

## December 2013 Bulletin Board

The National Governors' Association is an independent charity representing state school governors from 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 and 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 H.

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. CBI report on improving school governance

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) has [released a report](#) outlining recommendations to ensure “assertive and confident governing bodies.” [NGA supports many of the proposals](#) and very much welcomes the CBI’s call for strengthened links between employers and schools.

NGA takes every opportunity to emphasise the strategic role of governing bodies, and is pleased to see the CBI report takes care to underline this: “this distinction between operations and strategy is not always understood and observed...Equally there are instances of school leaders seeking to involve governors beyond strategic.” The report goes on to point out that Ofsted’s recent suggestion of a business governor taking responsibility for careers guidance blurs this line.

The CBI points out that “the skills governors develop in the course of their school duties may stretch beyond those of their day-to-day job and expand their workplace skills.” Applying their knowledge and expertise in different situations can “help to develop problem-solving and other skills that they can in turn apply to their job.”

NGA has spoken out on many occasions about the difficulties some employees face in being released by their employers to take part in governing duties, for example in our evidence supplied to the education select committee inquiry. NGA is disappointed that the CBI’s list recommendations does not include encouragement to employers to give time off to employees; instead supporting the select committee’s recommendation to extend the legal requirement to allow time off for governors of maintained schools to academies. They also agree with the select committee, and NGA, that radical reform of school governance is not needed, suggesting that the “essential area for progress is in the calibre and skills of those serving on governing bodies.”

NGA agrees entirely with the CBI that “senior ministers need to be more vocal in championing the role and importance of school governors” and that this is necessary for any government that is “serious about improving performance in schools.” We very much hope to see ministerial involvement in the forthcoming campaign planned by the Department for Education to encourage and support volunteering as governors.

## B. Education news

### 1. Pupil Premium – 2014 figure for secondary schools

In the 2014/15 financial year, the national pupil premium budget will be £2.5 billion, compared to £1.875 billion in 2013/14. The premium for children of primary school age (4-11) will rise from £900 to £1300 per pupil, while students of secondary school age (11-16) will attract £935 per pupil. Furthermore, from April 2014, pupil premium funding of £1900 will also be extended to children who:

- have been looked after for 1 day or more;
- are adopted; or
- leave care under a Special Guardianship Order or a Residence Order

Governors must be reviewing the impact of the last year's spend of pupil premium: for access to the many resources to help schools do this, see the NGA's guidance section:

[DfE policy on raising the achievement of disadvantaged children: pupil premium](#)  
[Pupil premium guidance](#) and [Questions governing bodies should ask: pupil premium](#)

### 2. Ofsted report on pupils missing out on education

On 19 November, Ofsted released a report entitled *Pupils missing out on education*. The report looks at the experiences of children and young people not in full-time education at school. Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for children of compulsory school age. For the majority of children and young people, this will be in school, but for a variety of reasons (e.g. exclusion, health, or recently moved) some will only be in school part-time or not at all. The report was looking at children who would usually be in school, as opposed to those children whose parents have chosen to home educate them.

While the report's focus was local authority provision, there are some recommendations in relation to schools. It noted that information sharing between schools and other services was not good. Also of concern is that the survey again found evidence of some schools resorting to 'illegal exclusions' (i.e. where parents are encouraged to remove their child from school, or where the young person is simply told not to come in). The report notes that although many schools had 'good' or 'improving' systems for monitoring outcomes for children receiving some education in alternative provision or hospital schools, monitoring was less robust for those receiving other health services or home tuition.

The report highlights some good practice through the case studies and makes a number of recommendations to local authorities, schools (including academies) and other services such as education, health and youth. There is a specific recommendation for governing bodies:

- Governors should be given sufficient information about children and young people who are not accessing school in the usual way, to enable them to challenge the amount of provision being made and evaluate its effectiveness.

Do you know if any of your students are not in school full-time and does the governing body receive information about this group of students as part of the headteacher's report?

[NGA members can read more in the newsletter](#)  
[Pupils missing out on education report](#) and [Ofsted Press release](#)

### 3. Applications open in January for 5<sup>th</sup> cohort of NLGs

National Leaders of Governance (NLGs) are highly effective chairs of governors who provide support to other chairs. The next round of NLGs opens on 10 January and closes on 14 February.

