

# Succession Breeds Success

*How to grow leaders in your governing body*



Co-ordinators of Governor Services



SCHOOL  
GOVERNORS'  
ONE-STOP SHOP



*“Effective succession means having a plan and making plans to create positive and co-ordinated flows of leadership across many years and numerous people”*

Sustainable Leadership (2006), Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink, Jossey-Bass, quoted in Leadership succession - securing the next generation of school leaders (2006) NCSL

### Acknowledgements

This document was compiled, edited and published by a project team with members drawn from the South West and South East Co-ordinators of Governor Services (COGS) regions. The team included:

David Alderson, Poole  
Jan Banks, Bournemouth  
Steve Barker, Four S  
Rosie Bass, West Berkshire  
Pat Fuggle, South Gloucestershire  
Marya Griffiths, Oxfordshire

David Marriott, Wiltshire  
Mary McIntyre, Plymouth  
Judith Ogan, West Sussex  
Hilary Price, Torbay  
Brenda Steel, Somerset

The project was funded by NCOGS and the publication by donations from organisations listed below. The School Governors One-Stop Shop (SGOSS) was particularly supportive and helpful in securing the funds necessary for design and printing.

October 2007



SCHOOL GOVERNORS' ONE-STOP SHOP

*'Recruiting Governors with management skills for Schools that need them most.'*



Ernst & Young is one of the largest professional service firms in the UK.



Clifford Chance is a truly integrated global law firm which operates as one organisation throughout the world. With 27 offices in 20 countries, we are committed to providing the highest quality professional advice, combining technical expertise with a deep understanding of the commercial environment in which our clients operate.



Herbert Smith LLP is a leading international law firm with offices across Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

## CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 3
Succession planning – how you do it	Page 3
What does good governing body leadership look like?	Page 3
What deters people from taking on school leadership?	Page 4
How can we use the tables?	Page 4
Attracting new governors	Page 5
Developing the new governor	Page 6
Taking additional responsibility	Page 7
Growing as a team leader	Page 8
Developing the role of the vice chair(s)	Page 9
Being an effective chair of governors	Page 10

## Introduction

### Has your governing body ever found itself in any of these situations?

- *Nobody was prepared to stand as chair*
- *The existing chair stayed on but didn't really want to*
- *The vice chair has no clearly defined role*
- *Committees are simply 'talking shops'*
- *It's usually the same governor(s) who volunteer to take on a task*
- *It takes too long for new governors to feel they can contribute*
- *There are too many vacancies or 'we grab anyone willing to do the job'*

If the answer's yes, join the club! If it's no, good planning now will avoid it happening in future. It's good practice anyway to ensure your governing body secures the legacy for the strategic leadership of your school.

Clearly, it's important for governing bodies to ensure continuity of leadership and to avoid crises within leadership throughout the governing body. So how can these situations be avoided in the first place? The answer is effective succession planning.

## Succession planning – how you do it

### It's about:

- *Attracting and retaining good governors*
- *Spotting leadership talent early*
- *Supporting and developing leadership skills throughout the governing body*
- *Creating opportunities to practise leadership skills*
- *Giving and receiving feedback*
- *Coaching and mentoring*
- *Developing the governing body as a team*
- *Delegating fairly and effectively*
- *Encouraging others to take up opportunities*

For an individual governor, succession planning can make life much more interesting as it opens up a range of opportunities for personal development. For a governing body, succession planning ensures its future strength and effectiveness. It's easier to achieve in a governing body with a more stable membership but even where turnover's high, succession planning could provide valuable help.

This document aims to help you identify the steps you can take to create a culture in which leadership can thrive.

## What does good governing body leadership look like?

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and Ofsted regard governance as a key component of effective school leadership:

*"The governing body, headteacher and senior management team, together constitute the leadership team of the school"*  
Governing the School of the Future DCSF 2004

Distributed leadership is common to many schools. In practice this means that many members of the school are seen as leaders and tasks are delegated far and wide.

Traditionally, we tend to think of the leadership of the governing body as being vested in the chair (and perhaps the vice chair). However, for a governing body to be truly effective and guard against the impact of rapid change it, too, needs to distribute leadership. For this to work, we need to grow leaders within the governing body.

The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) is encouraging schools to become more proactive in growing the next generation of leaders by:

- *Expanding opportunities - providing more openings for teachers to practice leadership skills*
- *Widening the talent pool - encouraging more women and ethnic minorities to take on leadership roles*
- *Talent spotting - actively identifying and encouraging leadership talent within the school*
- *Leading beyond the school - opportunities in other schools and industries for leadership practice*
- *New models of leadership - federation, co-headship and executive headship*

These strategies are equally applicable to the governing body.

