



Nick Gibb MP

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Dan Dan and Tessa

EDUCATION BILL: CLAUSE 37

During the scrutiny of Clause 37 of the Education Bill by the Public Bill Committee on 31 March, we had a thorough debate on the Government's proposals for greater flexibility on the composition of the governing bodies of maintained schools. I promised to consider further the points raised during the debate (col 811, Hansard).

In the Schools White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, we praised the contribution made by school governors and proposed to provide greater flexibility, should schools want it, for governors to be appointed primarily on the basis of skills, rather than the current stakeholder model. As I said in debate, the key issue is recruiting governors with the right skills for individual schools and governing body.

I have reflected, with the Minister responsible for school governance, on how we can retain the principle of greater flexibility and appointments based on skills with the need to reflect all of the stakeholder groups with an interest in the school, in particular staff and local authorities.

I believe there is a way to meet these two objectives by enabling governing bodies that re-constitute to be required to have (in addition to the parent and head teacher governors proposed in Clause 37):

- one elected staff governor (other than the head teacher); and
- one local authority appointed governor, who has the skills required by the governing body.

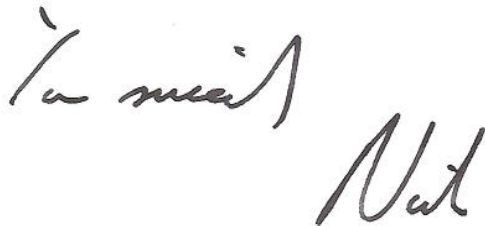
We can assume that the staff governor, elected by fellow professionals in the school, will have the requisite skills to serve on the governing body. In order to ensure that the local authority appointed governor has the skills required by the governing body, we propose the governing body should have a reserve right to reject unsuitable proposed LA governors. In practice, this will mean there should be a dialogue between the school and local authority, prior to appointment, as to the skills and experience being sought and ensure a suitable candidate or pool of candidates.

It has never been our intention to diminish the contribution made by local authority and staff governors. We simply want to provide schools with greater flexibility to ensure that, for most governors, skills are the primary basis of appointment rather than the constituency or stakeholder they represent. I believe the proposals above achieve this.

We will be considering how best to implement the proposals above, including the balance between using primary and secondary legislation.

I hope this provides further reassurance and I am copying this letter to Kevin Brennan MP and former members of the Public Bill Committee for the Education Bill.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Gibb', written in a cursive style.

NICK GIBB MP