

Leader

QUARTERLY

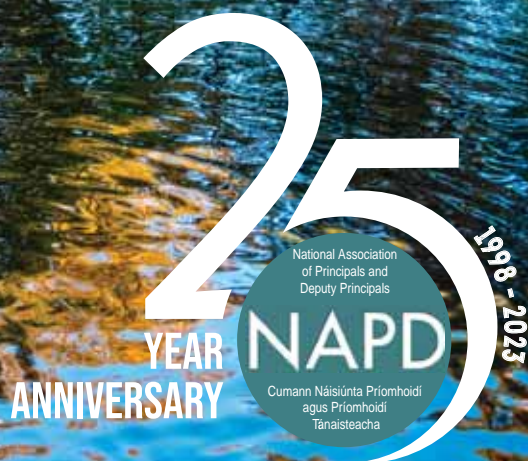
SUPPORTING OUR UKRAINIAN COLLEAGUES & STUDENTS

There is nothing quite like it, when the days are full of slanted light, when the landscape is ablaze with the colour. When the mist blurs mysteriously and nature sings its lullaby, lulling the hibernators to a deep torpor.

Conkers, the crunch of russet leaves, fabulous fungi, migrating birds, the deer rutting season and the harvest.

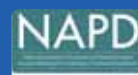
It's all happening in Autumn.

Dara McAnulty (age 19)
Diary of a Young Naturalist



Autumn
2023

National Association of Principals & Deputy Principals
Cumann Náisiúnta Príomhoidí agus Príomhoidí Tánaisteacha





Mental health matters – Health Insurance can help

Let's face it, life can be stressful. With everything going on in the world and everything that's happened over the last few years, our anxiety levels have been off the charts. We all need a healthy mind as well as a healthy body & it's never been more important to look after your mental health.

Did you know that Health Insurance can help? Over the past few years, Health Insurance has evolved with the changing landscape, offering a wide array of online mental health benefits that members can access.

While you may be aware of benefits such as an Online GP which is available on most Health Insurance plans, you may not be aware of the many other mental health benefits that are also available from the comfort of your own home.

Online Mental Health Benefits:

Access to Beneficial Apps like Calm and Headspace

These apps have been developed with the purpose of de-congesting our minds. With resources available on these ranging from breathing exercises to meditation they allow us to re-align and de-stress from the pressures of the modern world.

Often, we might just want some more information or advice on a topic that's bothering us and that's where these apps have medically-verified, informative articles. They also have an online chat function to connect to a trained counsellor.

Access to a Life Coach

Available on some Health Insurance plans, these trained professionals help and empower us to make, meet and exceed personal and professional goals – it may range from excelling at work or college, becoming happy and fulfilled in life, exploring the world, and achieving ambitions either in our personal or professional lives.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

This program is available on many Health Insurance plans. Also named 'Healthy Minds' with Irish Life Health and 'Support Services' with Laya Healthcare, the EAP gives members access

to a 24/7 telephone counselling service and will also cover up to 6 face-to-face visits with a counsellor.

The service is confidential and covers everything from relationship issues to anxiety, and career challenges. This service can be availed of over the phone, on video chat or face-to-face.

There are so many benefits available on health plans today which allow us to tackle mental health. Health Insurance also offers benefits on wellness & self-care, you might be surprised to know that Yoga & Pilates classes are claimable on certain Health Insurance plans. Need a massage to de-stress? You are even able to claim back on massage treatments!

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FROM THE EDITOR



We continue to commemorate NAPD's 25th anniversary, with a further six former Presidents offering reflections. Áine Hyland, looking back over the 25 years, provides a review that's both incisive and comprehensive. She identifies significant successes but, as we would expect from Áine, pulls no punches when calling out failures. Her summary, borrowed from Fianna Fáil's 2002 election manifesto *A lot done – more to do*, seems apt.

In his column, Director Paul Crone writes about NAPD's determination to deliver on reducing school leaders' administrative workload, to allow them prioritise leading Learning & Teaching. When that day comes, how will Principals and Deputies embrace their primary role to improve the quality of learning in their school's classrooms? Many are already a long way down this road and will thrive in the new dispensation. Those a distance further back might wonder about how they get on board. NAPD's 2023-2024 Learning and Teaching Programme, particularly *Become a Leader of Learning* workshops, by Graham Powell and Mike Hughes, offers a good starting point. Details are on pages 12 and 14.

From almost nowhere it seems, Artificial Intelligence has crept up on us. It's not anything new. Celebrated computing pioneer Alan Turing was devising intelligence tests for computers in the 1950s. I had College modules on AI in the mid-1970s. However, like the fires scorching the planet this summer, its rapidly accelerating speed has taken the technology and academic worlds by surprise and found the rest of us uninformed and unprepared. We are comforted to hear about the upsides, from business to transport to medicine to education, even for the great climate challenge. However, should we worry when the big-tech-boys publicly plead for Governments to intervene and legislate. Why so, when they stand to gain enormous riches? What do they know that we don't?

Next time you have a free 40 minutes, enlighten yourself, via YouTube, with the recent talk "AI and the Future of Humanity" by Yuval Noah Harari, a serious thinker and author. When AI machines master language better than humans, could there be trouble ahead? If (or when?) AI becomes the first ever inorganic lifeform on our planet, might CAO points be the least of our worries?

