


Addressing the diversity deficit in school governance: A call to action

11 February 2025  Victoria Hatton

The composition of school governing boards should reflect the values and priorities of the communities they serve. However, the latest findings from the National Governance Association's (NGA) [annual survey](#) reveal a stark reality: school governance remains significantly lacking in diversity.

The statistics are telling:

- 9% of respondents were under 40
- 1% were under 30
- 41% of respondents were retired
- 95% identified as White

The implications of this lack of diversity are far-reaching. Governing boards that do not reflect the rich tapestry of the communities they serve are at risk of missing out on crucial perspectives. This can lead to policies and decisions that fail to address the unique challenges and needs of all stakeholders, including staff and pupils.

Building a framework for change

Addressing this challenge requires a comprehensive strategy focusing on both attracting a broader pool of volunteers and ensuring their retention and active participation. Schools and trusts must intensify their efforts to reach out to underrepresented communities, leveraging partnerships with local businesses, faith groups, and community organisations.

Additionally, the development of a welcoming and inclusive culture within governing boards is crucial. This means not only acknowledging diverse perspectives but actively valuing and integrating them, fostering a culture where every voice is heard and respected.

Training and support for volunteers must also strike the right balance, comprehensive enough to prepare them for their roles, yet not so burdensome as to deter participation. Succession planning should be approached with a strategic eye, ensuring a seamless transition of leadership that maintains continuity of knowledge and experience.

Moving forward

The lack of diversity in school governance is an urgent issue that requires sustained focus and action. By prioritising inclusivity, schools can strengthen their governing boards and better serve their communities. A diverse board is not just a desirable aspiration it is essential for making informed, effective decisions that benefit all pupils, staff, and stakeholders.

The time for action is now, and it is through collective effort and commitment that we can begin to see a change in the reflection that our school governing boards provide a reflection that truly mirrors the diversity of our communities.

In collaboration with the NGA, we will be facilitating conversations with governors, prospective governors, and leaders in school governance on their journey and the importance of diversifying the school governing pool.

For more information on becoming a school governor or supporting employees in governance roles visit the [NGA's website](#).

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