



Please pass this on to all your Governing Body contacts – thanks

Contact us

Communications@staffsga.org.uk

www.staffsga.org.uk

This week's news comes in two sections again: -

Local SGA news

&

National NGA news

SGA News

Chairs' Briefings

The recent chairs' briefings organised by the LEA were very good and worth taking the time out to attend. The new Directorate Pack was talked about in some detail. This is available via Governor Services and the LEA website and it's essential reading for all committee chairs.

Staffordshire Super-Governors

The NGA bulletin (below) features an article where the LEA has expressed a desire to recruit super-governors to work alongside governing bodies. Apparently this was mentioned in the consultation and the matter has not been raised with the SGA yet.

Meeting with Cllr. Ian Parry

We will shortly be having a meeting with Ian Parry. Any matter of a governance nature that you want raised, then please contact us via the e-mail address above.

Thought for the Week

The recent LEA conference featured school co-operatives. Co-operative details were also provided at the Chairs' briefings. One of the main drives for working as a co-operative is to improve value for money and save money – purchasing as a group of schools. The LEA is in effect a co-operative, negotiating contracts and buying in bulk for the whole County (see below the Surrey drive for mass academy status). If we are being advised to work together (as schools) co-operatively, what will the austerity measures impact really be to the LEA's services?

SGA AGM

7 pm Monday 18th October at the Walton Middle School, Stone, ST15 0AL. Please come along as we really want to shape this governors' association in to something rather special.

David Owen

NGA News

NGA News Briefing 011010

The NGA weekly news briefing is an essential document for any governor, clerk or governor support officer. This briefing gives details of new research, government consultation papers, policy announcements and legislation, together with a summary of recent education stories in the media.

NAHT decide not to boycott SATS

The NAHT has decided not to ballot its members on a boycott of the Key Stage 2 SATs, after the Government announced its decision to conduct an external review of the tests. A full article on this story can be read [here](#). The Secretary of State's letter to the General Secretary of the NAHT can be downloaded [here](#).

The NGA is pleased that the Secretary of State has announced a very necessary and thorough review of the Key Stage 2 tests, and delighted that NAHT has decided not to boycott the 2011 tests in the meantime. NAHT will be participating along with the other headteacher and teacher associations in the review.

While leaving teaching methods to the professionals, governing bodies are concerned with the *ethos* of teaching and learning, and we would suggest that the governing bodies of primary schools should pay particular attention this term to the ethos in year 6. We have heard time and time again that teachers are being compelled to 'teach to the test'. Is the governing body compelling headteachers to do this, with the result that large portions of year 6 are spent doing practice papers? This should be considered fully by the governing body. NGA does not want the teaching and learning of year 6 children to be limited by preparation for SATs and would suggest that headteachers who promote a broad curriculum for their year 6 children, which embraces creativity alongside the mastering of basic skills will have the enthusiastic support of their governing bodies. This should not be interpreted as a lax approach to standards; it is right that high standards for literacy and numeracy remain at the heart of our primary schools.

Whilst the governing bodies of primary schools should absolutely be held to account for the performance of their schools, SATs results are not the 'be all and end all' in terms of measuring success. We would like the government to recognise this in devising a system that takes some of the heat out of SATs. The NGA supports the external assessment of children on leaving primary school, but believes that league tables are a crude and unhelpful measure of performance. NGA supports the development of other methods of robust, meaningful reporting to parents and prospective parents, which reflect the complexity and variety of the challenges faced by schools, and the breadth of their successes. We hope the new review will deliver this.

We would be very interested to hear from primary school governors with ideas on how we discourage headteachers from 'teaching to the test' without sending a message that we are unconcerned with standards of literacy and numeracy. Please e-mail emma.knights@nga.gov.uk with your views.

Surrey Council in Academy Drive

Both the BBC and the Guardian carried a story about Surrey County Council and its 'proposals' that all its secondary schools could convert to academy status. The two websites quote the Cabinet member for Education (Peter Martin) and the Strategic Director for Children's Services (Andy Roberts). The 'proposals' have stemmed from the idea that it may be better for all schools to convert rather than just a few. Having said that no Surrey schools have yet converted and only two are significantly down the road of doing so.