How will AI impact education? Professor Stuart Russell in University California, Berkeley is optimistic, arguing that it will lead to personalised tuition, hastening the end of traditional classrooms. University of Limerick's Anne Marcus Quinn argues herein why educationalists should embrace AI. As does Olive, a world-leading Irish company, who show how flat text books and other learning materials can be brought alive by AI.

Have we fully considered the impact of AI on Leaving Cert reform with 40% promised for non-exam-day assessment, when the issue won't be daddy/mammy assistance, but that assignments will be done by ChatGPT? And could Junior Cycle students be already using ChatGPT for their CBAs?

There are many deserved tributes in this edition to Paul Byrne, who is stepping down as Deputy Director. Here's mine: Paul has been a staunch supporter of NAPD's Learning & Teaching Programme since its inception in 2012 with late-great Paul Ginnis. In addition, Paul has provided me, an utterly unprepared editor of Leader when Derek stood down, with valued support, advice, insights and perspective (and long evening chats which invariably strayed to his fishing exploits. Not being a fan, I'd go silent – I don't think he ever noticed). Paul also contributed wisely and generously as a member of the Editorial Board.

I wish Rachel O'Connor every success as she takes the baton from Paul.

We are indebted to all contributors. As ever, observations in the column are mine alone. Just as for Paul Byrne, it's time now for me to put up my own "Gone Fishing" sign.

Barry O'Callaghan

Leader

Quarterly

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Paul Byrne, Tim Geraghty

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Charlie McManus & Barry O'Callaghan

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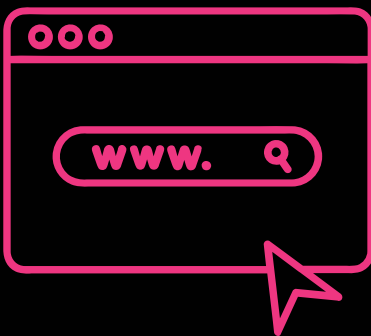
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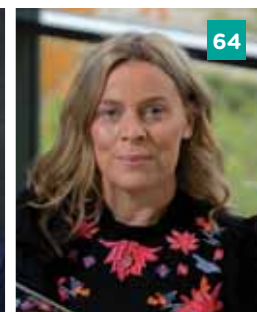
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Presidential Musings

Shane Foley
President



The Power of Yet – Fostering a Growth Mindset in Our Schools

I was wondering on what theme I would write my piece for Leader and somewhere along the road Carol Dweck and "The Power of Yet" crossed my path. To our new and returning leaders, you will begin this year in the knowledge that you have been entrusted with the task of shaping young minds and creating an environment that fosters both academic excellence and personal growth. As we embark on our leadership journey for 2023-2024, I for one will be trying to re-connect with Dweck's concept as it holds immense potential to transform the way we approach teaching and learning:

"The Power of Yet"

"I don't get it"

"I can't do this"

"This doesn't work"

Dweck pioneered the theory of growth mindset which is rooted in "The Power of Yet". It revolves around the idea that our abilities and intelligence can be developed through dedication, hard work and perseverance. The new school year is an opportunity for us all to instil this mindset in ourselves to begin with - but also for our students and our staff.

As school leaders, we need to embrace "The Power of Yet" when faced with challenges in the day to day running of our schools. The challenges that we face trying to focus our time to improve Teaching and Learning, improve student engagement and build a more inclusive school environment will more than likely not happen overnight, but are achievable goals with time, collaboration and a commitment to continuous improvement.

When it comes to our students, we need to encourage them to add the word "yet" at the end of their sentences. Instead of "I can't do this," encourage them to add the word "yet". - "I can't do this yet". Dweck tells us that this subtle shift in language opens up a world of possibilities. It acknowledges that while they may not grasp a concept at the moment, with effort and guidance, they can overcome their current limitations. This empowers students to view challenges as opportunities for growth rather than insurmountable obstacles. For me this is especially important when taking a restorative approach in managing student behaviour in a school. What a powerful way to begin the new year.

"The Power of Yet" also extends to staff development. I, for one, will try to encourage our teachers to pursue professional development opportunities, to try new teaching methods, and most importantly to embrace change. We have a responsibility as school leaders to nurture a growth mindset amongst our staff, if we want to create the sort of culture that fosters continuous learning to benefit our school community.

We are all leaders of learning; therefore, we need to lead by example. While it is widely acknowledged that there is a high degree of stress involved in our roles, it is equally acknowledged that we have one of the most privileged jobs in the world.

As you begin your journey as new and returning school leaders, remember that "The Power of Yet" is a powerful tool that can transform education. By fostering a growth mindset, you can inspire students and staff alike to approach challenges with resilience, determination, and a belief in their capacity to learn and achieve.

Let us all embrace "yet" as the cornerstone of our educational philosophy: #Limitless!

Wishing you a successful and impactful year ahead as school leaders.

Ar aghaidh le chéile

Shane Foley, President



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DIRECTOR'S DESK



PAUL
CRONE

O Teachers, Teachers, wherefore art thou Teachers?

"In the middle east or Australia" I hear your collective shout. Another cry of pain can be heard from a Principal, head in hands, "mine are all gone down the country, home". I reluctantly ask "So how is the timetable looking" and stand back, await the answer and brace. What I get is a pragmatic response that shows a deep understanding of the intricacies of the current teacher supply crisis.

