

## **NGA News Briefing 070510**

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.

### **SATs Boycott**

The Sats tests are due to start on Monday, and we continue to receive calls from members and non-members about how to deal with the situation. The NGA's guidance has been revised in the light of the latest information and the most recent version of the guidance is available to download from the NGA website. The NGA has been in discussion with the DCSF who remain adamant that there is a sound legal basis for requesting your headteacher (assuming they are planning to boycott) to absent themselves from the premises during SATs. The NGA remains concerned about this course of action and would strongly recommend that no governing body takes such an action without first discussing it with the local authority and ensuring that the local authority will provide support should there be a challenge. We have also updated our guidance in relation to deductions of pay.

The latest guidance is available to download from the NGA's dedicated web-page via the attached link - [SATs Boycott](#)

We would welcome information from members about what advice they have been given by their local authority and indeed what the situation is around the country in relation to the boycott.

### **Election**

Well it came and went and most of us were able to cast our votes. At the time of writing most of the seats had declared and it is clear that the Conservatives have the most seats. It is not clear, however, whether the Conservatives will form a minority government or attempt to form coalition. Hopefully in next week's newsletter we will be able to report who is Secretary of State for Children Schools and Families (assuming the incoming administration does not change its name again). The current incumbent, Ed Balls MP, did manage to retain his seat (albeit it was a fairly close run thing) although former Secretary of State Charles Clarke and former schools ministers Jackie Smith and Jim Knights all lost their seats.

Thanks for those of you who did send NGA's manifesto to their local parliamentary candidates. Please let us know of any responses you received. We can report that the offices of all the previously opposition spokespeople for children and schools did acknowledge the receipt of NGA's manifesto and promised to be in contact after the election. Of course they may end up with different portfolios. As soon as the relevant ministers are announced, The NGA will make contact with them and aim to meet them as soon as possible to make sure the governor voice is heard and taken note of by the new Government.

### **Free Schools**

Members on the NGA's email forum have been raising the issue of 'Swedish Free Schools', a central plank of the Conservative Party policy and the mechanism by which parent run schools would be established. There has been considerable debate about the effectiveness of such schools and the research gives a mixed picture. For more information you may like to check Channel 4's election fact checker, which provides links to the various pieces of research on the subject.

#### [Channel 4 Swedish Free Schools Fact-check](#)

If, as seems quite likely, the Conservatives form the next Government the NGA will be seeking urgent talks with the incoming Secretary of State about how exactly this policy will work in practice and more particularly how such schools will be governed.

### **World Class Primary School Programme**

Today's Times Education Supplement reported on the World Class Primary School Programme which follows from the publication of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools White Paper and is the DCSF's programme for primary school improvement. A kind of National Challenge for primary schools.

The TES report that the DCSF has identified those schools which it considers to be under-performing, those in an Ofsted category and those where the results in the Key Stage 2 tests have consistently been below 55% at level four. The main thrust of the article is about those schools which have been identified as 'coasting' in documents produced by the National Strategies team.

The TES article can be viewed via the attached link - [TES Article on World Class Primary Programme](#)

For more information about the programme you can view the dedicated pages on the DCSF's website via the attached link - [DCSF World Class Primary Programme](#)

### **Clare's Blog**

This week Clare talks about the experience of appearing on TV – her latest blog can be read via the attached link - [Chair's Blog](#).

### **Contact NGA**

By e-mail [governorhq@nga.org.uk](mailto: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](#).