

# Collaboration Governance

There are many forms of collaboration between schools. Federation is the most formalised but there are many different ways to collaborate. This table has been adapted from information provided by Government and illustrates scenarios for two school governing bodies (GB). The scenarios outlined are not sequential. There is no limit placed on the number of schools able to collaborate and federate.

	<b>Co-operation</b> Informal GB GB Informal Committee	<b>Collaboration</b> Informal GB GB Committee without delegated powers	<b>Formalised Collaboration</b> Formal GB GB Formal Committee	<b>Federation</b> Formal GB
Governing Body?	Each school has its own governing body and the group of schools meet informally on a planned 'ad hoc' basis.	Each school has its own governing body. The collaboration has a joint governance/strategic committee without delegated powers.	Each school has its own governing body. The collaboration has joint governance/strategic committee with delegated powers.	Single governing body shared by all schools.
Statutory?	No. Schools can form informal collaborations without having to follow regulations.	No. Schools can set up collaboration agreements without having to follow Regulations.	Yes. 'Soft governance' federations are established using Collaboration Regulations, invoked under Section 26 of the Education Act 2002 and School Governance (Collaboration) (England) Regulations 2003.	Yes. 'Hard governance' federations are established using Federation Regulations, invoked under Section 24 of the Education Act 2002 and School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012.
Common Goals?	Yes. All schools share common goals and work together on ad hoc issues and informal agreements.	Yes. Through protocol joint committees can make joint recommendations, but it is up to individual governing body to authorise plans.	Yes. Through Service Level Agreement (SLA) and protocol; joint committee can make joint decisions in delegated areas, but not all.	Yes. Through Service Level Agreement (SLA) and protocol; having a single governing body allows efficient, streamlined decision making in all areas.
Common Budget?	No. If schools wish to commit budget, they would need to go back to their individual governing bodies for approval.	No, but it could make budgetary recommendations for the group, which in turn would have to be approved by the individual governing body.	No, but if Joint Committee has budgetary powers delegated to it, they can make prompt budgetary decisions for the group of schools.	Yes. The Local Authority is able to set a single budget share for a 'Hard' Governance Federation which retains the whole of any resulting formula saving.
Shared Staff?	Unlikely to have common management positions, but if they exist, they have to be agreed in a protocol/contract.	Yes. Common management positions and appointments but need to have protocol/contract to underpin commitment to shared posts.	Yes. Common management positions and appointments, but need to have protocol/contract to underpin commitment to shared posts	Yes. Common management positions and appointments are agreed in a simple, effective manner. Sometimes choose to have single headteacher across a group of schools.

## What are the benefits?

Benefits for schools, as described by the Department for Education (DfE) of working together through collaborative partnerships (including federation) are that the schools can:

- a) raise their standards and improve outcomes for your people, for example, by shared staff training, encouraging their staff to support each other and developing integrated curriculum and pastoral policies;
- b) offer pupils a wider range of opportunities and experiences, for example, by holding joint activities or sharing facilities or teachers that might be difficult to sustain;
- c) develop a range of extended services and activities for pupils and the wider community;
- d) improve their leadership and management, for example, through shared headship or school business;
- e) maximise financial benefits and cost savings to include the sharing of resources, (material and staff costs), taking advantage of economies of scale and greater value for money, to improve sustainability;
- f) in particular for small rural schools open up opportunities to share management, governing body responsibilities and curriculum expertise.

‘There are lots of interesting developments in leadership practices, and management of governance arrangements, that seem to have the potential to increase the capacity of schools to innovate. Such developments are vital if the system is to find ways of continuing to improve. But it is clear that these examples are closely tied into the local contexts in which they have developed. It is unlikely that ‘solutions’ will transfer easily’.

Ref: National College/Manchester University

Structural changes do not in themselves bring about improvements but may contribute to how, together, we adapt to changes over the forthcoming years.

