

Walsall Association of Governors

Background

One of the greatest challenges in terms of raising standards in Walsall is strengthening Governance. A key factor in this which is sometimes forgotten is that governors are volunteers. Both Michael Wilshaw and Michael Gove have made it clear in recent times that they have raised the bar in terms of expectations of school governance. In Walsall Ofsted reports since September 2013 and indeed before this time have highlighted where there has been good governance but also equally highlighted schools where governance is weak. There is no longer a separate judgment on Governance and it is significant that this is now contained within Leadership and Management.

The Walsall Governor Association already exists in Walsall but it has not been active for some time.

Proposal and the Future

A group of Governors from a range of schools are keen to relaunch WAG and to use it as a vehicle to

1. Identify best practice in Walsall.
2. Make use of the National Leader of Governance we have in Walsall
3. Develop networking between governors
4. Create opportunities for buddying between governors in different schools.
5. Use electronic means for sharing policies and ideas
6. Organising an annual conference for Governors.

If we were successful in obtaining this resource of £10,000 then it would be used to work towards delivering the above. It would be a great boost to the work of governors across Walsall. The rationale behind this resource is that it would relaunch the organisation and allow it to begin working towards this agenda and challenge which is facing all Governing Bodies. A key outcome of this initiative is that it would reduce the isolation which Governing Bodies often feel.

In future years the idea is that in future years we would create a system where governing bodies would be invited to join the WAG and there would be a subscription.

Funding

At the January 2014 meeting, Schools Forum voted for the 'legacy' surplus to be divided amongst all schools at £79.28 per pupil. It is very likely that once this exercise has been done there will still be some residue from the elements funding the c£3.2m given to schools. Therefore Schools Forum can fund this as a one off in 2014/15 subject to Secretary of State/EFA approval.

Recommendations

- 1) To approve use of 'surplus' to support £10k investment in WGA for 2014/15
- 2) To support a request to Secretary of State if required.