Effective leadership of the governing body involves working towards a shared vision for school improvement which all governors help to achieve, working together to share responsibility, workload and the adoption of effective working practices which enable everyone to participate and develop leadership skills.

## What deters people from taking on school leadership?

The NCSL has identified factors deterring people from taking up Headship and is actively promoting succession planning for school leadership, in order to ensure schools do not find themselves unable to recruit or retain headteachers. Similar factors may deter governors from taking on the role of chair. The following table demonstrates common themes:

<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>Chair of governing body</b>
<i>Overwhelming demands of the job</i>	<i>Overwhelming demands of the job – and the time to do it</i>
<i>Takes 20 years to reach headship</i>	<i>Can take at least two years to feel confident enough to take it on</i>
<i>Shortage of suitable candidates</i>	<i>Governors are not effectively prepared for the role</i>
<i>Schools wait for talent to emerge – don't seek out leaders</i>	<i>Governors hope someone else will volunteer and don't develop potential leaders</i>
<i>Behaviour and attitude of chair or governing body</i>	<i>Behaviour and attitude of head or governing body</i>
<i>Previous or existing head impossible act to follow</i>	<i>Previous or existing chair impossible act to follow</i>
<i>Level of responsibility – but at least it's well paid</i>	<i>Level of responsibility – and unpaid</i>

The NCSL ([www.ncsl.org.uk](http://www.ncsl.org.uk)) has published a range of guidance on succession planning including two publications that governors will find particularly useful:

- *Leadership Succession – Securing the Next Generation of School Leaders*
- *Recruiting Headteachers and Senior Leaders – Seven Steps to Success*

The Hay Group's *Rush to the Top – accelerating the development of leaders in public services* (May 2007) ([www.haygroup.co.uk](http://www.haygroup.co.uk)) also contains a lot of helpful detail.

The need for this document - *Succession Breeds Success* - was stimulated by the absence of equivalent guidance for governors. It has been developed to promote effective succession planning for governing bodies.

The tables that follow identify the different phases of leadership development through which a governor may pass, from the recruitment process to becoming an effective chair:

- *Attracting new governors*
- *Developing the new governor*
- *Taking additional responsibility*
- *Growing as a team leader*
- *Developing the role of the vice chair(s)*
- *Being an effective chair of governors*

Each table defines the expectations and actions and strategies that will enable the growth of leaders within the governing body.

## How can we use the tables?

Share them with governors and evaluate your practice against them.

Think about what you might want to do differently. You could write a governing body plan for succession.

If you would like help in exploring the recommended actions and strategies, your local Governor Services Co-ordinator can help.

## Attracting new governors

An effective governing body is, in itself, the best recruitment tool of all. Don't wait for vacancies to arise before developing effective recruitment strategies such as engaging parents and carers with the work of the governing body and actively encouraging community and business links.

Expectations	Actions and strategies
<p>The governing body knows that its collective effectiveness is both the best recruitment tool and encourages governors to stay and develop leadership skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree and publish a shared vision between the senior leadership team and governors of how the school's leadership will look in five years time (staff and governors)</li> <li>• Sign up to an agreed set of principles underpinning effective, transparent team working, sharing the workload and encouraging all to get involved and gain leadership experience</li> <li>• Build relationships between governors and between governors and school staff, including the clerk, based upon mutual trust and respect</li> <li>• Encourage all governors to participate in all aspects of the work</li> <li>• Change roles within the governing body regularly to ensure maximum numbers have experience across a wide range of work</li> <li>• Audit governing body development needs</li> <li>• Ensure collective responsibility</li> <li>• Review structures regularly to ensure the governing body meets statutory requirements and that workload and experience are shared</li> </ul>
<p>The governing body reaches out to its community and ensures that potential recruits are clear about the purpose, work and expectations of the governing body</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicise the work of the governing body e.g. newsletter, informal presence at parents' evenings</li> <li>• Organise open evenings/sessions for interested parents</li> <li>• Approach and build relationships with local companies and community groups</li> <li>• Invite potential governors as observers or appoint as associate members</li> <li>• Be honest about the commitment needed to be an effective governor</li> <li>• Agree and publicise an expenses policy</li> <li>• Ensure that the timing of meetings is no disincentive to recruitment, and reflects satisfactory work-life balance for school staff and governors</li> </ul>
<p>The governing body makes use of available recruitment resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use Local Authority (LA) material or DCSF-published recruitment materials</li> <li>• Contact School Governors' One-Stop Shop (<a href="http://www.sgoss.org.uk">www.sgoss.org.uk</a>)</li> </ul>

## Developing the new governor

Effective induction of new governors is crucial to ensure their retention on the governing body. If they engage through induction they will be more able to contribute effectively and feel part of the governor team early on. Remember that induction has two strands: by the Local Authority and by the governing body.

