

December 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. Education Select Committee Inquiry into Governance

The House of Commons Education Select Committee has announced an inquiry into the role of governing bodies. The Select Committee wishes to receive written evidence from as many governing bodies as possible. The Select Committee is parliamentary scrutiny of the government, providing an opportunity for governors (in all state funded schools) to demonstrate the breadth of effective practice that exists, and to suggest any necessary changes. The Committee intends to look at:

- the purpose, roles and responsibilities of school governing bodies, within the wider context of school governance and leadership;
- the implications of recent policy developments for governing bodies and their roles;
- recruiting and developing governors, including the quality of current training provision;
- the structure and membership of governing bodies, including the balance between representation and skills;
- the effectiveness and accountability of governing bodies;
- whether new arrangements are required for the remuneration of governors;
- the relationships between governing bodies and other partners, including local authorities, academy sponsors and trusts, school leaders, and unions; and
- whether changes should be made to current models of governance.

Too often when governance is discussed not enough governors are heard; the NGA urges all its members to submit evidence. You do not need to answer every question but please do respond if you can. Evidence needs to be with the Committee by 17 December: to submit evidence, go to <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/education-committee/inquiries/parliament-2010/the-role-of-school-governing-bodies/form/>.

If you do not wish to respond directly but would like to feed into the NGA's response please email gillian.allcroft@nga.org.uk.

B. Education News

1. All Party Parliamentary Group on Governance considers school funding

Parliamentarians will have received an invitation from Neil Carmichael MP, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Education Governance and Leadership, to the group's next meeting on **Monday 10 December** at 4.30pm. As MPs have received representations from some governors about the changes to school funding, this is the topic for discussion at this term's APPG. Please do encourage your MP to attend. If you e-mail your MP a reminder of the invitation, and copy it to the APPG secretariat: education.governance.appg@nga.org.uk, we will then send you an invitation to the meeting in Westminster. If you have been lobbying your MP on the subject of school funding, you are very welcome to attend, whether a member of NGA or not. Do please share with us any concerns – and solutions - you may have about school funding by e-mail: education.governance.appg@nga.org.uk.

2. Ofsted publishes its annual report

On 27 November, Sir Michael Wilshaw, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) produced his first annual report. The annual report is based on the full range of services (schools, early years, childcare services, adult learning and colleges) Ofsted inspects, but is underpinned by additional reports on each of the sectors including schools. Sir Michael opens the report by saying: 'It is important that we remind those who complain about standards today of how low they were in pre-Ofsted days...'. He notes that in order for the English education system to reach the level of the very best in the world it needs strong leadership and that his annual report is 'fundamentally about the importance of leadership at every level.'

The opening to the schools' specific report states that 'Schools in England are getting better', with 70% rated good or outstanding compared to 64% five years ago. HMCI notes that this is still not good enough compared to high performing jurisdictions across the world.

The report is set out in three key sections: how good are schools in England, positive trends and challenges. Although there is not a separate section devoted to governance, in each of the three sections there is mention of the importance of good governance. The report goes defines what it means by a good governing body: "A strong governing body is characterised by a collective ambition for the school to excel. The governors provide a good balance between supporting the school and ensuring that ambitious targets for improvement are set and achieved. They are fully informed and are able to ask challenging questions about the work of the school; thereby holding leaders and managers to account."

In relation to the challenges facing the system, HMCI focuses particularly on two aspects:

- the gaps between the outcomes for the most prosperous and the poorest; and
- the wide variations in the performance of schools across different local authority areas

The report 'names and shames' local authorities, pointing out that in some areas there is a less than 50% chance of children and young people attending a good or outstanding school, compared with more than 90% in other areas.

At the same time as publishing its annual report, Ofsted launched its new tool, Data View, which enables comparisons about outcomes of Ofsted inspections to be made across schools, local authorities and regions.

You can download the full report from the Newsletter of 30 November.

3. 400 primaries to be converted

On Monday 12 November, at a cabinet meeting held at the John Cabot Academy in Bristol, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, announced that a further 400 of the weakest primary schools will be converted into academies. Mr Cameron said: "We want to go further, faster, with 400 more under-performing primary schools paired up with a sponsor and either open or well on their way to becoming an Academy by the end of next year."

NGA will shortly be releasing a Q&A for members on sponsored academies.

C. NGA News

1. NGA Poll: the verdict on a Clerk's Guide to the Law

The results of last month's poll:

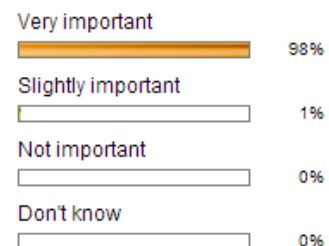
'How important is it for clerks to governing bodies to have a guide to the law?'

98%	Very important (551)
1%	Slightly important (6)
0%	Not important (2)
0%	Don't know (2)

With the Department for Education planning to replace the Governors' Guide to the Law with a handbook for governors, 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. Clearly you do too: please write to your MP stressing the importance of the role of the clerk to effective professional governance and asking for a Clerk's Guide to the Law.

NGA Poll:

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



2. NGA Poll on school funding

Please take the time to vote in this month's NGA poll:

From April 2012, will my school's budget be:

Bigger, smaller, about the same, don't know.