Mr Rogers has also written to primary headteachers setting out the Council's thinking on this issue and asking primary heads whether they would support an initiative to look at mass conversion to academy status. It is absolutely right that local authorities should be looking at the potential effects on services if schools adopt academy status, but both Mr Rogers and Mr Martin seemed to have missed a fundamental legal point: it is not the Council or headteachers who make decisions about whether a school converts to academy status, it is the governors.

The story also takes a rather bizarre twist if you read today's edition of the TES, which also has a lead story headed "Meet the Tory council boss who's happy to snub the academy dream". Who is this Tory boss? – none other than the leader of Surrey County Council, who is quoted as saying: "We are one of the top-performing areas in the country, so I don't see that the move to academy status would do much for us."

And continues, "There are other areas where the move (to academy status) would be more applicable, and I think the Government is quite right to have this option open, but I struggle to see what the benefit would be to do it in an area like ours."

Good luck to Surrey schools making informed choices when even the leaders in the authority seem to be singing from different hymn sheets.

The various articles can be viewed via the attached links:

[BBC Surrey Academy Story](#)

[Guardian Surrey Academy Story](#)

[TES Surrey Academy Story](#)

Equalities Act 2010

The majority of provisions under the Equalities Act 2010 come into force today. The NGA will be providing a briefing on the Act which will be accessible via our website. The Act brings together the numerous acts covering equalities into one 'super-act' with over 200 clauses and 27 schedules. The Act sets out the basis on which people are protected from discrimination. Although much of the Act is a reiteration of existing legislation there are some important changes, which broaden the scope of current equalities legislation.

Find out more information from the [Government Equalities Office](#) website.

Visit our Schools and Colleges Week

18-22 October is 'Visit our Schools and Colleges' week; a national week to celebrate partnership working between education and employers. The campaign encourages partnership between schools, colleges and businesses – find out more here via the campaign's [website](#). Schools should highlight the role employers can take in encouraging their employees to volunteer as governors.

Department for Education website

The Department for Education has re-vamped its website, with clearer sections for easier navigation. Visit the new-look website – [Department for Education](#)

Although there is a link to the GovernorNet discussion board from the DfE website, GovernorNet will not remain as a separate website as the Department is rationalising the number of websites it owns, and migrating content onto its main web site. GovernorNet is currently being archived onto the Government Web Archive, based at the National Archives. Find out more – [website rationalisation](#)

Membership Survey

We still need to hear what more of you think of us. To ensure that we are representing you as effectively as we can, it's essential that we hear your views. Please take the time to complete our membership survey to help us make important decisions on our future direction.

Our survey only takes a maximum of 10 minutes to complete - click here to complete our [Membership Survey](#). The survey closes on Monday 11 October.

NGA General Director Elections

We remind all NGA members that they are entitled to vote in our General Director elections. There are seven candidates for three General Director vacancies on the NGA Board. Completed ballot forms need to be submitted to the NGA office by Thursday 4 November (2pm). The results of the election will be announced at our AGM on 6 November.

Click here for more information and to place your vote: [NGA Board Elections](#)

Regional Meetings reminder

Our Regional Meetings on academies continue to be popular but you can still book on, if you're quick! Please note that places are now limited in some regions and are being allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Find out more about meeting dates and locations here – [Regional Meetings](#)

Are you a new academy?

Are you a Primary or Secondary School who has recently converted or is in the process of converting to academy status? If so, we would be interested to hear about your experiences and would like to feature you as a case study for our membership magazine; *Matters Arising*. Please get in touch if you're interested in sharing your experiences. E-mail NGAs Communications Manager, Pardeep Mattu via Pardeep.Mattu@nga.org.uk

IAA Conference & Awards

The Independent Academies Association (IAA) is hosting a conference; '*Driving Transformation*' on 6- 7 October at the Nottingham Conference Centre. The focus of the conference is to celebrate the outstanding practice and national contribution of individual academies, and to guide the development of academy establishment and expansion. For more information, click here to view the [Conference Programme](#).

