GOVERNANCE & GOVERNING RIG Report 2025 - 2026

Overview:

The Governance and Governing RIG had a productive and engaging year with its members. The report emphasises the highlights of 2025-26 as these events unfolded:

Events hosted

Date	*Where*	*Format*	*Title*	*Speakers*
10/03/26	Online	Seminar	'What is School Governance? Findings from the Literature'	Dr Andy Allen and Dr Denise Mifsud
14/04/26	Online	Seminar	'The Case for Governance'	Sam Henson
18/05/26	Online	Seminar	'Democratising Educational Governance – Book Proposal Meeting and Workshop'	Andy Allen
03/07/26	In-person	Seminar	Annual Conference	Andy Allen and Lizana Oberholzer

Feedback

Really good event and an exciting time for the RIG. Just disappointed I had to leave early due to immediate work pressures.

I thought that the session was excellent, and it was good to have breakdown groups at the end of the first presentation. I would suggest that the second session needed further time for questions particularly with the vibes coming up. Maybe an extra 10-15 minutes?

Meetings took place across the year, and covered a variety of different research topics:

First meeting
'What is School Governance? Findings from the Literature'
The session was based on a paper produced by: Denise Mifsud and Andrew Wilkins in 2025, - A Systematic Review of School Governance Literature Between 2000 and 2023 Denise Mifsud & Andrew Wilkins which can be accessed: A Systematic Review of School Governance Literature Between 2000 and 2023

The session was well attended and led by Dr Andy Allen and Denise Misfud was the guest speaker at this event. The work explores the complexity of governance, and how the term governance can at times be viewed in different ways due to this complexity. The session outlined a thought-provoking and insightful discussion, and members had to opportunity to consider how to extend this work within their own research contexts too.

RIG members are able to revisit the event by clicking on the following link: Governance and Governing RIG Seminar March 2026 - BELMAS

Second meeting
In April 2026 the RIG welcomed Sam Henson, Deputy Chief Executive of the National Governance Association (NGA) presenting the NGA's lates report focusing on 'The Case for Governance' **-** **https://www.nga.org.uk/knowledge-centre/the-case-for-governance/**

Members are able to revisit the recording for this event by clicking on the following link: Governance and Governing RIG Seminar - April 2026 - BELMAS

Third meeting
Members were invited to attend a meeting to explore how they can shape and contribute abstracts to the RIG's book proposal focusing on Democratising Governance. The event can be revisited and reviewed by clicking on the following link: Governance and Governing RIG Book Proposal Meeting May 2026 - BELMAS

The RIG received over 20 abstracts for this opportunity and convenors are currently working through these proposed abstracts with the aim to finalise the book proposal and to progress to the development of the book in 2026-27.

Annual Conference
The G and G RIG has the wonderful opportunity to engage with members at the 2026 conference in Cardiff. It is an excellent opportunity to learn more about members' needs, work and contributions to the field. Explorations of the 2026/7 programme for members led to additional discussions regarding the book proposal and contributions, and additional abstracts were received after the event. It was fantastic to catch up with colleagues at the event, and to celebrate their work.

We look forward to seeing RIG members at the 2027 event in Newcastle.

Other meetings:

- **Planning meetings**

The G and G RIG plans regular meetings across the year, and we are currently mapping our programme which will offer opportunities to engage in November, January, April, May and the conference. We look forward to sharing the detailed information with you shortly.

- Annual Conference

As mentioned, the RIG will be visible, and convenors will be available in 2027 in Newcastle. If members would like to discuss specific themes or ideas, do get in touch, and we shall make sure that we embed your requests into our programme.

- Podcasts:

The Governance and Governing RIG releases a number of podcasts annually reflecting on members and collaborative partners' work. You can revisit or listen to the podcasts for 2025-26 below:

In this podcast episode, Lizana Oberholzer and Micheal Barton discuss the latest National Governance Association's report 'The Case for Governance'.

LISTEN: 2026 BELMAS NGA Podcast - BELMAS

In this episode **Rosie Hoyle** and **Stuart Walker** talk about Stuart's EdD research into governor experience. The title of Stuart's thesis is **'How do Governors perceive their own effectiveness in their role as a member of a governing body and as a school leader?'**

Rosie and Stuart's conversation ranges across a series of questions:

- What inspired Stuart to research this subject?
- How has he approached his research and what challenges has he encountered?
- What are the key issues in his findings?

And importantly:

- What should chairs and governing boards across the country take away from this research as they try to fulfil their role in the school system?

LISTEN: Talking Research Podcast Part 5 from the Gov RIG - BELMAS

This episode is a little different in that the tables are turned and Dr Andy Allen interviews fellow RIG Co-convenor, Rosie Hoyle, who has presented the first three of these podcasts. Rosie's PhD research is focussed on the relationship between the chair and the executive leader. The working title of Rosie's thesis is ''A Partnership of Equals? An exploration of the relationship between the chair and executive leader in the English state school system".

Andy explores this by asking:

- What inspired Rosie to research this complex relationship?
- How has she approached the study and what challenges has she encountered?
- What are her key findings?

And importantly...

- What should chairs and governing boards across the country take away from this research as they try to fulfil their role in the school system?

LISTEN: Talking Research Podcast Part 4 from the Gov RIG - BELMAS

Mentorship:

The Governing and Governance RIG is a vibrant learning community where we work in collaboration with a wide range of researchers and practitioners. We offer mentor support for those who are emerging as researchers, and often review, and help emerging researchers to refine their work before it is published as a blog, MIE publication or EMAL publication. Collaborations are also undertaken to support book chapter developments, as well as books. Furthermore, the G and G RIG community mentor and support new researchers engaging with their PHD work and celebrate this work at every stage. Annually we are delighted in celebrating the success of our members, and we look forward to continuing with this work.

Aims and Objectives for next year:

2026-27 is a promising year in which the RIG's membership will be working to towards finalising its book proposal focusing on the Democratisation of Governance, and we shall aim to move towards developing the book once the proposal is finalised. We aim to host a number of writing retreats to offer collaborative opportunities for our members to enable us to work towards finalising this important contribution to the field.

We shall continue to offer a minimum of 3 events, and we aim to extend our podcast series to reflect the voices of the RIG community as we become aware of new publications, research and work. We look forward to a productive and exciting year where we can continue to celebrate our RIG community's work.