of other prospective partners and may work in other areas later in the year. We are happy to deliver in all regions of the country, apart from the North West where we are referring all enquiries to Governors' Network North West.

For more information:

Download a flyer: <http://www.nga.org.uk/About-Us/Training.aspx> or
 Visit the partnership's website www.leadinggovernance.org or
 Email us at info@leadinggovernance.org

Governors Network North West:

http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/education_and_learning/schools/school_governors/governors_network_north_west/chairs_development_programme.aspx

5. NGA Research – Federations and Multi-Academy Trusts

NGA is conducting a small research project to look at the decisions governing bodies make when considering whether or not to federate, either as a local authority maintained federation or a multi-academy trust. There is no research to-date on how and why some governors decide to federate and others don't. We are looking for a small number of federations to interview over the next year. The federations need not be identified as we are interested in getting to the bottom of the role of key players and what motivated them. We are interested in talking to governing bodies who have found this a very difficult process as well as those who feel it has all been successful.

For more information about the project please contact our new information officer Ellie Howarth: Eleanor.howarth@nga.org.uk.

D. Dates for Your Diary

1. Yorkshire Education Conference - 10 November 2012

The NGA is running a joint conference on school improvement with NUT and NAHT for governors and headteachers in Yorkshire. Speakers will include Christine Blower (General Secretary of NUT), Russell Hobby (General Secretary of NAHT), and Emma Knights (Chief Executive of NGA). There will also be a dedicated workshop on governance and school improvement led by NGA Vice President John Adams MBE with support from local governors who have been involved in successful school improvement.

Registration is free, but delegates must book in advance at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YorkshireEducationConference>.

Enquiries to: YEC@nut.org.uk

<http://www.teachers.org.uk/node/16664>

2. NGA Regional Conferences

The next NGA regional conferences will be in the North East region, and the South West. These very popular events are free and open to non-members. More information will be provided in the next bulletin board.

North East: Saturday 2 March 2013

South West: Saturday 9 March 2013

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

1. [Reforming Key Stage 4 Qualifications](#) **Closing date:** Monday 10 December 2012

To view these consultations, please go to

<https://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/departmentalinformation/consultations>

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

GEL

Governor E-Learning (GEL) is an online learning experience providing school governors with a flexible way to access information and training. GEL supplies high-quality, accurate and value-for-money learning through: learning modules, supporting documents and hot topics. Together, these ensure the required support is available to governors at their convenience.



GEL seeks to support governors across all types of schools. It is essential that the relevance, accuracy and quality of the content of our modules and 'Hot Topics' meets the needs of all our GEL members, a membership which reflects this diverse range of school settings. The high quality and accuracy of our learning materials, at an affordable price, is what sets GEL apart from similar products in the market place. GEL has been developed and is run by the Eastern Leadership Centre, a not for profit charitable organisation based in Cambridge.

www.elc-gel.org

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.

