

# Governing boards: What they are and why you should join one

NGAs 'Educators on Board' campaign exists because teachers and educationalists need to know how the work of governing boards affects them, and how they could fast-track their own career while making an even bigger difference to the lives of even more children and young people than those they teach by governing themselves

## What do governing boards do?

Governing boards provide strategic direction and oversight in schools. They do not get involved in the day-to-day running of the school but look at long-term strategy and school improvement.

Boards:

- Set the vision, ethos, and strategic direction
- Ensure the views of the wider school community are heard
- Hold leaders to account for pupils educational outcomes and school experiences
- Oversee financial performance

## Who are governors and trustees?

Governing boards are made up of volunteers who bring a range of experiences, skills and objective insights that enable your school or trust to keep improving.

There are different types of governing roles within the school system:

- Schools maintained by the local authority have a single governing board with governors.
- All schools in academy trusts have a central trust board with trustees.
- Schools in multi academy trusts (MATs) also usually have a local board, often called the local governing body (LGB), with local governors.

Although governors and trustees may have slightly different responsibilities their core purpose is similar. Both are tasked with determining the mission, values and long-term vision for the school, holding leaders to account and ensuring the best educational outcomes for pupils.

### Governors

Governors are appointed or elected to governing boards in local authority maintained schools. Academy committee members who govern within multi academy trusts are also often referred to as governors.

### Trustees

The trust's 'Members' appoint or elect trustees, who are sometimes referred to as 'directors'.

**There are over 230,000 governors and trustees volunteering across the country, making them one of the country's biggest volunteer force.**



As part of our [Visible Governance in Schools and Trust campaign](#), we also produced a short video explaining more about the role.

For more information on [governing board roles](#), visit the [NGA website](#) and remember to look at your school or trust's website to find out who your governors or trustees are.

# Educators on Board - Become a governor or trustee

Governing in a different educational setting - whether that is another school or another trust - is a fantastic opportunity for educators to grow professionally.

**“It’s been the best CPD I’ve had as a teacher in the last nine years. When I first started, I was 20 and just starting off in my career, it gave me opportunities to be involved at a strategic level in schools, things I didn’t expect to be involved in for many more years into my career.”**

**Conor Acton**  
Teacher

## The benefits of educators on boards

### Why you should become a governor or trustee

- Bring and share ideas your unique insight from a different community, different trust or different phase, type of school.
- Utilise specialist skills, knowledge and expertise from financial planning, data analysis, teaching and learning, SEND, the curriculum, and safeguarding.
- • Develop your leadership skills and confidence by asking school leaders insightful, focused questions, looking at things from angles they may not have thought of.
- Use your experience to shape the culture and influence a vision that benefits the whole school community and beyond.

Governing boards thrive with diversity of ideas, combining various skills and perspectives. As education professionals, you can shape policies and practice beyond your school and make a real difference to how things are done.

Becoming a governor or trustee develops leadership skills fast, builds networks across educational communities and increases the opportunity for further continued professional development (CPD) and career opportunities.

To find local governing vacancies, try:

Checking your local authority’s website or contacting schools and trusts directly.

Sign up for free recruitment services that connect volunteers with schools. Such as:

[Governors for Schools](#)

If you decide to join the vibrant community of volunteers making a difference in education, NGA is here to support you every step of the way. From your very first steps in governance to taking on leadership roles, we provide the tools and knowledge you need to succeed.

You’ll have access to expert guidance, training tailored to your role, and a wealth of resources designed to build your confidence and help you make an impact. Whether you’re attending your first meeting or chairing a board, NGA is by your side, offering advice, insight, and a national network of like-minded individuals who are just as passionate as you about improving education.

The Educators on Board campaign has won the backing of several education sector organisations that support and represent education professionals nationwide including:

- Prof Dame Alison Peacock. CEO [Chartered College of Teaching](#)
- James Bowen, Director, [NAHT](#)