I listen to the creativity, the innovative strategies employed and most importantly I hear, in every word, that the best interests of the students are at the core of every decision made. Sometimes these decisions are not popular among staff, sometimes they can bring hardship and grief – and yet as school leaders we stand steadfast on behalf of our students.

Most schools at this stage have found their own way of working, their own way to keep moving forward safe in the knowledge that the next vacancy, maternity leave, sick teacher or parental leave may well end up not being filled.

Yet we are back, refreshed, rejuvenated, enthusiastic and confident. Confident that we will solve the problems we encounter, confident we will do everything in our power to deliver for our students and confident that we are in this together. Be assured that NAPD is determined more than ever to deliver on the administrative workload for school leaders, as we work to align our vision with the vision of the management bodies.

Together we are stronger. We are determined to reimagine leadership in our schools that will allow us to prioritise leading Teaching and Learning. Our collective voice is the strongest voice in the Irish education system, since without Principals and Deputy Principals there can be no system. Let us hear your voice, let us know your opinions and we will, without apology, ensure your voice is heard.

Now is a good time to promote Annual Conference, 11 to 13 October, in Galway. By that stage you will have worked really hard to get the school up and running, so this your opportunity to prioritise your own professional learning. I am confident that we have an excellent programme, along with the usual enhanced networking opportunities.

The theme this year will be around reimagining leadership to allow us to prioritise leading Teaching and Learning. We do need additional administration support and we also need to begin our own professional journey to support the switch in our mindset, when the administrative support arrives. Let us start that journey together at Conference 2013.

I was delighted, in August, to congratulate and welcome the newly appointed Principals and Deputies in Portlaoise.

I want to welcome Rachel O'Connor as the newly appointed Deputy Director. Rachel brings a wealth of experience, along with a clear understanding of the role of the school leader. She experientially understands the stressors of the job and has developed strategies to support success in the role. I am looking forward to working closely with Rachel to deliver for members.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Paul Byrne for all he has done for NAPD members, for his support to me and the commitment he has shown throughout his involvement with NAPD. I wish him every success on the next leg of his professional journey and I encourage his to keep alive the strong connections he has developed in the NAPD family.

You don't have the time to be reading long articles from me, so all that I have left is to wish you every success in the upcoming academic year. I hope to see you in Galway at Conference and at Regional meetings throughout the year.

Ar aghaidh le chéile

Paul Crone, Director



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DEPUTY DIRECTOR RACHEL O'CONNOR



As we head into the end of Summer and I write my first article as incoming Deputy Director of NAPD, my mind is still 'on' as Principal. I just got a WhatsApp from a teacher about her successful job interview with NCSE – now I must look at the knock-on effects on our timetable and the headache that poses for our incoming Principal to replace an MFL teacher.

I spoke to the caretaker yesterday and a building job we need for an incoming first year in a wheelchair is no longer viable – another headache. Today I completed online banking and cleared invoices. My question – is there such a thing as summer holidays for Principals – actual time off, where I'm not needed? Or is the 'time off' simply a postponement of several headaches that add to the list that the SLT complete alone before students and teachers return?

NAPD has been working very hard with the Department of Education since 2019 to ease the administrative burden on school leaders. A solution that would lead to a genuine reduction in menial, burdensome, time consuming yet essential (and some not so essential) tasks that take up so much time. 73% of school leaders said that too much time is spent on administration, according to the Irish Post Primary Principal and Deputy Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey 2022.

A 2022 ASTI survey of members also found that 72% of those surveyed called for more administrative supports for schools. As

immediate Past President and incoming Deputy Director I will continue working in earnest on finding solutions. I will work on your behalf 'at the table' to ensure that your voice is represented. I have been Principal for a decade now of a DEIS co-ed school of over 630 students and I served as Deputy Principal before that and so I know that our job, in its current state, is far from sustainable. I look forward to working with and supporting Director Paul Crone, President Shane Foley and our Executive in their work to make our jobs more sustainable.

I have been a member of the National Executive for 8 years now and have represented NAPD on several working groups, committees etc., including the Senior Cycle Implementation Partners Forum, and the Education for Sustainable Development Advisory Group. I am also a member of the Department of Education Expert Panel for the establishment of the Student Participation Unit. I am really looking forward to expanding this reach and to use my experience and your opinions and advice to continue to drive the profile and influence of NAPD within Irish Education.

I would like to congratulate and thank Paul Byrne on his time as Deputy Director and wish him well in his future endeavours.

A warm shout out to Tracey Edwards, Bridget Cadogan and Sinéad Kehoe, the new leadership team in Ramsgrange Community School – our school is in safe hands!

To all of the newly appointed Principals and Deputy Principals, massive congratulations to you all and the very best of luck with this new and exciting stage of your leadership journey. Be assured that NAPD is here to support you. If you need advice, support etc please feel

free to email me at racheloconnor@napd.ie.

The NAPD Confidential Support Service is available to members on 01-6627025 – select option 2.

One of our main aims in NAPD is to connect with and listen to members' voices, those of us that serve on 'the frontline'. This very important connection happens at NAPD regional meetings. Paul Crone, and I will be attending these meetings throughout the year around the country, to meet with you and to keep you informed of the work being done on your behalf.