As a special offer, NGA members are able to select conference packages at IAA member's rates. Click here to download a [booking form](#).

Staffordshire Governors

You may be interested to hear that a team of 'super governors' could be recruited to support scholls in Staffordshire. They would work alongside a school's existing governing body, either through a mentoring role or by offering advice. Find out more here via the [web article](#).

Our address details

We have noticed that some of our members are still addressing post to our old office address. Please update your records to the following details:

National Governors' Association, Ground Floor, 36 Great Charles Street, Birmingham B3 3JY. Call 0121 237 2380, fax 0121 233 1323.

Chair's Blog

This week our Chair, Clare Collins blogs about the Self Evaluation Form. Her latest blog can be read via the attached link - [Chair's Blog](#).

Contact NGA

By e-mail governorhq@nga.org.uk or by phone at 0121 237 3780.

This newsletter is distributed as a benefit of NGA membership.

If you think this news briefing is a valuable resource, you should consider becoming a NGA member - more information on membership can be found by following this link - [Join the NGA](#).

National Governors' Association

BULLETIN BOARD

BB 10/10 **1 October 2010**

Ground Floor, 36 Great Charles Street, Birmingham B3 3JY

Tel: 0121 237 3780 Fax: 0121 122 1323 E-mail:
governnorhq@nga.org.uk Website: www.nga.org.uk

The Bulletin Board is an NGA membership benefit circulated to Local Associations and to Co-ordinators of Governor Services to update them on NGA's work, consultations and developments in school governance.

Please share this information widely, through your email contacts and at local meetings, to keep governing bodies better informed of, and more involved in, current activities and national issues.

FOR ACTION: NGA DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

NGA Conference and 2010 AGM – *Managing Your School's Money:*

6 November in London. Book now.

The Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, was due to be our key-note speaker but has sent his apologies as he is now on a foreign fact-finding trip on the weekend of 6/7 November. However, we are pleased to announce that Lord Jonathan Hill, the Under-Secretary of State for Education (who has governance in his ministerial brief), is now opening the conference.

The conference booking form and the conference programme are available from the NGA website via this link – [NGA Conference and AGM](#). Please return the booking form by **Friday 22 October** at the very latest. However, we advise that you book early to ensure that you secure places, as there are a limited number. Local associations and

Gold governing body members are entitled to three free places. If you have additional people who wish to attend, we will place them on a waiting list and let you know if we have spare spaces available after 22 October.

Please note that we are planning to suggest a change to subscription rates at our AGM this year, on which members will be asked to vote.

NGA Autumn Regional Meetings: Our regional meetings are this month. We will focus on **academies**. All governing bodies, whether outstanding or not, need to think about the pros and cons of converting to academy status. Come and hear about, and discuss, the issues involved. Other business, including regional elections, will also be covered at the meetings. (See website: *Events/Regional Meetings* for location maps)

Meeting dates are:

North East: Tuesday 5 October; 6.30pm start; Durham

North West: Wednesday 6 October; 6.00pm start; Preston

Yorkshire and the Humber: Monday 11 October, 6.30 start; York

West Midlands: Saturday 9 October, 9.30am start, Dudley

East Midlands: Tuesday 12 October; 10.30am start; Leicester

East: Wednesday 13 October; 6.00pm start; Bury St. Edmunds

South West: Saturday 16 October; 10.00am start; Taunton

South East and London: Monday, 18 October; 5.00pm start for regional business; 6.00pm start for Academies Seminar, London

Register to attend the meeting for your region by e-mail:

governorhq@nga.org.uk

For ACTION: NGA Membership Survey

We need **more of you** to complete our survey! Please take the time to complete our Membership Survey to help us make important decisions on our future direction. An action plan of issues to address and propose improvements to our service will be developed as a result of the responses to this survey.

