

Bursar Development Programme

**Information for Headteachers and Chairs of
Governors**

September 2008

Bursar Development Programme (BDP) - aims

Schools that employ competent resource managers benefit both from being able to make the most effective use of the funding available to them, and from reducing the administrative burdens on heads and senior teachers.

At the National Association for Headteachers (NAHT) conference in June 2001, the then Secretary of State for Education and Skills pledged to qualify 1,000 school business managers (SBMs) and bursars by 2006. These qualified SBMs will contribute to wider work on the remodelling schools agenda.

A key part of the rationale for training and recruiting more SBMs is to lever more productivity from existing resources for schools through better management, and to allow qualified teachers to concentrate on the activities in which they have greatest expertise.

How trained SBM's can help

Schools are changing. We expect our schools and our teachers to provide improvements in education year-on-year. Whilst the government is making record levels of funding available to our schools, it is important that we make the best use of all resources to maximise the benefits. Providing bursars and school business managers with the skills and competencies they need has the potential to lead to a better use of resources and embed the disciplines of business management in schools.

Benefits to the school and school business manager

Feedback from the programmes has shown that the work that participants complete as a case study or project report greatly benefits schools. The areas of improvement have been in finances, health and safety, playground development work, school environmental improvement, strategic planning and many more. The benefits have included improvements in teaching and learning, and significant financial savings and gains to the schools.

Headteacher and governor references

The government has invested, and continues to invest, a great deal of resources in these programmes and the individuals and schools that embark upon them. Each participant that wishes to take part in this professional development programme will not only need to consider this investment, but also the time and commitment they will need to put into the programme personally.

In addition, a great deal of support is required from the school that has agreed to support the participants through their programmes. NCSL must therefore obtain evidence that the headteacher and the chair of governors have understood this commitment and wholly support the individual's application.

Once the applicant has applied via the online application form, emails will be sent to the headteacher and chair of governors in order for them to confirm their support via an online registration. **Applications will not be classed as complete until online references have been received**

What is expected of the Head and colleagues

Participants on this course are often returners-to-learning. Even if this is not the case, whilst performing a busy role at school, many have strong home commitments. Participating in professional development at this level and calibre is often new to them and can at times present some challenges to their work/life balance.

It is beneficial if the participant can negotiate time to discuss their development and progress on the course with their line manager/mentor or Headteacher on a regular basis. Often a 10-30 minute catch-up is all that's required each month.

The participant works with their facilitator to produce a work completion plan. They are then encouraged to discuss this plan with their line manager in order to check that it fits with work commitments.

The process of sharing information on this course and focussing on school improvements and been shown to be beneficial to both participant and school. The participant may uncover means to attract extra funding or a procedure that has been overlooked or needs implementation. The line manager may give guidance on task priority or be able to assist in identifying project work. The line managers' commitment will give the participant the confidence and guidance they need to be successful on the course and enable them to deliver improvements for the school.

Participants may need to speak to colleagues across all areas of the school. They will be looking to place their learning into their own schools context and may therefore wish to discuss how discreet areas work. They will draw upon the expertise and experience of their own colleagues and peers as well as their line and senior managers.

The individuals commitment

It is estimated that most participants take about 320 hours to complete the different parts of the CSBM and 240 hours for the DSBM. This will vary, according to each participant's circumstances and current level of expertise.

Some schools are able to give their participants some release from their professional duties each week to enable them to complete their work. As previously indicated, many schools find that they benefit directly from the work that participants do for the programme, as systems are reviewed and developmental work is undertaken. This means that, resources permitting, the school can make a sound investment through supporting their participants and providing some remission from their duties.

CSBM participants will be assessed throughout the course, and attend a concluding phase which will include a presentation. On average, participants can complete within 10 to 12 months of commencing the programme.

Owing to the advanced nature of the DSBM programme, participants will have to submit work at the end of each module before they can proceed to the next module of the programme. On average, candidates can complete the DSBM programme within 10 to 12 months of commencing it.

Participants are required to **complete** within 12 months of the date of their first residential workshop, unless they are granted a deferral from the programme by NCSL.

Financial Contribution

We currently fully fund a number of places for participants who work or who are seeking a career within the maintained sector. Participants from the independent sector are currently charged £3,000 for national and £2,000 for local CSBM and £3,100 for DSBM.

In most cases we will not reimburse supply cover or travel/subsistence expenses. Further information on funding is available on our website (www.ncsl.org.uk/bursar).

Most of the learning materials are provided through the college online system known as the 'Learning Gateway'. It is also helpful for participants to purchase a small number of key texts to support their studies. These may already be available within the school. If not, they are likely to be useful for staff in general. You may wish to consider purchasing these key texts from school funds.

Module workbooks are available online. Participants are able to print these in sections or in full, if they so wish. Participants may therefore need to consider the cost of printing and paper consumables.

In most cases participants are expected to meet the cost of travel to face to face sessions. These costs relate to attending face-to-face residential and non residential sessions, although the cost of the delegate hotel rate and all meals are met by NCSL for each session. In some cases, participants meet and work together at other times in informal support groups. These groups are self funded although they are sometimes hosted at one of the participating schools.

ICT resources required to complete the programme

Participants are involved in a significant amount of online learning as they work through the programme and they should therefore have access to a computer in order to participate. The minimum specification for a personal computer (PC) is a Pentium II at 233MHz or higher. They will also need:

- a PC with a minimum of 64Mb of RAM (Macs not yet supported)
- a hard drive
- a CD-ROM drive
- an operating system running Windows 95 or later
- Internet Explorer (version 4.0 or later)
- a modem, at least 56Kb per second
- Flash Player 6 and Adobe Acrobat Reader
- a Java-enabled web browser
- a knowledge of Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint

Some participants have access to a PC at home, but others are wholly dependent upon the school's ICT equipment. You may wish to discuss with the applicant how the school can help in terms of access to equipment and time to complete their work for the BDP.

Participants need access to the internet. This is to enable them to work in a virtual learning community through talk2learn and to access the online modules through the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) Learning Gateway. They will also need to visit a number of websites in order to undertake research into government policy and best practice. As a result, participants often become well-informed about current developments in education and business practice. Sometimes they may need to use the school's system to access these documents.

Participants will also often need to access the internet outside office hours and term-time. Research from previous participants has shown that online work often takes place during evenings, weekends and school holidays. The participant will need either access at home using a computer of the same specifications as above, or they will need to make alternative arrangements with their employer, friends or colleagues.

**More information can be found about the CSBM at: <http://www.ncsl.org.uk/csbm-content>
And DSBM: <http://www.ncsl.org.uk/dsbm-content>
Along with eligibility: <http://www.ncsl.org.uk/programmes-index/dsbm-index.htm> &
<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/programmes-index/csbm-index.htm>**