Please save the dates and prioritise these meetings, which are a priceless way to network with other school leaders. As Michele Jennae said '*Networking is not just about connecting people. It's about connecting people with people, people with ideas, and people with opportunities*'.

I wish you the very best for this academic year. To be a school leader is a privilege in terms of the potential positive impact we can make in the lives of those in our care.

Ar aghaidh le chéile

Rachel O'Connor,
NAPD Deputy Director

One of our main aims in NAPD is to connect with and listen to members' voices, those of us that serve on 'the frontline'. This very important connection happens at NAPD regional meetings.

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NAPD Annual Conference 2023

Galway



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For further Conference details scan the QR code.



This year's Conference will take place from Wednesday 11 October to Friday 13 October at the Galmont Hotel (formerly Radisson), Galway.

The Conference schedule and information on speakers are yet to be confirmed and will be issued to those who register and also notified via the NAPD App and website.

To register for Conference, you need to be a NAPD member in 2022-2023; to attend you need to be an NAPD member in 2023-2024.

To attend the NAPD Conference 2023, you must be a fully paid NAPD Member for term 2023/2024.

Register via the NAPD Website or scan the QR Code.



The Conference Hotel, the Galmont, is now full.

The following Hotels are also full:

- The Hyde Hotel
- The Harbour Hotel
- The Connacht Hotel
- The Hardiman Hotel

We have secured rates for the following hotels with a booking of two nights:

The G Hotel: €239 B&B

The House Hotel: Single €199

Other hotels within walking distance of the Galmont are:

Victoria Hotel – 7 min walk

Imperial Hotel – 8 min walk

Jurys Inn Hotel – 14 min walk

None of these offer a Conference rate.

All accommodation will be booked and managed by delegates. NAPD will not accept responsibility for hotel bookings.

Details of the Conference programme are available on the NAPD website.

Queries – contact Michelle at info@napd.ie

Magenta Principles

Mike Hughes



The Magenta Principles is an umbrella phrase that refers to a philosophy and an approach to teaching based upon the premise that learning should be both exciting and engaging.

More specifically the phrase represents a pedagogy underpinned by a belief that:

- Learning is a consequence of thinking ... therefore our job is to get them to think
- Language is central to thinking ... therefore our job is to get them to talk
- Learning is an active process ... therefore our job is to get them doing

While we talk about Magenta Principles, in reality there is only one principle - in order to make sense of information that comes their way, students are required to do something to or with it.



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Wed 13 Sept 2023	Wed 6 Dec 2023	Wed 17 Jan 2024
Dublin		
Thur 14 Sept 2023	Thur 7 Dec 2023	Thur 18 Jan 2024

This programme is aimed primarily at classroom teachers but it will also be of interest to school leaders who wish to familiarise themselves with what Magenta Principles can offer their school.

Schools can register up to 4 participants. We require the same participants to attend all 3 workshops (since workshop 2 builds on workshop 1 etc.).

A **per-school** registration fee for the programme is €650.

Level 2 – Returners

1 workshop

Portlaoise
Monday 23 October 2023

Participants must have previously completed a Level 1 (Newcomers) programme.

A **per-participant** registration fee for the workshop is €70.

Become a Leader of Learning

1 workshop

Portlaoise
Tuesday 24 October 2023

This workshop is aimed at Principals, Deputies and senior staff with responsibility for Learning & Teaching.

A **per-participant** registration fee for the workshop is €70.

Important Information

1. Workshops run from 9:00am to 1:30pm, followed by light lunch.
2. If face-to-face workshops cannot take place, they will be offered online via zoom.
3. We might need to limit participant numbers, depending on venue capacity and health regulations.
4. Places will be allocated on a first come basis.
5. We strongly recommend that each participant has a copy of the Irish Magenta Principles/Na Prionsabail Maigeanta to support their understanding and learning throughout the programme.
6. Books cost €30 each (plus €10 PP). For 4 or more, books cost €25 each (plus €15 P&P). For 10 or more, books cost €20 each (plus €20 P&P). Orders should be emailed to info@napd.ie. Books also available to purchase at workshops.
7. Registration can be made by Principals or Deputy Principals via the NAPD website (go to the Professional Learning tab from the home page).
8. Any questions? Contact Barry O'Callaghan at leading4learning@napd.ie.

Waterford & Wexford

ETB

Our Magenta Journey



Sinéad O'Hara

Our involvement with the Mike Hughes and the Magenta Principles Programme began in 2016. Our Chief Executive, Kevin Lewis, and our then Director of Schools, Eilis Leddy, created the role of Education Co-ordinator within our ETB, to work across our post-primary colleges on a range of projects to support and enhance quality teaching, learning and assessment.

The rationale was to strategically focus on providing high quality CPD that could be applied across all subject areas. We also wanted to build a Community of Practice of highly skilled facilitators of Teaching and Learning.

Several of our Principals (including Eimear Ryan, who was subsequently appointed Director of Schools in 2019) recommended that I attend a Mike Hughes Magenta workshop. By the end of that day, we knew that working with Mike would be the right fit for WWETB.

We were delighted when Mike agreed to work in our 12 post-primary colleges across two counties, with over 500 teaching staff. Our first ever group of "Facilitators of Teaching and Learning", comprising 45 teachers from all subject specialisms, met in 2016.