The survey only takes a maximum of 10 minutes to complete - click here to complete our [Membership Survey](#). The survey closes on Monday 11 October (12 noon).

CONSULTATIONS: NEWS and ACTION

1 Education Select Committee Inquiry: The role and performance of Ofsted

The Select Committee has launched a new enquiry and is calling for evidence. Written submissions are invited on a range of aspects, including the purposes and range of inspections, the impact of the inspection process on school improvement and its role in providing an accountability mechanism for schools operating with greater autonomy. For full details visit:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/education-committee/news/new-inquiry-announced-ofsted/> which includes guidance on submissions.

A copy of the submission should be sent by email to:

educom@parliament.uk and marked 'Ofsted inquiry'. The Committee's strong preference is for submissions in electronic form, although hard copy originals will be accepted, and should be sent to: Education Select Committee, House of Commons, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA.

**Deadline 8 October 2010
responses to NGA**

Please copy

2 Green Paper: Children And Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities ~ Call For Views

On 10 September the Minister of State for Children and Families, Sarah Teather, invited views from everyone with an interest in services, including education, for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities in England. All views and perspectives received will be considered as part of developing proposals for a Green Paper on SEN and disability to be published this autumn.

The consultation can be found at:

www.education.gov.uk/consultations/

Responses may be made online at:

www.education.gov.uk/consultations/ or sent by email to: send.callforviews@education.gsi.gov.uk or by post to: SEN and Disability Frameworks' Team, Special Educational Needs and Disability Division, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT

**DfE deadline 15 October 2010
responses to NGA**

Please copy

3 Consultation on School Funding 2011–12: Introducing a Pupil Premium

This consultation seeks views on proposed arrangements for the operation of the pupil premium and the distribution of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to local authorities for 2011–12. It seeks views on the overall funding methodology and puts forward options for how elements of the pupil premium should operate. DfE is aware that the 12-week consultation period includes the summer break. It regrets it cannot extend the deadline for responses, as the process needs to be concluded by 18 October to give sufficient time for the calculation of local authority and school budgets.

Please note that, on accessing this consultation, the first option 'Read the consultation document on-line' opens the Executive Summary only. The full consultation document is available as a download (option 4 in the list).

The consultation can be found at:

www.education.gov.uk/consultations/

Responses may be made online at:

www.education.gov.uk/consultations/ or sent by email to:

dsg.consultation@education.gsi.gov.uk or by post to School Funding Consultation, Funding and Technology Unit, DfE, Level 3, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT

**DfE deadline 18 October 2010
NGA 1 October 2010**

Deadline for comment to

FOR INFORMATION

1 Key meetings attended in September

Secretary of State's Education Partnership (2.09.10): This is a confidential forum for the DfE to engage partners in debate and the development and implementation of policy, particularly its implications for the school workforce.

DfE Ministerial School Improvement task & finish group (6.09.10): This is part of the DfE's on-going review on the role of local authority in education.

National Heads', Directors of Children's Services' and Governors' Group (14.09.10):

At which the main items were:

- A presentation of NGA's draft paper on reducing bureaucracy for governing bodies (drawn up in the light of the Government's desire to cut unnecessary bureaucracy) and;
- Tony Redmond, Local Government Ombudsman, giving an update on their pilot in handling complaints concerning schools (we will be covering this issue in a future *Matters Arising* article).

Education & Employer Partnership Task Force Governance Expert Group (17.09.10):

This meeting planned the group's work for the coming year. The group has endorsed NGA's Code of Practice for governing bodies, and has developed a set of policy recommendations on governance, which partners plan to work together on to promote.

DfE School Funding Implementation Group (SFIG) (03.09.10): SFIG met to look at the future of school funding and academy funding.

GovernorLine Advisory Board (14.09.10): It was noted that there has been an increased number of enquiries on disputes around Facebook and co-heads.