Expectations	Actions and strategies
The governing body ensures that all new governors are made welcome and supports them in their development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out whether the newest governors feel they were welcomed and given sufficient support so that they could make a contribution from the start</li> <li>• Develop and implement an induction policy for your governing body taking account of most recent recruits' views</li> <li>• Identify an individual to oversee the induction of new governors</li> <li>• Provide new governors with a mentor</li> <li>• Encourage new governors to attend LA induction and other relevant training</li> <li>• Ensure that all contributions are recognised and valued</li> <li>• Review the induction process</li> </ul>
The governing body identifies those with potential leadership capability early on and nurtures the development of leadership skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree and publish annually a clear description of who is responsible and accountable for what, including terms of reference for committees</li> <li>• Audit the skills, knowledge and experience of new governors to establish their interests and development needs</li> <li>• Identify those with leadership potential and interest in developing it</li> <li>• Explain the future leadership opportunities available within the governing body</li> <li>• Encourage the early adoption of additional responsibilities by those with the relevant potential</li> </ul>
The new governor contributes to the effectiveness of the governing body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss with your mentor what skills, interests and experiences you bring</li> <li>• Be realistic and clear about the level of commitment you can give</li> <li>• Seek opportunities and offer to take on additional responsibility if and when appropriate</li> <li>• Offer feedback on the effectiveness of your induction</li> <li>• Attend relevant training and development opportunities</li> </ul>
The new governor has a positive impact on the effectiveness of the governing body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through discussions with one or more other governors, identify what has gone well and what could be improved</li> </ul>

## Taking additional responsibility

An effective governing body motivates and enables all members to play an active part in its school improvement and strategic development work.

This could include:

- *Taking a lead on a specific area such as Special Educational Needs, Child Protection, Health and Safety or Headteacher Performance Management*

- *Joining a committee*
- *Linking with a School Development Plan or Self Evaluation Form priority*
- *Leading a school improvement task or working group*
- *Leading on an agenda item*
- *Becoming a Link/Development governor*

Expectations	Actions and strategies
The governing body knows and deploys the skills, experience and interests of all the governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create opportunities for governors to get to know each other as people</li> <li>• Conduct a skills, experience and interests audit</li> <li>• Match governors' skills, experience and interests to known and anticipated roles and tasks – but enable new challenges by swapping roles as experience grows</li> <li>• Include a brief pen-portrait or mini-biography of each governor in relevant documents</li> </ul>
The governing body creates opportunities for governors to take on additional responsibilities and develop leadership skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review structures and ways of working to create opportunities for governors to take on additional responsibilities (eg working parties, task groups)</li> <li>• Give one or more governors the task of finding out from other governing bodies how they structure and manage the workload</li> <li>• Encourage, value and facilitate feedback from governors on their additional responsibilities</li> </ul>
The governing body encourages and supports governors taking on additional responsibilities and developing leadership skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer mentoring</li> <li>• Make sure the governors know the boundaries of the additional responsibility and what is expected</li> <li>• Facilitate meetings with relevant members of staff</li> <li>• Promote appropriate training and development</li> <li>• Develop policies and protocols with staff and governors to facilitate visits to school</li> <li>• Provide opportunity to network with governors from other governing bodies with similar responsibilities</li> </ul>
Governor taking on additional responsibilities carries out responsibilities to the best of his/her ability and reflects on learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make use of all available support, guidance and training</li> <li>• Keep to timescale</li> <li>• Deliver what has been agreed</li> <li>• Report as appropriate</li> <li>• Liaise and network with governors fulfilling a similar role on other governing bodies</li> <li>• Reflect on any new leadership skills you have developed</li> </ul>
Governor taking on additional responsibilities has a positive impact on the effectiveness of the governing body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through discussions with one or more other governors, identify what has gone well and what could be improved</li> </ul>



## Growing as a team leader

Leading a team in the governing body can mean chairing a committee or leading a task group or working party. An effective team leader doesn't simply run a meeting. He/she ensures that all governors have an opportunity to contribute, especially those reporting back on their additional responsibilities and they forge positive relationships with other players involved, such as key school staff and School Improvement Partner.