Developing and Embedding Magenta

Between 2016 and 2020, over 160 teachers took part in WWETB's Magenta

Principles Programme. Each cohort was offered a minimum of 3 days of workshops across an academic year. To develop and embed the programme in between workshop days, we arranged activities at cross-college and individual college level, such as:

- Working with WWETB's Digital Learning Team to set up a cross-college Microsoft Team and an internal Team for each college for sharing of ideas.
- 28 participants took part in a Coaching Programme which included video analysis of their teaching.
- Regular visits from the Education Co-ordinator.
- 'Magenta Day' in colleges with whole staff presentations.
- Continuous updates on progress to school leadership teams.

2018 saw the publication of Mike's Irish edition of the Magenta Principles – Na Prionsabail Maigenata. WWETB was proud to have numerous lesson examples from our teachers included, as well as a case study of how the programme was working for us. Three members of our Core Magenta Team were also entrusted by Mike to deliver Day 2 of the programme to new WWETB participants.

We had only completed one face-to-face session with Mike before COVID-19 changed everything, leaving us to totally rethink our approach. The remaining sessions were moved online.

In 2020, I was awarded a bursary by the Teaching Council under the John Coolahan Research Support Framework to research the impact of the Magenta programme in our colleges. As part of this research, I surveyed all previous participants and Principals to gather information on their experience of the programme and to shape its future development.

Based on this data, we offered a programme for the 2021/2022 academic year comprising a 'Refresher Session' with Mike, open to all previous participants from the previous five years of the programme. We sought expressions of interest to become one of their school's Magenta 'Lead Practitioners'. Our aim was now to focus on 'depth' – further developing

and enhancing the skills of previous participants.

Due to ongoing COVID restrictions, we postponed the Lead Practitioner Programme until the following academic year. However, we continued to engage online and developed a suite of Magenta resources for use in classrooms.

Leading Magenta Programme

We re-started the 3-day Lead Practitioner Programme in person in 2022. In between sessions, participants worked to further enhance engagement with Magenta in their schools. At the end of the programme, we asked participants what further support they needed.

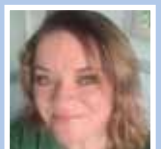
The focus for 2023/24 is now on introducing Magenta to teachers new to WWETB. We will also be offering a workshop to our Deputy Principals, to provide an overview of the programme and give them the tools to support Lead Practitioners in their schools.

Key Take Aways

- Top-down support for the Magenta Principles programme is crucial to its success.
- Taking part in the Magenta Principles Programme has given us the opportunity to build a Community of Practice of teachers from a broad range of subject areas.
- Teachers are given the opportunity and the time to further develop their individual, collaborative and collective practice.
- The programme is inclusive of all learners and can be applied in any classroom setting.
- The focus continues to be on the learner experience.

Sinead O'Hara has been a teacher of French and a Special Educational Needs Coordinator with WWETB for 23

years. In 2016, she was appointed to the role of Education Co-ordinator (Schools), working with the Director of Schools on a range of Teaching and Learning projects and initiatives across WWETB's twelve post-primary colleges and one Community national school.



The Learning Power Approach

Graham Powell

The Learning Power Approach (LPA) uses a distillation of international research into how young people learn, based on the exemplary practice of many teachers working in a variety of contexts across the age and ability range.

The focus of LPA lies in the development of those learning habits that all young people need in school and will need in their lives beyond compulsory education. These proven approaches assure student motivation and high levels of achievement.



Important Information for all workshops

1. Workshops run from 9:00am to 1:30pm, followed by light lunch.
2. If face-to-face workshops cannot take place, they will be offered online via zoom.
3. We might need to limit participant numbers, depending on venue capacity and health regulations.
4. Places will be allocated on a first come basis.
5. Registration can be made by Principals or Deputy Principals via the NAPD website (go to Professional Learning tab from home page).
6. Any questions? Contact Barry O'Callaghan at leading4learning@napd.ie.

Level 1 – Newcomers Programme –

2 workshops with a choice of 2 venues

	Workshop 1	Workshop 2
Cork	Wed 4 Oct 2023	Wed 31 Jan 2024
Portlaoise	Thu 5 Oct 2023	Thu 1 Feb 2024

This programme is aimed primarily at classroom teachers but it will also be of interest to school leaders who wish to familiarise themselves with what the Learning Power Approach can offer their school.

Schools can register up to 4 participants. A **per-participant** registration fee for the programme is €140.

We require the same participants to attend both workshops (since workshop 2 builds on workshop 1).

Level 2 – Returners Workshop

1 workshop

	Workshop
Portlaoise	Wed 15 November 2023

Participants must have previously completed a Level 1 (Newcomers) programme or be leaders of schools whose teachers previously participated.

A **per-participant** registration fee for the workshop is €70.

