

## **Academy Trustees and non-Executive Directors: key facts**

Academies are changing education in this country: giving schools autonomy and accountability and raising aspirations. That change needs leadership and Academy Trust Boards across the country need senior business people and professionals to join them as pro bono non-executive directors.

### **What is an Academy?**

Academies have seen enormous growth over the previous 4 years; as of 2010 there were 250 academies, in 2014 this number is over 4,500. Over a third of children are now in education at academies.

An academy is an independent, state funded school that is free from Local Authority control and is run by an independent charitable trust. Academies are directly funded by the Department for Education and the proportion of funding previously taken by the local authority now goes directly to the academy. Academies have more freedom over the curriculum, length of school day and year and pay and conditions for staff.

### **What type of people are Trust Boards seeking?**

We are looking for high-calibre business people and professionals who have experience holding organisations to account and who will be able to:

- Provide strategic advice on how the trust is run overall, including agreeing strategies for business growth or consolidation.
- Provide robust independent challenge to the executive.
- Play a role in hiring (and firing) the Chief Executive of the group, Principals of individual schools and possible other senior staff.
- Challenge the Chief Executive, Financial Director and others to ensure that education standards in schools rise quickly and that academy groups are efficiently run, delivering maximum value for money.
- Ensure that academies are providing a strong education that goes beyond achieving high test scores.
- Dedicate around 4-6 hours per month (four to twelve Board/Committee meetings per year).

Educational experience or expertise is not needed. We want business people involved for their ability to set a vision and hold the Trust to account in delivering that vision.

### **What are the rewards?**

Trusteeship is a rewarding path for senior executives looking to give something back and improve the life chances of children and young people. It is proving attractive to those looking to build on a portfolio of non-Executive and Chair positions and some smaller Trusts are suitable for those beginning their career as a non-Executive. It is not paid. As senior business leaders - like Sir Rod Aldridge who set up Capita and Nikki King OBE of Isuzu Trucks - will attest there are few things as challenging or as rewarding than turning around some of the most difficult schools in the country.

### **How do I get involved and what happens next?**

1. Contact Laurence Coombe at [laurencecoombe@newschoolsnetwork.org](mailto:laurencecoombe@newschoolsnetwork.org) or on 020 7952 8475.
2. The Academy Ambassadors Team will gather personal profile information from you.
3. You will then be contacted when a Trust registers with Academy Ambassadors that could be a good match.
4. You meet the team at the Trust and decide if the match could work. The Trusts conduct their own interview/vetting process and formal appointments are usually made at the next Board meeting.
5. You join the Academy Ambassadors alumni and are invited to meet other Academy Ambassadors and join our events and visits.

Academy Ambassadors at the New Schools Network also welcomes the involvement of business people as academy sponsors, free school proposers and Trustees of single Academy Trusts.