Expectations	Actions and strategies
The governing body defines the team leader's role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree and publish the job description</li> <li>• Ensure clear parameters of delegation of authority and reporting back procedures</li> </ul>
The governing body identifies and nurtures the development of the governor's leadership skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify governors with the potential to become team leader</li> <li>• Encourage them to take on this role</li> <li>• Enable shadowing of more experienced team leaders either on own or other governing body</li> <li>• Offer mentoring</li> <li>• Offer support at initial meetings</li> <li>• Encourage attendance at effective chairing or other relevant training</li> <li>• Encourage provision of feedback on leadership skills</li> </ul>
Team leader leads group effectively and reflects on learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take advantage of support, guidance and training offered</li> <li>• Fulfil expectations of role</li> <li>• Liaise and network with governors fulfilling a similar role on other governing bodies</li> <li>• Seek feedback on how well you have fulfilled the role</li> <li>• Reflect on the new leadership skills you have learned</li> </ul>
Team leader has a positive impact on the effectiveness of the governing body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through discussions with one or more other governors, identify what has gone well and what could be improved</li> </ul>

## Developing the role of vice chair(s)

The role of vice chair offers plenty of scope for the development of leadership skills. For example, you could be:

- *A champion of distributed leadership amongst the governing body*
- *An active role model to new governors*
- *Co-vice chair*
- *Co-chair*

In any case, developing a close working relationship with the chair is essential.

Expectations	Actions and strategies
The governing body defines the role of vice chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree and publish the job description</li> <li>• Include the definition in relevant documents</li> </ul>
The vice chair actively develops knowledge, skills and understanding to share the workload with the chair and governing body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the chair's workload to establish which tasks you could take on</li> <li>• Attend relevant training/briefings e.g. Taking the Chair</li> <li>• Join meetings with chair/head</li> <li>• Link with vice chairs of other governing bodies</li> <li>• Ensure you keep abreast of school issues</li> </ul>
The vice chair shares the workload with the chair. The chair delegates tasks and responsibilities to the governing body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximise the effectiveness of communication between you and the chair</li> <li>• Take on specific responsibility e.g. mentor for new governors, committee chair or development of governors</li> <li>• Chair particular agenda items</li> <li>• Chair some full governing body meetings</li> <li>• Hand over role to well-prepared successor(s)</li> <li>• If still a governor after handover, serve as mentor to other governors</li> </ul>
The vice chair has a positive impact on the effectiveness of the governing body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through discussions with one or more other governors, including the chair, identify what has gone well and what could be improved</li> </ul>

## Being an effective chair of governors

An effective chair of governors:

- Gives a clear lead in organising and evaluating the governing body's work, valuing the contribution of all members and staff
- Delegates roles and ensures all governors are fully involved
- Works in partnership with the headteacher through regular meetings, providing appropriate support and challenge
- Co-operates with other agencies to support school improvement
- Operates as the first amongst equals but actively models and promotes the development of leadership skills
- Encourages the development of the vice chair role

Expectations	Actions and strategies
The governing body defines the role of chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree and publish the job description</li> <li>• Include the definition in relevant documents</li> <li>• Agree a protocol for the term of office of the chair and record it</li> </ul>
The chair actively develops knowledge, skills and understanding to share the workload with the vice chair(s) and governing body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend relevant training</li> <li>• Keep up to date</li> <li>• Seek a mentor</li> <li>• Mentor vice chair(s)</li> <li>• Share workload with vice chair(s) and other governors</li> <li>• Network with other chairs</li> <li>• Contribute, where appropriate, to governance beyond the school (eg in localities, federations or clusters; as mentor to chairs in other governing bodies)</li> <li>• Seek feedback from vice chair(s) and governors on own performance</li> <li>• Encourage regular review of the effectiveness of governing body structures and working practices</li> </ul>
The chair shares workload with vice chair(s) and delegates tasks and responsibilities to the governing body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create opportunities for governors to take responsibility and provide/arrange support where necessary/possible</li> <li>• Encourage governors to contribute at meetings</li> <li>• Ensure that governors' contributions are recognised and valued</li> <li>• Develop effective working relationship with clerk and Headteacher</li> <li>• Develop the governing body as a team</li> <li>• Develop sustainable processes for sharing knowledge and information</li> <li>• Handover role to well-prepared successor(s)</li> <li>• If still a governor after handover, serve as mentor to other governors</li> </ul>
The chair has a positive impact on the effectiveness of the governing body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through discussions with one or more other governors, identify what has gone well and what could be improved</li> </ul>

# Succession Breeds Success

*How to grow leaders in your governing body*



You can download additional copies of this document via [www.ncogs.org.uk](http://www.ncogs.org.uk)

Contact your local Governor Services Co-ordinator for support for your governing body in using the document.