Becoming a Leader of Learning in your School using The Learning Power Approach

2 workshops in 1 venue

	Workshop 1	Workshop 2
Portlaoise	Thu 16 Nov 2023	Wed 6 March 2024

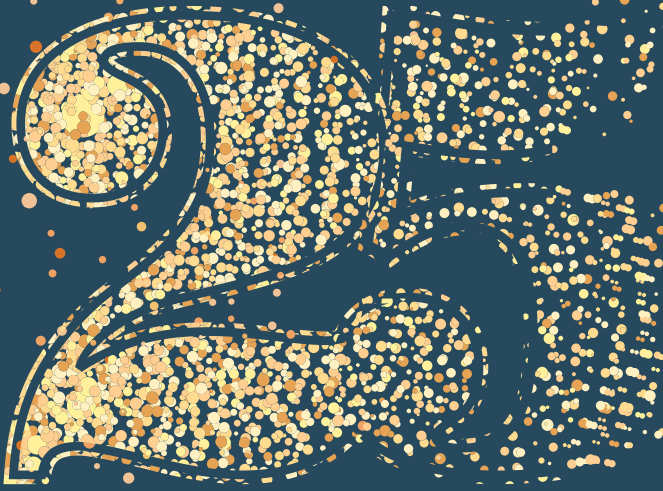
This programme is aimed at Principals, Deputies and senior staff with responsibility for Learning & Teaching.

Together with examples from Irish school leaders that have worked with him over the past decade, they will focus attention on the leadership and whole school implications and practicalities that ensure successful and sustainable implementation.

The workshop will draw on *Powering Up Your School* (Crown House, 2020) which was co-authored by Graham.

A **per-participant** registration fee for the programme is €140.

We require the same participants to attend both workshops (since workshop 2 builds on workshop 1).



YEARS of NAPD

Áine Hyland

It is fascinating to look back over the last 25 years in Irish education and to realise how much has been achieved. It is a case of “a lot done – more to do”. There will always be more to do in education. But at the risk of being attacked by those who see the glass as half-empty rather than half-full, I would sum up the past quarter of a century as one of the more positive periods for education since the foundation of the State one hundred years ago.

The Education Act, introduced by Micheál Martin as Minister for Education in 1998, was a milestone for Irish education. It was a courageous, all-encompassing and ambitious Act – the only comprehensive education legislation ever passed for Irish education. The 1998 Act not only opened the door for changes and developments, but by enshrining in legislation the rights of all young people to education, it was transformative for the marginalised in our society, especially for those from less advantaged backgrounds and those with additional educational needs.

The following whistle-stop tour of education developments since 1998 summarises what was achieved – and what has yet to be achieved.

The publication of a White Paper on Early Childhood Education in 1999 by Micheál Martin gave formal recognition for the first time to early education as a separate sector in its own right. It focused on children from birth to six years. It covered the whole spectrum of educational needs: the development of very young children in the home, supports to parents concerning how best to help their children to learn, a wide range of supports for private providers and voluntary/community groups and a strategy to enhance the quality of infant education in primary schools.

It included specific additional measures in respect of the priority target groups – the disadvantaged and children with special needs. During the subsequent twenty-five years the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme was set up; a Minister for Children was appointed; a formal curriculum for early childhood (Aistear) was implemented and, over the period, public funding increased from virtually nothing in 1999 to almost €1 billion in 2022.

However, it's not all perfect. The decision to devolve early childhood education to private providers, was in my view, a

lost opportunity. The requirement that early childhood educators should hold only a minimum qualification at level 5 of the National Qualifications Framework was also wrong. And the decision to have two separate sets of inspectors – one from the Department of Children and one from the Department of Education should never have been made.

Hopefully in the coming years some of these mistakes will be rectified.

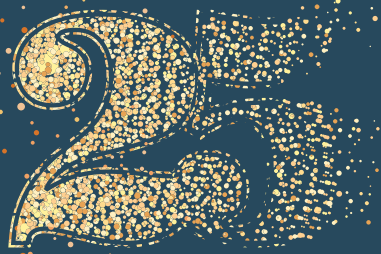
At primary school level, Ireland now has a much more diverse pupil population than was the case twenty-five years ago. Almost 15% of pupils in primary schools today were born outside Ireland and many of these pupils do not have English as a first language. There is now a clear mismatch between the type of school sought by parents for their children and the current ownership and management of national schools. Parent-led campaigns for multi-denominational schools and Gaelscoileanna increased during the past 25 years and while there are now more such schools than there were then, 89% of national schools are still under denominational (church) patronage and management.

Efforts by government to transfer existing church-owned schools to more democratic patronage (following the recommendations of the Report on Patronage and Pluralism in 2012) have not been successful - with only about 10 such schools divested between 2012 and 2022.

The introduction by Minister Mary Hanafin of the DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) scheme in 2005, following the publication of the reports of the Educational Disadvantage Committee, provided additional resources to designated schools in disadvantaged areas. While this scheme is not perfect, it has brought coherence into previous ad hoc arrangements and while it has not yet bridged the gap between the attainment of pupils in DEIS and non-DEIS schools, it has gone some way towards narrowing that gap.

However, DEIS did nothing for the more than 50% of children and young people from less advantaged backgrounds who do not attend DEIS schools – this is an anomaly which I hope will be addressed in the coming years.

A new Primary School curriculum in 1999 enhanced and strengthened the child-centred approach of the 1971



YEARS of NAPD

curriculum and provided updated and detailed syllabi in all subject areas. This curriculum has recently been updated – whether it is an improvement or not on the 1999 curriculum has yet to be proven. Whole school evaluation which replaced traditional school inspection is also undergoing reform – again it's too soon to judge whether this will be an improvement or not.

