

## **National Governance Association(NGA) Regional Meeting 21/3/18**

The NGA held its Regional Meeting at their offices in Birmingham on the 21 March 2018.

We were given the following questions to consider regarding Senior Leadership Teams in Schools.

- How does your school's leadership compare to those of other schools?
- Do your senior leaders teach?
- How much are your senior leaders paid?
- How big is your SLT, relative to the school's type and the size of the school's staff and pupil population?
- How regularly does your governing body/trust board review its senior leadership structure? What resources does it utilise to understand good practice?
- Are the roles and responsibilities of your senior leaders clearly defined, and separate from each other? Are your senior leaders' role titles an accurate reflection of what they do?

The responses from delegates were interesting. One governor said that as an exercise all SLT members had to write down what they were doing for a month and all their assigned tasks including time spent on them. It was discovered that they were spending a lot of time on administrative tasks, updating the website and producing the newsletter. At the time there was no PA to the Head Teacher so one was appointed to undertake these jobs instead. Another governor pointed out that if SLT are teaching that is very expensive to use them as classroom teachers given their salary. Finally, a governor of a primary school said that members of SLT would teach in the case of staff absence to reduce costs of Supply/Agency Cover. In conclusion it was felt by most that reduction in staffing costs could be made in finance and administration where schools were part of a MAT or cluster of schools.

Our second topic for discussion was narrowing the gap in respect of disadvantaged children. This is proving very difficult to achieve in many schools despite continued pupil premium funding. There are also resources provided by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) as to what might make the most impact. The NGA is worried if the gap does not close then this money could be lost and it had recently met with the EEF as to what else might have an impact such as providing breakfast to pupil premium children in a primary school. How is this measured?

We were updated on mental health in schools. The Government has recently produced a Green Paper entitled "Transforming Children's and Young People's Mental Health". The proposals are for each school to have a senior lead for mental health from 2019. The commitment in the Green Paper " is for a member of staff in every primary and secondary school to receive mental health awareness training." New mental health support teams would be created for in-school treatment.

Emma Knights Chief Executive of the NGA said the government needs further convincing of the funding challenge which some schools say they are facing. She asked governors to provide evidence of shortfall of funding.

Another important topic discussed was Data Protection and we were provided with an Article from Governing Matters November/December 2017. The Article was written by a solicitor at Browne Jacobson, NGA's legal partner. In particular General Data Protection Regulation comes into force on the 25 May 2018 and the question was asked "Are Schools ready"? A governor was concerned about who should be the Data Protection Officer and whether that person should undertake the role as a stand-alone post. The NGA agreed to seek advice from Browne Jacobson. There are new provisions, for example relating to the rights of individuals, notification to the Information Commissioner of breaches and data which is adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary.

The final topic of the evening was recruitment and retention of governors. The NGA has produced a guide "The right people around the table- a guide to recruiting and retaining school governors and trustees" We were also reminded of the ability to recruit through "Inspiring Governance". Inspiring Governance connects skilled volunteers interested in serving as governors and trustees in schools in England. It also provides free, expert support for volunteers and governing bodies, as well as for employers wanting to run programmes for their staff serving as governors.

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