



Department
for Education

To all Chairs of FE College Corporations,
College Principals

10 November 2014

Dear College Principals, Chairmen & Chairwomen

When I wrote to you on 23 July 2014, shortly after being appointed as the new Minister for Skills and Equalities, I promised to maintain the termly letters that I know you find helpful in keeping abreast of policy developments. I am writing to you now to highlight some key developments as we continue to implement the FE reforms.

First of all, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you all for your hard work. It is clear to me what a valuable role further education (FE) college governors play and I appreciate the contribution and commitment you make to helping your colleges become the best they can be.

I also want to reinforce how important effective governance is to achieving our ambitions for FE. With colleges working as social enterprises with the freedom to deliver the education and training that individuals, employers and the community need, governors need to play a leading role in driving local accountability. This involves recognising and being responsive to the full range of customers and stakeholders, and in ensuring that open consultation takes place locally. This is now even more important following the outcome of the Scottish referendum and in light of the Greater Manchester devolution deal. In short, there has never been a more important time to be a governor.

Since I last wrote to you, there have been a number of important developments. The FE Workforce Strategy continues to support the sector to strive for excellence in the quality and professionalism of teachers and trainers. The introduction of GCSE English and maths funding conditions in September 2015 means that our support for the FE teaching workforce is more relevant than ever. We have, therefore, announced two further packages of support: a package for FE providers to train maths teachers who they employ; plus an extension of the initial teacher training bursary scheme to 2015/16. Also, on 23 October we announced a third phase of Apprenticeships Trailblazers and we are also trialling a simple funding approach for new employer-led Apprenticeship standards in 2014/15.



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The FE Commissioner-led intervention process continues to go from strength to strength. I look forward to the publication of the Commissioner's first Annual Report due later this month which summarises the recommendations arising from each intervention together with updates on progress, which I hope you find helpful.

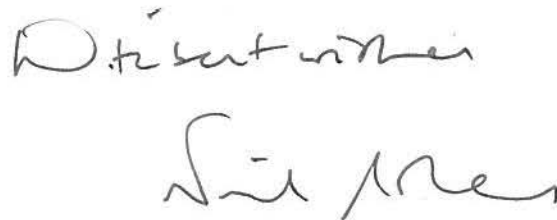
I also wanted to draw your attention to the new governance guide which was published in August 2014 and which I was pleased to provide the Foreword to. I welcome the positive feedback the guide has received across the sector so far. This will be a valuable resource, alongside the new governance code due to be published for 2015/16, in helping colleges scrutinise their governance arrangements.

Looking forward, I am pleased to be hosting another recognition event for Chairs in spring 2015. I value this opportunity to celebrate the contribution that governors make and to recognise the importance of their role. It will also be a chance to highlight the challenges for effective governance and to discuss the increased strategic importance of governors' work in the current environment.

As on previous occasions, I attach a policy brief on recent progress in implementing *Rigour and Responsiveness*. I would be grateful if you would ensure this is disseminated to all your governors.

Please forward any comments you have to the Department's FE Governance mailbox at fegovernance@bis.gsi.gov.uk.

Thank you again for all the hard work.

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

NICK BOLES MP