3. 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.



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](#)), including non-members.



4. Scholarships for chairs' training

The Chair's Development Programme has a RRP of £350, but the National College is providing scholarships for some participants to make the programme as accessible as possible. There are two types: a full scholarship of £350 for participants from small schools (100 pupils or less according to the most recent Pupil Level Annual School Census), or a part scholarship of £175 for participants from schools that are 'satisfactory' or 'require improvement.' There is a limited fund, so apply early to make sure you receive one of these scholarships. You have to apply via your training provider.

For the purpose of this programme, the following state schools and establishments are defined as eligible:

- Community, foundation, VA and VC schools and colleges
- Pupil referral units
- Academies and free schools
- Local authority nurseries
- Secure units
- City technology colleges
- Studio schools
- Non-maintained special school

The National Governors' Association and Eastern Leadership Company are licensees of the National College's Chairs' Training Programme. We are currently planning training in the East of England (Bedford Borough Council, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Central Bedfordshire, Essex, Thurrock, Hertfordshire, Luton, Norfolk, Peterborough, Southend, and Suffolk, East Midlands, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire (inc Rutland), Northamptonshire,

Nottingham City, and Nottinghamshire, and also other areas where we have been invited by a local partner, including: Milton Keynes Teaching School, Milton Keynes, St Joseph's College Teaching School, Stoke-on-Trent, Derby School's Learning Partnership, Northumberland, Leeds, Newham, Enfield, Harrow, Oxfordshire, CfBT School's Academy Trust, and Gloucestershire. For more information or to register your interest please visit www.leadinggovernance.org or email info@leadinggovernance.org.

5. New Edition of *Welcome to Governance* now available

The 5th Edition of *Welcome to Governance* is now available. The new edition contains updates on legislation and practice since the last edition in January 2012, including changes to Ofsted inspections. The easy to read layout and clear explanations have made it the most popular induction resource for new governors, purchased by over 50 local authorities. To buy your copy, go online or call the NGA office.

Price: NGA Members: £5.50; Non-members: £10.00

6. *Knowing your School* series releases a briefing note on performance management

The NGA is publishing the fourth briefing note in the *Knowing your School* series on performance management and pay. Produced in association with Coordinators of Governor Services, the briefing note covers five key questions:

1. How effectively are the staff appraised?
2. How effectively do we appraise the headteacher?
3. What should our pay policy say about performance and progression?
4. What is the correlation between appraisal outcomes, pay, and the quality of teaching and learning?
5. How effective is Continuous Professional Development in improving teaching and learning?

All the briefings in this series are available for free on the public area of the NGA website:

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

D. Dates for Your Diary

1. 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. The conferences will be on the subject of '*Governance in a Changing Environment.*' More information will be provided in the next bulletin board, but you can register your interest online now.

North East: Saturday 2 March 2013 (Durham)

South West: Saturday 9 March 2013 (Exeter)

2. NGA Regional Meetings

The NGA regional meetings are free for members to attend. The dates have now been confirmed for Spring 2013. Bookings must be made online.

Region	Date	Location
North West	Monday 25 February	Preston
Yorkshire and the Humber	Tuesday 26 February	Wakefield
London	Tuesday 5 March	London
South East	Tuesday 5 March	London
West Midlands	Wednesday 13 March	Birmingham
East Midlands	Tuesday 19 March	Leicester
East of England	Saturday 27 April	Cambridge

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

1. [Departmental advice on school attendance matters](#) **Closing date:** Thursday 13 December 2012
2. [Pupil information consultation](#) **Closing date:** Tuesday 18 December 2012

To view these consultations, please go to

<https://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/departentalinformation/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

1. National College

a. Applications for the next round of NLGs opens on 3 December



National Leaders of Governance (NLGs) are experienced chairs who provide coaching and support for chairs in a school outside their own. The next application round opens on 3 December, and closes on 21 January 2013.

For this application round, the eligibility criteria have been amended so that – by exception – applicants with less than three years' experience, who can demonstrate the impact they have had on improving school performance, will be eligible for designation. The requirements remain for an applicant's school to show consistently high levels of pupil performance or continued improvement; and to have an Ofsted judgement of good or outstanding for both overall effectiveness and leadership and management.

b. Primary associate academies

In association with FASNA (Freedom and Autonomy for Schools National Association), the National College will be deploying a group of 50 primary associate academies, whose job it will be to help primary schools make an informed choice about academy conversion, but

also support them through the process of conversion. They are looking for headteachers, principals, chairs of governors, and school business managers that have led successful conversions and are keen to help others. If you are interested in the role, please email primary.leadership@nationalcollege.gsi.gov.uk. A grant of £4,000 is available for up to eight days support for other schools.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/nationalcollege/index/support-for-schools/primary-associate-academies.htm>

2. Staffordshire Governors' Association is looking for governors

Staffordshire Governors' Association is looking for governors to get involved with their association. It is an active local association that organises local events and provides support for Staffordshire governing bodies. Joining your local association is a great way to develop your skills as a governor and share good practice. It is a forum for discussion of local issues that are important in your community: <http://www.staffsga.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 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.