Provision at primary school level for children with special educational needs improved significantly during the period under review. The National Council for Special Education was set up as a statutory body in 2003. The EPSEN Act (2004) to provide for the education of people with special educational needs was all encompassing and was widely welcomed – but disappointingly, almost twenty years later, some of the key provisions of the act have not yet been commenced.

Additional resources (specialist teachers, special needs assistants, bespoke facilities) were made available to enable children with additional needs to attend mainstream schools and special classes were also provided where required. The total budget to support students with special needs at primary and post-primary levels in 2023 was over €2.6 billion, more than 25% of the total education budget.

But issues still remain to be addressed, especially the provision of appropriate and specialised training for teachers of these pupils.

At post-primary level, the Community and Comprehensive school sector as well as the ETB sector has grown and the number of voluntary secondary schools has declined. While the number of priests, brothers and nuns in these schools had begun to decline twenty-five years ago, the decline accelerated over the period and there are now almost no members of religious orders teaching in post-primary schools – a development predicted fifty years ago in the Future of Irish Religious Education (FIRE) report – but widely disbelieved at that time.

Enrolment in post-primary schools grew significantly in the past quarter of a century, driven both by demographic factors and by a very high school completion rate. Ireland now has one of the highest completion rates of Senior Cycle education in the OECD – with more than 95% of students completing. However, alternative educational provision is still inadequate for the small number of young people for whom mainstream schooling is not suitable. This issue is currently being addressed and will hopefully result in suitable educational provision for the full cohort of young people.

Despite expectations at the beginning of the 21st century that major curriculum reform at both at Junior and Senior Cycle was imminent, progress has been slow. The reformed Junior Cycle was examined in full for the first time in 2022, but with only 10% of the marks in most subjects allocated to class-based assessment tasks, the emphasis continues to be on the State examinations at the end of third year.

At Senior Cycle, the much-hyped Leaving Certificate Applied,

introduced in the mid-1990s, has not been as widely taken up as had been hoped. The vast majority of Senior Cycle students (almost 90%) sit the (Established) Leaving Certificate, which is not necessarily the best choice for all who choose it.

A number of new Leaving Certificate subjects have been introduced in the past decade (such as Physical Education, Politics & Society and Computer Studies) and revised specifications (syllabi) have been introduced in some other subjects, but controversy persists about the recently-revised format of subject specifications, where very limited details or teacher guidelines are provided by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

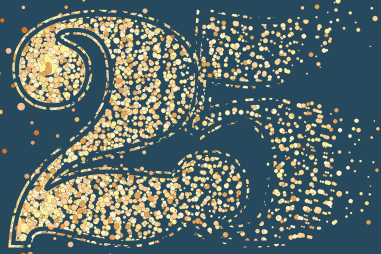
The setting up of the State Examinations Commission (SEC) in 2002 led to greater independence and transparency of State examinations with impressive initiatives such as access by candidates to their marked scripts and full and accessible information about marking schemes and their application. However, the separation of curriculum reform by the NCCA from the State Examinations system administered by the SEC, has resulted in an increasing disconnection and a lack of alignment between subject syllabi and the annual state examination papers, much to the frustration of teachers and students.

Teacher education saw significant developments during the period, with the passing of the Teaching Council Act in 2001 and the setting of up the Teaching Council in 2006. Minister Ruairi Quinn's Literacy and Numeracy Strategy in 2011 added an additional year to teacher education programmes, and while this was initially welcomed, it has had the unintended consequence of contributing to the current shortage of teachers, especially at post-primary level.

The failure of the Department of Education to engage in focused and targeted forecasting of teacher supply and demand, in spite of numerous requests for regular and systematic forecasts, has exacerbated the current and ongoing shortages. The reduction in public service salaries after the economic crash of 2008 led to an increase in the number of trained teachers emigrating to countries where salaries and working conditions are better than those in Ireland. As various financial restrictions are lifted in Ireland, it is to be hoped that some of these teachers will return and that the outflow of teachers will be stemmed.

In spite of these challenges, it is encouraging to see that the teaching profession is still regarded by school-leavers as an attractive option and that Ireland continues to attract a very high calibre of students into the teaching profession. However, the lack of ethnic and race diversity in the teaching profession needs to be addressed and this will be a significant challenge in the years ahead. Developments during the past 25 years to support school leadership has been well documented in recent issues of Leader – and much of this support owes its origins in the setting up of NAPD and IPPN twenty-five years ago.

The report of the Commission on the Points System in 1999 examined in depth issues that were being raised about the transition from second to third level education. The report acknowledged the challenges and difficulties encountered by students because of the imbalance between the demand for higher education programmes and the number of places available.



YEARS of NAPD

While the report failed to get agreement about an alternative to the Points System, it made a number of recommendations about the amelioration of its consequences, especially for students from less advantaged backgrounds and students with special educational needs.

The subsequent Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) and Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) schemes, set up by the Higher Education Institutions with the support of the Higher Education Authority (HEA) led to an increase in the numbers of such students accessing higher education through non-traditional routes. It is estimated that more than 25% of today's higher education students have entered higher education through routes other than the Points System. There has also been an increase in the number of mature students, especially those engaged in upskilling courses, many of which are now being offered on a blended basis, with the use of technology, while also recognising that learning can and does take place in the workplace as well as on higher education campuses.

