

## **LDEA SCHOOL GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP**

### **Shared Strategic Leadership**

We believe that excellent governance is achieved with the shared strategic leadership of the Governing Body and the Headteacher together with the senior leadership team of a School. This should deliver and develop educational opportunities for school pupils both now and for the future, working with partners as necessary in order to achieve these objectives.

In addition Governing Bodies have varying executive responsibilities regarding property, finance, and human resources but their main function is as a non-executive scrutiny body.

### **Work in Progress**

We have had one consultative session at the LGA Children and Young Persons Conference held last February and an initial two meetings of the Working Group. Our work so far has concentrated on drafting the above statement on the principles behind School Governance but like the other issues raised below we want your input today at this consultative session. The questions are not meant to be comprehensive but should enable the issues to be fully addressed

We are organising the first part of our consultative session in small groups:

#### **1) Role of Governing Bodies and their Scrutiny and Local Authority Governors**

Do you agree with the above statement and if not how should it be amended?  
In particular should the executive function be changed?

Should the balance of responsibility for the School be shifted from the Headteacher to the Governing Body, of which the Headteacher is a member?  
Is it right that Headteachers tend to be the sole scapegoat when things go wrong such as a bad OFSTED Report?

We are proposing that Local Authority Scrutiny and Overview Boards should scrutinise the work of Governing Bodies, particularly in failing Schools. Do you agree or do you have a different idea? NB.Scrutiny of individual schools should be confidential excluding press and public.

What is your view on the role of Local Authority Governors? Do they still provide a role and input to the work of Governing Bodies or not? If you believe they do should we change the way they are selected or not? Should they have to be approved before being eligible and by whom?

What should be their relationship with the Local Authority?

#### **2) Involvement of Parents, Local Communities, Young People and Staff**

We would like your input on initiatives to encourage these stakeholders, particularly Liberal Democrats, to become involved.

How do we ensure that these groups are clearly informed about the role of School Governors and by whom so that they have the confidence to progress their interest?

Should Young People ie pupils be eligible to be School Governors? If so what age limit should apply?

How can we ensure that Staff Governors fulfil their dual role as Governors and Employees, in particular the scrutiny role of the Governing Body?

### **3) Good training and mentoring of new School Governors**

How do we ensure that there is a minimum standard of training of School Governors?

Should Governing Bodies or Local Authorities be responsible for training and/or mentoring of new Governors? Or if not either who?

To what extent should training be voluntary or compulsory bearing in mind that Governors are voluntary and unpaid.

### **4) Selection/Election of Governing Bodies**

At present Community Schools have Local Authority, Parent, Community and staff (including the Headteacher) Governors. Parent Governors are elected by parents of pupils, Community Governors are elected by the Governing Body, and staff governors are elected by members of staff. Local Authority Governors (see 1). Voluntary Aided, Foundation and Trust schools and Academies can appoint the majority of their Governors. The regulations regarding the composition of governing bodies are complex.

Would you like to see any changes to the current position?

In particular should the Community rather than the Governing Body elect Community Governors? And if so how?

Should we give much more freedom to Governing Bodies to determine the composition of their Governing Bodies with two provisos that no category should have an overall majority and that all categories must be included?

Should all or some categories have to be approved before standing as Governors? To what extent should a skills audit determine how Governors are elected/selected?

### **5) Training in School Governance of Headteachers and Senior School Managers**

At present there is little, or no, training in the role of School Governance during teacher training and insufficient in Headteacher training. This leaves many otherwise highly effective senior teachers seriously lacking in their understanding of School Governance.

How do we ensure that these senior people have a basic understanding of School Governance so that they know how to become involved in working with Governing Bodies, and in particular the role of the Headteacher as Governor?

**This consultative session is being sponsored by Baroness Joan Walmsley whose contribution we are pleased to acknowledge.**

Comments may be sent to [ldeasgwg@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ldeasgwg@yahoo.co.uk) or left at the LDEA exhibition stand in Liverpool.