

Memorandum of Understanding between the Essex School Governors Association and Essex LEA

This Memorandum of Understanding provides a framework for the continued development of an effective partnership between the Essex School Governors Association (ESGA) and Essex LEA (the LEA). This partnership will facilitate the achievement of our shared aims and objectives:

- to raise attainment and achievement for all our young people;
- to promote high standards of governance in all Essex schools;
- to enhance and develop the partnership and communications structure and practice between Essex LEA and its schools;
- to develop more integrated approaches to the education, social and health care of our young people.

The purpose of this memorandum is not to set out a definitive formula for success, but to indicate how the success of the partnership between ESGA and the LEA will be evidenced.

The context

The national context for this Memorandum is summarised in the Code of Practice on Local Authority – School Relations:

“Authorities will ... work with local governor associations, parent-teacher associations, dioceses and many others to facilitate networking and partnership.”

The local context is contained within the Essex Approach. The Essex Approach theme with particular relevance is “for our children and young people”. Additionally, the Essex LEA – DfES Compact seeks to “develop effective consultation and communications strategies with governing bodies, so as to inform their strategic role”. Essex Governor Services aims to achieve “Excellence in governance: Excellence in Governor Services”.

The principles

This Memorandum of Understanding is designed to secure a structured approach to the continued development of the working partnership between ESGA and the LEA. This partnership will be demonstrated in the following working practices:

- an ongoing review of the partnership arrangements;
- a collaborative approach to raising the profile of the respective roles of the LEA and ESGA and promoting governance issues;
- a joint approach to raising awareness and understanding of school improvement strategies within governing bodies;
- ESGA representation on LEA committees and working parties;
- regular exchanges of information, including updates on strategic policy and service changes.

Enabling governor involvement

At a strategic level we will:

- support governors in understanding the implications of both national and local strategic decisions and initiatives;

- jointly support increasing governor involvement in school improvement issues;
- seek to widen governor involvement in consultation at local and national levels;
- work together to improve governor recruitment and retention;
- share best practice in governance across all Essex schools.

We will work to ensure that:

- all services within the LEA are aware of the governor communications strategy developed as part of the Essex LEA – DfES Compact;
- the timing and location of LEA organised meetings do not mitigate against governor involvement;
- the timing of consultations ensures the widest circulation and consideration;
- appropriate briefings and information are provided in advance of meetings and consultation exercises;

Funding

In order to operate as efficiently as possible ESGA needs to maintain an infrastructure that will support their work with all Essex governors. There will be an annual review of the financial support the LEA provides to ESGA. In addition, the LEA will:

- assist with mailings;
- assist in the collection of ESGA annual subscriptions;
- provide professional advice from the Governor Services team.

Information

ESGA and Essex LEA will share whatever information is necessary to support the continued development of school governing bodies, to support governors in their role and to ensure that they are fully informed of relevant issues.

The ESGA Executive takes responsibility for liaising with governing bodies and obtaining feedback from school governors about LEA services and consultations. Any areas of concern will be fed back to the Head Of Governor Services.

To support the practical operation of this partnership approach, there will be regular meetings between the ESGA Executive, the Head of Schools Service and the Head of Governor Services.

Review

This Memorandum, and the associated working practices, will be reviewed every twelve months, beginning

Signed

Chair of ESGA

Head of Schools Service

Cabinet Member for Education

Date