

PRO BONO ECONOMICS

ashurst



# A Quantitative Assessment of The Work of the Governors For Schools Charity - A Summary

In association with David Wirth, Tom Punton & Beverley Bishop



This is a summary of a report Pro Bono Economics have prepared to support Governors for Schools (GfS) in building their understanding of the efficiency and effectiveness of their service to place skilled volunteer governors in schools that need them.

## **Background**

GfS is a not-for-profit charity that was set up in 1999 and exists to support schools in recruiting governors and trustees. In the last 5 years, GfS has placed over 11,600 governors and served more than 8,600 schools.

In July 2018, GfS conducted an online survey of the volunteers and schools they have worked with. The aim was to develop the evidence base around the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they offer.

## **Scope of this study**

The report uses evidence from the survey of schools and volunteers to explore the following questions:

- How satisfied are volunteers and schools with the service GfS provide?
- How does the service provided by GfS compare to alternative routes to filling governor vacancies?
- How effective are the volunteers provided by GfS compared to other Governors in terms of participation and impact on the school?
- What is the value of the services provided by GfS volunteers provided to the school?

## **Key findings**

The key findings from the analysis of the survey results are:

- 9 out of 10 volunteers would recommend being a governor to a friend, and 9 out of 10 schools would recommend GfS.
- 50 per cent of schools stated it took at least two terms to fill their last governor vacancy, with 29 per cent of schools outside of London saying it took more than a year to fill their last governor vacancy, highlighting the need for support with this issue.
- 64 per cent of volunteers believe their work as a governor to be of 'high' or 'very high' value, and almost one in two schools describing GfS volunteers as having 'high' or 'very high' impact.
- 96 per cent of schools stated that GfS volunteers have the same or better skills than other governors and 65 per cent of schools felt that GfS volunteers were either 'highly motivated' or 'more interested' than other governors.
- The value of the time committed by the GfS volunteers is estimated to be around £9.9 million.

## Implications

The findings of this report show the value that schools place on the service provided by GfS, and also the value to the volunteers from the experience of being a governor.

There are a handful of areas where GfS could consider changes going forwards, including:

- How support both before and during governor placements could be improved to facilitate a better understanding as to what the governor role entails.
- Whether support can be enhanced outside of London where schools experience the most acute difficulties in recruiting governors.
- Whether school satisfaction could be improved if GfS can find a way to identify and vet less motivated volunteers earlier in the process.

More broadly, this report represents an important step in GfS's journey towards being able to measure their impact. GfS can build on the survey data collected for this study by developing stronger evidence around the experience of schools that do not use GfS services. This would provide better insight into the difference that GfS makes. In addition, there may be scope to develop evidence on the impact of improved governance on levels of academic attainment in schools.

# What do schools say?

**9/10**

would recommend  
Governors for  
Schools

Almost

**1 in 2**

think GfS governors  
had a **high or very  
high impact**

**1/2**

took **two terms or  
longer** to find their  
last governor

“ The skillset of those found have really helped improve the quality of our governing body by bringing skills and experience that we were unable to source locally ”

**65%**

rated GfS governors  
as **highly motivated  
or interested**

**85%**

of schools surveyed  
**still have** GfS  
governors in post

**96%**

said GfS governors  
**as skilled or better**  
than other governors

## Skills most utilised are:

Policy & Strategy, Leadership & Governance  
Finance, Educational Experience, HR / Recruitment

# What do volunteers say?

**9/10**

would recommend being a governor to a friend

**6.7**

hours a month spent on governing duties on average

**64%**

consider their work of **high or very high value**

“ My annual performance appraisal recognised my vice chair role as evidence of my leadership skills - it also contributed to my promotion at work to a senior manager. ”

**11%**

have become a **chair** or **vice chair** of the governing body

**£9.9m**

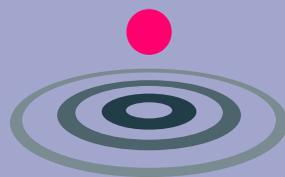
**annual value** of the time given by GfS governors

**>50%**

had a **strong impact** on a project

## Skills most utilised are:

Leadership & Governance, Policy & Strategy, Finance, HR / Recruitment, Educational Experience



**GOVERNORS  
FOR SCHOOLS**

**020 7354 9805**

**[info@governorsforschools.org.uk](mailto:info@governorsforschools.org.uk)**



**[www.governorsforschools.org.uk](http://www.governorsforschools.org.uk)**