

TRAINING AND SUPPORT OF GOVERNORS

Report By: School Services Manager and General County Inspector (with responsibility for Governors) attached to IASPS

Wards Affected

Countywide.

Purpose

1. To review current plans for the training and support given to governors.

Financial Implications

2. Training and support for Governors provided by the LEA is delivered within the Education budget allocation for 2002/2003 at a sum of £37000. Additional funding maybe required in 2003/2004 to reflect additional re-charge requirements.

Report

The Council's responsibilities for Governor Training

3. Schedule 11 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and section 22 of the Education Act 2002 state that the Local Education Authority shall –
 - (a) secure that every governor is provided, free of charge, with such information as they consider appropriate in connection with the discharge of his functions as a governor; and
 - (b) secure that there is made available to every governor, free of charge [to the individual governor], such training as they consider necessary for the effective discharge of those functions.
4. The Council finances its training programme for governors through budgets allocated to schools. Schools use these budgets to pay that charge for attendance for any of their governors who attend a recognised training course provided locally.
5. The Governor Services Service within the Education Directorate undertakes training and support in a number of ways –
 - i) an annual programme of courses planned and provided locally
 - ii) individual sessions for specific school governing bodies
 - iii) lectures/conferences arranged by Herefordshire Association of Governors following discussion with the Education Directorate
 - iv) guidance notes and library/video resource materials
 - v) the Governor Services telephone helpline

6. Over the past year the following courses have been held –

AUTUMN TERM 2002

Early Years - Capturing the Spirit (9 Governors attended)
Children in Public Care – Conference (25 Governors attended)
Role of the Numeracy Governor (15 Governors attended)
National Induction Training for new Governors (32 Governors attended)

SPRING TERM 2003

Disability and Special Needs - What Governors Need to Know (14 Governors attended)
Clerks' Workshop (38 Clerks attended)

SUMMER TERM 2003

Reporting to Parents on SEN Policy (9 Governors attended)
Training for Governors on the changing role of the Teaching (Support) Assistant (15 Governors attended)
Child Protection in schools (20 Governors attended)
Young People's Drug Issues (4 Governors attended)
Clerks' Workshop (32 Clerks attended)

7. Overall, the overwhelming majority of evaluations rate the courses offered as being of a very high standard.
8. Specific training was also arranged at several venues around the County to provide information and advice on the new constitutional and procedural regulations which came out of the Education Act 2002.
9. These events were as follows -

Friday 6th June 2003 - Hereford Education Centre
Monday 9th June 2003 - The Minster College, Leominster
Tuesday 10th June 2003 - John Kyrle High School, Ross-on-Wye
Wednesday 18th June 2003 - The John Masefield High School, Ledbury
Wednesday 25th June 2003 - Hereford Education Centre

Total attendance - 93 Governors

10. The Governor Services Unit also receives requests from individual governing bodies to undertake specific training for the whole governing body. Such training is usually provided by relevant staff within the Directorate (inspectors and advisers, personnel, LMS, etc) though external speakers are also engaged.

11. The Directorate provides advice and support to the Herefordshire Association of Governors, (HAG) which is an independent organisation affiliated through the National Governors Council (NGC). HAG has a membership drawn from all Herefordshire schools and the School Services Manager acts as an adviser to the organisation. During the school year 2002/03 the following briefings and training opportunities have been arranged –

"Strategies for Managing Falling Rolls in Schools"

A seminar for all governors in the Bromyard and Ledbury area held at St Peter's Primary School, Bromyard (these seminars are a regular event, previously they have been held in Kingstone, Ross-on-Wye, and Leominster)
"Maintaining the Effective Governing Body"

12. The planned programme for the school year 2003/04 includes –
- (i) The new constitution and procedural changes for governors
 - (ii) Performance Management: a briefing session on the new support materials and training toolkit
 - (iii) Creativity in the Curriculum: the governors' role in supporting creative education in schools
 - (iv) Workplace Reform: a briefing for governors on the implications of the government's proposals for restructuring the teaching profession and reforming the school workforce
 - (v) The curriculum at KS3 and KS4: the impact and implementation of current strategies
 - (vi) Reviewing and reorganising governors' roles and responsibilities
 - (vii) Drugs Awareness issues
 - (viii) Child Protection issues
 - (ix) SEN Issues
 - (x) The National Training Programme for clerks to governors
 - (xi) Clerks Workshops (ongoing)
 - (xii) Social Inclusion Training for Governors
 - (xiii) National Training Programme for New Governors (ongoing)
13. The Education Directorate has a resource library with some videos that are available to individual governors and whole governing bodies on request. The guidance notes relate mainly to procedural requirements for governing bodies and are currently being revised to reflect the major changes as a result of the Education Act 2002. A letter (Appendix 1) provides an indication to this Committee of the changes that will occur from 1st September 2003.

National Training Initiatives

14. In November 1999, the Secretary of State announced that the then DfES was launching a National Strategy for Governor Support and Training. The first priority under the strategy was to develop a National Programme for Training New Governors.

15. The programme officially became available in October 2001 with an expectation that all LEAs would put into place immediately the requirements of the programme. Herefordshire was fortunate to obtain the services of Michele Robbins, an independent consultant who had developed the programme on behalf of the government. Ms Robbins has now undertaken a number of training sessions in Herefordshire over the last two years.
16. In July 2001, the DfES launched the National Training Programme for Clerks to Governing Bodies which is a comprehensive programme to introduce strategies for raising the status of clerks (69 Governors). The Toolkit for Trainers, which covers a number of initiatives, is quite complex and will require the trainer to become accredited by the DfES. The Directorate will be having discussions with colleagues in the West Midlands Confederation of Governor Services Group to determine an appropriate way forward (3 Clerk Workshops).
17. Finally, the DfES has awarded a contract to Eastern Leadership Centre Partnership to provide a national framework for training Chair of Governors and Headteachers on their respective roles within schools (Overall attendance – 96 clerks).

The Way Forward

18. The Council has a continuing duty to train new governors, and the DfES has updated the training material from September 2003. The services of Michele Robbins who has considerable expertise in this field will continue to be engaged in Herefordshire. There is a strong possibility that a number of new governors will be appointed and will require induction training.
19. The Council also has to establish an effective programme across a range of topics over the next 12 months, including Special Education, Performance Management in schools, the new teacher workload agreement, Child Protection, Drugs Education and policies, Curriculum matters and Clerking. Many of these courses will be undertaken by staff in house though outside trainers will be used from time to time. However there is a concern that the pressure from central government to provide effective and consistent training based on national standards is placing heavy demands on available staff resources within the Service and this will need to be considered.
20. Finally, individual governing bodies need advice and support to take them through the new constitution and procedural changes that came into effect from 1st September 2003 and this will be undertaken in-house by the School Services Manager.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee consider the range and adequacy of the current level of training and support.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Toolkit for both The National Training Programme for New Governors and The National Training Programme for Clerks to Governing Bodies will be on display at the Committee meeting for members to view.