2 NGA General Director Elections

We remind all NGA members that they are entitled to vote in our General Director elections. There are seven candidates for three General Director vacancies on the NGA Board. Completed ballot forms need to be submitted to the NGA office by **Thursday 4 November (2pm)**. The results of the election will be announced at our AGM on 6 November.

Click here for more information and to place your vote: [NGA Board Elections](#)

3 Incentives for associations to encourage schools into NGA membership

Did you know that, if half of an association's members join the NGA (as governing bodies), then the association itself does not have to pay any membership fee to NGA? NGA has now extended this principle so that, if just one quarter of an association's schools become members of the NGA, we will halve the association's fee for the following year. In addition, an association's members will also now be entitled to a £5 reduction on their school's NGA membership fee, which means instead of £60 for standard governing body membership, the school would pay NGA £55.

We are developing our new membership promotions leaflet. If you are interested in promoting NGA membership to your schools, please e-mail Pardeep.Mattu@nga.org.uk

4 NGA Governance Awards 2011

Don't forget to make nominations for the National Governors' Association Awards for Outstanding School Governance 2011. There are two prestigious awards:

- NGA's and Governor Wales' Outstanding Clerk Award (England & Wales), and
- NGA's Outstanding Governing Body Award (England only).

There will be both national and regional winners, and awards will be presented at a national ceremony in March 2011.

The closing date is approaching – it is 15 November 2010 (12 noon). Don't let great work go unnoticed. Our members supported our first 'ask' in our manifesto – raising the profile of governors and the importance of school governance. These awards are a very good way of achieving that – please do so.

Nomination forms are now available via the attached link – [NGA Awards 2011](#)

5 New editions of Guides available from NGA

New editions of the NGA Guides, with updated information on legislation, are available this Autumn. These valued publications are purchased by over 50 local authorities as a credible source of information and guidance for governors. The publications are available at discounted rates for NGA members. Our new edition of *Welcome to Governance* is ready for despatch and other NGA publications will follow by the end of October.

For further information, and to access the order form for the new NGA Guides, visit the NGA website: [NGA Guides](#)

6 Local Association websites

NGA is continually developing and improving our website and has introduced new regional pages. To provide useful information for NGA members, we have included a list of local associations, by region, that link through to local associations' websites. Please view the web page: [Local Association websites](#). If there are any changes you wish to make, please contact Pardeep Mattu, NGA Communications Manager, via e-mail: Pardeep.Mattu@nga.org.uk

7 Regional stories needed

Do you have forthcoming meetings to promote or do you want to share success stories on governance or your local association? We now have a regional page available in our membership magazine, *Matters Arising*, to enable you to communicate to a wider audience. If you have any story ideas, please contact Pardeep Mattu, NGA Communications Manager, via e-mail: Pardeep.Mattu@nga.org.uk

8 The NGA First Certificate in Governance

Changes are being made to this distance-learning programme to fit with the 2010/11 edition of *Welcome to Governance*.

9 Teachers TV

Teachers' TV is now available exclusively online. Access all you wish to view by going to www.teachers.tv. TTV has a microsite on the NGA website: <http://www.nga.org.uk/ttv.aspx> Teachers TV have also produced a complementary CD 'Training for Governors', which will be distributed with every new edition of *Welcome to Governance* ordered.

10 NGA Membership Benefits

Make sure your association is receiving all its benefits. Members of the executive committees of local associations are entitled to receive a copy of the NGA magazine, *Matters Arising*, sent to their home address, to have access to the members' only section of the NGA website and to have the e-newsletter sent direct to their email address. If you have not yet given us the names, addresses and email addresses of your executive members, or if these have changed, please let us have the information as soon as possible. Without these details your association is not receiving its full membership benefits.

Email Forum: Have you joined the forum yet? *If you wish to be placed on the forum, email Pardeep Mattu: Pardeep.Mattu@nga.org.uk*

11 Our address details

We have noticed that some of our members are still addressing post to our old office address. Please update your records to the following details:

National Governors' Association, Ground Floor, 36 Great Charles Street, Birmingham B3 3JY.
Call 0121 237 2380, fax 0121 233 1323.