Application format:

- Online application – applicant details including their tenure as chair, and details of their school performance
- Offline application – applicants' track record in school improvement and leading their governing body; their skills and attributes in coaching and mentoring



National College for  
Teaching & Leadership

Next steps for potential applicants

- Review the [eligibility criteria](#) on the NCTL website
- Register interest in applying by emailing [governors@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:governors@education.gsi.gov.uk)

## C. Parliamentary news

### 1. Ask your MP to attend this week's debate on governance

On Thursday 5 December at 13:30 there will be a debate on the recent House of Commons Education Select Committee report on School Governance in Westminster Hall, in the House of Commons. This is a great opportunity to raise the profile of governors and the importance of school governance in the wider education system.

Please email your MP, urging him/her to attend and contribute to the debate, stressing the importance of school governance. You will find email addresses on [Parliament UK website](#), and remember to include your postal address (and/or that of the school) in the email to show you are a constituent.

If you copy [Philip Wood](#) into the email, he will make sure your MP receives a briefing before the debate, and can take note of the issues you wanted raised.

### 2. MPs report into school partnerships

The House of Commons Education Select Committee has released its report into school partnerships. It makes a number of recommendations, including:

- That academy chains should be inspected by Ofsted with parents provided with information as to their performance;
- Headteachers who support underperforming schools in disadvantaged areas are given an excellent leadership award;
- The government should widen its funding for partnerships beyond the sponsored academy route; specifically, the Primary Chains Grant should be extended to federations;
- That the government ensures that outstanding converter academies are able to support other schools in the way that they feel best. Some schools may not wish to sponsor an academy and other types of partnerships should be actively encouraged; and

- That the government should formalise and publish the procedures for an academy to leave a chain by mutual consent. This could be modelled on the procedure for leaving a federation and should also explain how a school consistently judged 'outstanding' by Ofsted would be able to leave an academy chain where this is against the wishes of the chain.

NGA welcomes the report by the Select Committee. We are particularly pleased to see a recommendation for the primary chain grant being extended to federations. NGA has long sung the benefits of federating, which [we explained in our evidence to the Committee](#).

[Education Select Committee - School Partnerships and Cooperation](#)

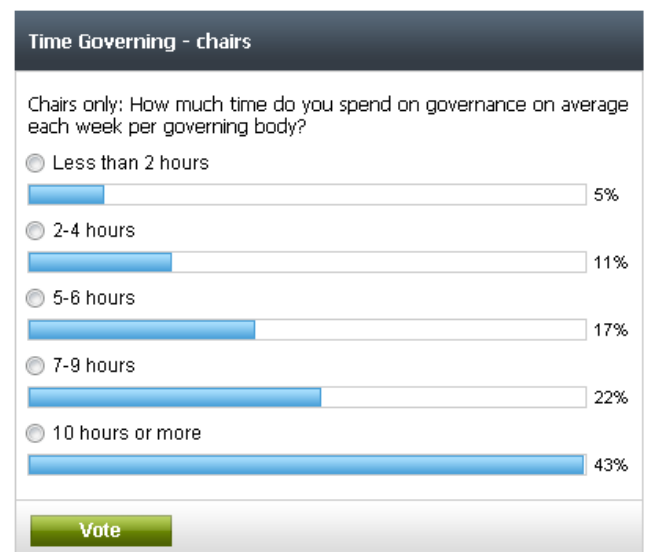
## D. NGA news

### 1. NGA Web Polls

The results of the **last poll** are in:

*Chairs only: How much time do you spend on governance on average each week per governing body?*

- 5% (16) Less than 2 hours
- 11% (31) 2-4 hours
- 17% (49) 5-6 hours
- 22% (63) 7-9 hours
- 43% (121) 10 hours or more**



There is a rule of thumb from the third sector that if a chair of trustees is giving more than 20 days a year, s/he needs to question how s/he is carrying out the role. That works out to be about half a day a week during term-time. All the indications we have had suggest that many chairs of governing bodies are doing much more than this, which has been repeated by this poll. Clearly there will be times when additional time is needed by governors, especially the chair, for example when schools are in crisis or recruiting a new head. With these results showing the vast majority of chairs of governors are donating more than four hours a week, this not only raises questions about whether chairs are becoming operational, but also has implications about the feasibility of recruiting others to the role of chair. Is it possible to couple being a chair of governors and full-time employment? NGA is intending to carry out a project to investigate this issue further.

