

News from the National Governors' Association

NGA News Briefing 120310

SATs Boycott – Proposed Action by the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)

The two unions are now preparing to ballot members. Ballot papers will issue in the week beginning 13 March and are due to be returned by midday on 16th April.

Chairs of governors in primary schools may well have received a letter from Christine Blower and Mick Brookes, General Secretaries of the NUT and NAHT asking for your support for the ballot. If you have not seen the letter it can be viewed on the NUT website via the attached link - [NUT Information about SATS boycott](#).

The Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families (Ed Balls MP) and the Minister of State for Schools (Vernon Coaker MP) have written to primary headteachers about the future of Key Stage 2 tests. The letter can be viewed via the attached link - [DCSF Letter](#).

It has not yet been established whether this is a legitimate industrial dispute; the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) believes that as headteachers are under a statutory duty to make arrangements for the tests to take place if they do not comply with that duty they are acting unlawfully. On the other hand, the NAHT's legal advice is that this is a legitimate dispute. This has not been tested in the Courts (and the DCSF has not said that if the unions vote 'yes' to the boycott, it intends to do so).

This is not strike action, if the unions vote 'yes' to the boycott, any staff involved will be in school throughout, but will take no part in the administration/management of the Key Stage 2 tests.

This action is limited to the NAHT and NUT, the other teaching unions/professional associations (ASCL, ATL, NASUWT and Voice) are not involved

What should governing bodies do?

The NGA does not support a boycott of the Key Stage 2 tests and whatever members' personal views may be, the NGA advises that governing bodies do not sign supporting statements.

The duty to arrange the tests falls directly on the headteacher and is clearly an operational matter. If the boycott goes ahead the governing body should not get involved in operational matters and should not get involved in the administration of the tests. The governing body can reasonably enquire of the headteacher (assuming your headteacher is a member of the NAHT/NUT) what action they will be taking and what steps are in place to administer/manage the tests. The governing body cannot force the tests to be carried out, and should not try to do so, but it may remind the headteacher of the government's view of the boycott's legalities.

Regional Meetings

The remaining NGA Regional meetings will be taking place during March and April.

The next NGA Regional meeting will be in Yorkshire and the Humber on Wednesday 17th March followed by the South West Regional meeting on Saturday 20th March.

The London meeting will take place on Monday 26th April (6-8.30pm) at City Hall. Dr David Ewens of the Greater London Authority will give a presentation on pupil place planning. A flyer for the event can be found on the NGA website via the attached link. [London Regional Meeting](#).

Details of all the regional meetings can be found on the NGA website via the attached link - [NGA Events](#).

To book a place at a regional meeting please email governorhq@nga.org.uk or phone: 0121-237-3780.

Clare's Blog

In this week's blog Clare talks about child protection, Children's Trusts and the proposed boycott of SATs. – [Chair's Blog](#)

Contact NGA

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

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