## What are the conditions for success?

The likely conditions for successful partnership as set out by the Department for Education are:

- a) A sense of shared identity between schools – for example, through geographical proximity, or a sense of being an inclusive community or church ethos.
- b) A sense of common purpose – the groups of schools involved in collaboration should have a shared sense of what needs to be done and how it is to be done, and a joint vision for improving the attainment, achievement and progression of young people.
- c) Leadership – a collaborative partnership needs a strong cohesive leadership, and collaborations should be interested in developing and sustaining leadership across all levels of the schools.
- d) A strong management infrastructure – collaboration partnerships must demonstrate that they have the capacity to deliver.
- e) A trusting relationship – having trust between schools is fundamental to effective collaboration and being effective.
- f) A system of review – arrangements will need to be monitored and evaluated to show that they are being effective.
- g) Commitment – schools must be prepared to commit both time and resources to ensure that the partnership is effective and sustainable. They will also need a commitment to raising standards and achievement in all schools in the federation and to continually improving progression for young people.

- h) Communication – excellent communication mechanisms are required when introducing change, particularly where lots of schools are involved.
- i) Sustainability – there must be a clear sustainability strategy in place to enable a collaboration to cope. For example, if the leadership on one in the schools changes; if additional schools wish to join in or if existing schools wish to leave. If committing contracts or expenditure for any length of time, financial sustainability is vital.

## Are you considering Federation Partnership Structures?

Governors and headteachers will have researched different forms of collaboration and decided upon federation as the most suitable model for their school.

Governors may vote to agree federation as a principle before approaching potential partners.

When another school agrees to investigate federation, a joint committee of governors (with delegated powers) is formed to prepare the proposal. This group develops the long term vision and a set of values and structures for the federation. It also organises the consultation process.

Members of the joint governor committee present their proposal to the full governing body of each school. The proposal is minuted and each governing body decides whether or not to proceed into the formal consultation process.

	<b>The role of governing bodies</b>
How long is the consultation period?	Governing bodies must allow 6 weeks initiated by sending a letter to all stakeholders giving details of the information in the proposal.
Who must be informed?	Governing bodies must inform the headteacher of each school; all staff paid to work at the schools, every person known to be a parent/carer of a registered pupil at any of the schools, the professional associations, the Local Authority, the trustees and the Diocese when a church school is involved.
Information sharing and further consultation	It is not a requirement but good practice to consult with other agencies with whom the schools work closely, to inform elected members and to provide information, presentations and opportunities for parents to raise questions and issues.
Who is in receipt of representations?	All parties are encouraged to submit written representations to the governing bodies, via the chair of governors.
What happens at the end of the consultation period?	The joint governor committee prepares a summary of consultation responses and details of activities that have taken place, data on numbers participating and a summary of the comments collected.
Who takes the decision to federate and how?	Individual governing bodies take the decision to federate. A summary of information gathered through the consultation period is presented to individual governing bodies before they vote, by secret ballot, on whether to proceed or abandon the federation proposal.
Following the decision to federate	An Instrument of Government for the new Federation governing body is drawn up by the Local Authority. As part of the discharge process, each governing body provides a written report outlining how it has fulfilled its responsibilities and providing an inventory of assets to inform the new governing body.

# Shared Headship through Collaboration

A shared headship is usually a short term or temporary intervention. A number of contractual issues may need to be resolved if this becomes a long term arrangement.

A shared headship is possible when the governing body of two schools decide to share one headteacher who has the responsibility for the strategic leadership of both schools. Both schools remain completely separate and retain their own individual governing bodies.

The shared headship between the two schools is formalised through a management contract which lays out the terms and remit of that partnership. A joint committee of governors oversee the arrangement and regularly assess and report on the workings of the management partnership arrangement.

A shared headship delivered through a management partnership is not the same as a federation. A federation has one governing body and is set up following a formal consultation process with key stakeholders.

## First Point of Contact:

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