**The new poll:** The NGA has been hearing a lot of discussion about whether governors should get involved in the recruitment of classroom teachers. Let's be clear: our view is that this is not a governor's role and we had hoped that practice on this would have moved on by now. The NGA is very clear that governors should only be involved in the recruitment of the headteacher, deputy, and senior leaders, as these are key positions in delivering the strategic vision the governing body has set out. The DfE's [Governors' Handbook](#) (Section 5) agrees that governors should only be involved in the recruitment of the head and deputy. All other recruitment is the job of the headteacher. Your only responsibility is to ensure that safer recruitment procedures are applied, and that conduct and discipline procedures are in place. We want to find out how many governors are getting involved in recruitment of classroom teachers.

**Please take the time to vote in the new NGA poll:** please choose the most applicable

*Do governors on your GB sit on the recruitment panel for teachers?*

Yes – for all teachers

No, it's not part of governors' role

Yes – but only when asked

No, we are not asked

Yes – but only in exceptional circumstances

No, the staff are able to manage

## 2. Clerking Matters: Find us a clerk service launched

NGA members will be aware of the current Clerking Matters campaign we are championing with the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and other partners including the National Co-ordinators of Governors Services (NCOGS) to raise the profile and professionalism of governing body clerks. For school governing bodies to be effective, they need the support of a professional clerk to advise them on their duties and how best to fulfil them, but we understand that many schools struggle to find a good independent clerk.



We have set up a pilot 'Find us a clerk' that we hope will help schools identify available clerks. If you are able to offer your services as a clerk, or your school has a vacancy for a clerk, you can register with us for free! This new service is available to non-members as well, so have a look at our listings and let us know how you get on.

[Find out more](#)

## 3. Are you governing a group of schools – or considering this?

NGA is doing work on governance of federations and multi-academy trusts, and is planning a seminar with the Independent Academies Association on 5 March in London – if you are interested in knowing more about this work or would like to attend the seminar, contact [Mark Gardner](#) at NGA.

## 4. NGA annual conference and AGM election results

Thank you to all the members who attended our annual conference on 16 November, and to our speakers, Prof. Sir John Holman on 'Measuring what we value'; Prof. Peter Earley and Dr Sara Bubb on 'Performance management of headteachers'; Chris Caroe on 'Challenges for governance in the coming year'; and Ian Bauckman on 'The great education debate'. The conference presentations are now available in the [members' area](#).

## E. Dates for your diary

If you would like us to advertise your local event, please email [Laura Owen](#).

### 1. GovernorLive at the Education Innovation Conference

The [Education Innovation Conference & Exhibition](#) is a two-day, national event on 27/28 February at Manchester Central. It is completely free to attend and is designed to provide governors and other education leaders with a wide



range of free CPD training, workshops, and debates which will focus on the most effective ways to raise achievement through the effective integration of innovation into learning.

[#GovernorLive](#) is taking place at the Education Innovation Conference on Thursday 27 February; a completely free event for governors in association with Modern Governor and the NGA. The event is a discussion on issues for governors, with workshop themes chosen and led by delegates. To register for EICE or to find out more, visit the [website](#) or follow the show on [Twitter](#) using **#EICE**.

## 2. London Education Conference

The NGA will be running a workshop about school federations at the London Education Conference on Saturday 8 February 2014. The conference will examine how the London Challenge helped to raise standards of education in the capital. It will draw on the international evidence around school improvement and share best practice to build on the success of London schools. Registration is free but places are strictly limited and delegates must book in advance at: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/LondonEdConf](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LondonEdConf).

For more information see this [flyer](#).

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

The House of Commons Education Select Committee has announced an inquiry into aspects of the academies programme. The Committee is taking written evidence until the 19 December. NGA is seeking comments and experiences from members on any of the points covered in the inquiry's remit. Please send any comments to [Philip.wood@nga.org.uk](mailto:Philip.wood@nga.org.uk).

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

#### Fischer Family Trust governor dashboard film

Fischer Family Trust has commissioned a film showcasing how governors are using the FFT governor dashboard to drive school improvement. The dashboard was developed in partnership with NGA and the Wellcome Trust and is available free of charge to all schools subscribing to FFTlive.



In the film, governors and senior leaders describe how they have used the dashboard in their school and Paul Charman, Director of Strategy & Operations at FFT, explains some of its key features. Our very own Emma Knights also features, discussing the importance of data to the governing body as a tool to support and challenge. Attendees of our East Midlands regional conference in Derby might also spot themselves early on in the film!

For more information and to watch the film, go to our [FFT governor dashboard page](#).



## 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).

