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Network News

SUMMER
2002

ASSET MANAGEMENT PLANS (AMPS)

The Network is currently involved in discussions about the development of Schools' Asset Management Plans (AMPs). The LEA has established an Advisory Board which has representation from the Network, as well as from Headteachers and Diocesan Boards. It will enable stakeholders to monitor the development of AMPs and will act as a forum for schools to influence future strategic developments. AMPs will be computer-based and will centre around the three elements of 'Condition', 'Suitability', and 'Sufficiency'. A Local Policy Statement has been produced for the Advisory Board's consideration..

The LEA has already been asked to provide a simple overview of the different sources of funding to which schools have access, and governors are being encouraged to communicate their reactions to the AMP process, and their views and requirements for the AMP process. If you have any comments to make, please get in touch with Judy Leggett – 01603 429986 or judy.leggett@ngn.org.uk

Meanwhile, our website and Newsletter will keep you informed of progress and we plan to have Asset Management Plans as a topic at a future Forum.

Next Year's GLAMs

The Network has been discussing with Bryan Slater the arrangements for next year's Governor-LEA-Area-Meetings (GLAMs). Although attendances at some venues (particularly in the West of the County) have been very disappointing, it is recognised that such opportunities for informal discussion are valued both by those governors who do attend and by the LEA. It has therefore been decided to go ahead with meetings next year, but that the number across the County will be reduced from 15 to 13. We are also looking at the nature of agendas. The theme for the Autumn term will be 'Working in partnership with the LEA' Full details of these meetings will soon be communicated to schools and will be posted on the Network's website.

We do urge as many governors as possible to attend – and it is hoped that Governing Bodies will feel able to ensure that at least one of their number attends one of the meetings during the year. Meanwhile a summary of the issues raised at this year's meetings can be found on our website.

Communication with Governors

The Network continues to try to identify better ways of informing,

and receiving comment from, governors. We still believe that if all governing bodies could nominate one person as their Network contact (with address, tel. no. and email if available) this would enable us to improve our service to them – we would therefore encourage you to do this, if you have not already done so, at your first meeting next term – and also to inform us (info@ngn.org.uk) of any changes which occur during the year. We are also going to issue a simple termly questionnaire which will enable all governing bodies to let us know of their current concerns and their responses to current consultations being undertaken by either the LEA or DfES. Please do your best to return these to us – it is intended for it all to be done on one sheet of A4 paper!!

Upper Pay Spine consultations

The Network continues to be concerned about this issue. We have attempted through our website to keep governors up to date with developments, and there is now a further consultation document issued by the DfES. In order to ensure that we can represent your views on a matter which we know concerns many

governors we would ask you to contact Mandy White (01603 261891 or mandy.white@ngn.org.uk)

Fair Funding Consultation

The DfES is currently consulting LEAs on the new Fair Funding proposals which includes the setting up of schools forums. The main consultation paper is posted on the DfES's Fair Funding website. They are also consulting with the main national governors' representative bodies and the Network is therefore encouraging governing bodies to send any comments to info@ngn.org.uk so that Norfolk governors' views can be channelled to the DfES through the National Governors' Council (NGC)

Parent Governor Representation

Lucinda (Polly) Poliakoff and John Riddett are the Parent Governor representatives on the appropriate committees of the County Council. These representatives are automatically co-opted on to the Network's County Committee (although Polly is an elected member in her own right), thus keeping the Network informed of Parent Governor matters and activity in the County.

New Clerk to be appointed

Unfortunately our Clerk, Verena Gray, will be leaving us this summer. She has provided the Network with excellent service over the past three years, and we wish to thank her most sincerely for all that she has done during that time. We are now actively recruiting a replacement for Verena. If you know of anyone interested, details can be obtained from Judy Leggett - 01603 429986 or judy.leggett@ngn.org.uk

Network Forum/AGM

The Network's Autumn Forum, which is also our AGM, will take place on Saturday, 9th November at County Hall. Please do put this in your diary now – full details will be circulated to schools early next term.

Sub Committee News.

The Network's Quality Sub Committee has been discussing with Fred Corbett the Green Paper on 14-19 education, the RDA booklet ('Support, Challenge, and Celebration Towards Excellence for Norfolk Learners'), and Race Relations/Multicultural Model Policy. Any questions, comments on these issues, or others relating to School Quality matters, should be addressed to Lucinda Poliakoff (01603 506242 or lucinda.poliakoff@ngn.org.uk) The Staffing Sub Committee meets Education Personnel staff on a regular basis and is currently discussing with them matters relating to the LSA Grading Scheme, Headteacher appointments, Threshold Payments, Pre-employment checks for staff, personnel implications of the School Organisation Review, Sickness Absence Policy and Revised Pay Policy. Should you have any queries or concerns relating to these issues please contact Mandy White (01603 261891 or mandy.white@ngn.org.uk)

Small school heads share ideas

Headteachers from small primary schools will get the opportunity to share their ideas with other heads

in a programme being piloted by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL). The college is working in partnership with 11 LEAs to develop the programme Leading Small Primary Schools, which involves 33 small schools, each with fewer than 100 pupils. The programme is designed to foster learning within schools from the same LEA and from different LEAs, and encourages headteachers to develop supportive relationships and networks. The pilot, launched in March is due to be completed at the end of the year.

Parental Involvement could be better

The DfES has recently published *Parental Involvement in Education*. This report presents the results of a telephone survey designed to investigate the level of involvement parents have in their children's education and general school life. It concludes that at present, only a minority of parents feel fully involved in their child's school life. The report, No. RR332, is available from the DfES website: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications>

Sex Education Needs Improvement

Ofsted's report, *Sex and Relationships*, says that while schools adequately cover the factual aspects of human reproduction, teaching about parenthood, relationships and the prevention of infection was often too poor.

Maths in Primary Schools

Teaching of Calculation in Primary Schools, a new Ofsted report, shows primary schools have made significant progress in the past two years in teaching mathematics and, in particular, in teaching pupils how to calculate mentally under the National Numeracy Strategy. The report finds that pupils make little use of jottings to support and record their mental strategies or explain their methods of calculation. This problem is exacerbated by teachers relying too much on worksheets and commercial schemes, particularly in Key Stage One (pupils aged 5-7),

which limit the space for pupils to develop and use their own methods of recording.

New Allowances for post 16s

Schoolchildren from low-income families are to be paid £40 a week to stay on at school after the age of 16. A £300 million expansion of the education maintenance allowance (EMA) is to be part of next month's Comprehensive Spending Review.

The government money will extend the scheme across England and Wales after a series of pilot programmes revealed that five per cent more children stayed at school after their GCSEs if they were paid the allowance. The allowance will be means-tested, with £40 paid to children whose parents earn up to £13,000, tapering down to £5 for those whose parents earn up to £30,000 annually. The money is paid directly into the teenager's or parent's bank account, or in some cases given out as transport vouchers. To receive the money students have to agree to attend school every day, do their homework and behave in class.

New Leader for the QCA

Australian **Ken Boston** has been named as the new chief executive of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). Currently director general of education and training and managing director of technical and further education in New South Wales, he will take up the post in September.

Specialist Schools' Performance

NFER and the Technology Colleges Trust have just published *High Performing Specialist Schools: What Makes the Difference?* The report, based on research by NFER, identifies those features of the practices and characteristics which appear to contribute to the student performance gains recorded for a sample of high-performing and improving specialist schools. The report, by Peter Rudd et al, is published by NFER priced £8. Email: book.sales@nfer.ac.uk