



Department
for Education

Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Tel: 0370 000 2288
www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

2nd April 2014

Dear colleague

Regional Schools Commissioners and Headteacher Boards

As you may know, I recently took up the post of national Schools Commissioner. As Commissioner it is my role to promote the benefits of the academies and free schools programmes among school leaders, local authorities and parents, recruit high-quality academy sponsors and encourage school-to-school collaboration and support. The role also allows me to work closely with academies and ministers to shape the future of academies and free schools as we develop a self-managing, self-improving system.

I am writing to tell you about the soon-to-be-appointed **Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs), the upcoming Headteacher Board (HTB) elections** and the opportunity you have to influence the academies and free schools sector in your area.

The Department for Education has for some time been considering how the education system should evolve to respond to the growth in the popularity and number of academies and free schools. Within government and the education sector there is a growing consensus that decision making should lie closer to academies and that those who have a track record of leading good schools should have a stronger role in shaping the system.

To begin this shift in emphasis from decision-making in Whitehall to more involvement by schools at a regional level, we are appointing eight RSCs. The RSCs will be taking key decisions about academies on behalf of the Secretary of State, bringing their expertise and local knowledge into the decision making process. This change will not cut across existing accountability lines; accountability will remain with the Secretary of State. The role of the RSCs will include the following functions:

- Monitoring performance and prescribing intervention to secure improvement in underperforming academies and free schools.
- Taking decisions on the creation of new academies and making recommendations to ministers about free school applications.
- Ensuring that there are enough high-quality sponsors to meet local need.
- Taking decisions on changes to open academies, including changes to age ranges, mergers and changes to multi-academy trust arrangements, as well as changes to admission arrangements.

Each RSC will be advised by a HTB made up of headteachers from academies rated as outstanding by Ofsted or with recent experience. The majority of these headteachers will be elected to the position by other academy headteachers in their region, and they will be expected to dedicate half a day to a day per week to support and challenge the work of the RSC. Individual RSCs will decide exactly how to use their HTBs within the parameters set by the Secretary of State, and in discussion with their individual HTB members. HTBs will work with the RSC to prioritise the issues in each region and the RSC will consult them on the key decisions they make for their region.

To determine the membership of each HTB, there will be elections in each region during the summer term. Members of the HTB will be current headteachers of outstanding individual academies, or recent ex-heads (within the last two years) of academies which were rated outstanding at the time they left their headship. All academy headteachers in each region will be eligible to vote. Where there is more than one head per school, for example where there is a head and a principal, it is for the academy to decide who casts the vote.

We will be in touch with you over the next few months to provide more information on the arrangements for nominations for HTB members and for the elections, but I wanted to give you early notice of this important development. If you are eligible to stand for election, you may want to start thinking now about whether you wish to put yourself forward. If you have any questions concerning the new model, please contact Info.RSCs@education.gsi.gov.uk.

I hope that you welcome the changes the department is making and that you will have your say in the upcoming elections and take on a role in the leadership of education in your region.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank Green'.

Frank Green
Schools Commissioner