The enactment of the Technological Universities Act of 2018 laid the ground for major change in the Higher Education landscape. The network of Institutes of Technology around the country has now been transformed into five Technological Universities (TUs).

The setting up of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the appointment of a bespoke Minister for Further and Higher Education, Simon Harris, in 2020 has contributed to this transformation. Links between the Further Education (FE) sector and Higher Education (HE) institutions, which had been slowly building since the early 2000s have been strengthened and accelerated. New models of apprenticeships have been forged. Agreements have been reached between FE providers and TUs to enable students to undertake the first two years of some degree programmes in an FE institution and to then transfer seamlessly into a university setting.

These developments promise to address some of the difficulties of access and accommodation encountered by post-secondary school students, especially those who live at a distance from a university campus. Despite decreased per capita core government funding for universities during the period under review, Irish universities continue to rank among the top echelons of universities worldwide and are highly regarded nationally and internationally by both students and employers.

No overview of developments over the past twenty-five years would be complete without mentioning the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated lockdowns between 2020 and 2022, as well as school closures, on education at all levels – not just in Ireland but all over the world. Teachers and their pupils had to pivot at a few days' notice from traditional classroom teaching to online teaching and learning – with all the change and transformation that

this necessitated. Student and teacher flexibility was impressive.

While some students and their families were more severely affected than others because of issues such as housing, overcrowding, lack of technology, limited broadband access etc., three years later the available evidence suggests that academic learning was not as seriously impacted as initially feared. However, Covid exacerbated physical and mental health issues, which may well be more evident in years to come and the consequences of which are still unknown.

And what of the future of education? Recent developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and emerging digital technologies present new challenges. Much has been written in recent months about the threat which ChatGPT and other such digital tools pose for teaching and learning as we know it. However, education must be open to change and while new technologies present a challenge, they also provide new opportunities for teachers and learners.

Scepticism about new technologies in education is not new. About 2,300 years ago, a Greek philosopher Plato, in his treatise *Phaedrus*, expressed concern about the then growing popularity of writing and literacy (as opposed to debating and oracy) as an educational tool. He wrote: *"This invention (i.e. writing) will produce forgetfulness in the minds of those who learn to use it ... you offer your pupils the appearance of wisdom, not true wisdom, for they will read many things without instruction and will therefore seem to know many things, when they are for the most part ignorant and hard to get along with since they are not wise, but only appear wise"*.

This quotation is as relevant today as it was two and a half thousand years ago.

We need to be open to change and to recognise the educational potential of new technological tools. AI tools, such as Chat GPT may present challenges but it has the potential to improve and transform the educational systems of the future, provided that we as teachers recognise and harness it, instead of regrading it as a threat. During generations past, despite Plato's fear, writing did not supersede the need for human teachers nor reduce the significance and importance of the teaching profession.

On the contrary, as literacy became a more important and central part of human progress and development, teachers became more (not less) necessary. The human and interpersonal dimension of teachers and their interaction and empathy with their students, will always be central to good education and no technological development will change that.

Áine Hyland is Emeritus Professor of Education and former Vice-President of UCC. She chaired and was a member of various government committees on education, including the Commission on the Points System and the Statutory Educational Disadvantage Committee. In recognition of her contribution to Irish education, she has been awarded a number of honorary doctorates. She was elected a member of the Royal Irish Academy in 2018.



NAPD 25 Years On

Mícheál Martin, TD, Tánaiste

I am delighted to have this opportunity to congratulate the National Association of Principals & Deputy Principals on reaching such an important milestone in your history.

It was as Minister for Education and Science that I officially launched the NAPD in 1998, with a vision to recognise the important role of Principals and Deputy Principals in our education system.

I fondly remember that launch at Collins Barracks 25 years ago.

Post primary school leaders were represented at that time by a number of different organisations, and through hard work and that vision, your organisation helped to provide a more consolidated forum for school Principals and Deputy Principals to have a greater input into the future direction of second level education in Ireland.

People like Shay Bannon, NAPD's first President, were early pioneers on this journey who can look back with great satisfaction on the positive role NAPD has had on Irish second level education in the last 25 years. In particular, I can recall Shay's enthusiasm and commitment and those of his colleagues on the first Executive, to ensuring that the organisation thrived in its early formative years.

I have always believed education, and investment in education, has been transformative in creating a modern, successful and global Ireland. NAPD has played a significant role in this progress.

We have faced many challenges as a country in the past 25 years, including the unprecedented upheavals brought about by COVID-19. As schools grappled with unprecedented circumstances, NAPD supported school



leaders in facilitating the reopening of schools and managing the complexities of calculated and accredited grades.

NAPD has also continually supported the professional development of school leaders, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to the ever-changing educational environment. Through these opportunities, NAPD has empowered school leaders to champion vital curriculum reforms, such as the recent Junior Cycle reform and in helping school leaders to transform the landscape of inclusive education and special educational needs (SEN) support in schools.

The Centre for School Leadership (CSL) was a partnership established between the Department of Education, the Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN) and NAPD in 2015. That partnership approach continues and has grown over recent years to provide a range of innovative supports for school leaders including mentoring, coaching and a specific post-graduate diploma in School Leadership. The active involvement of the NAPD has provided CSL with access to real time data on the current issues arising for school leaders in the Irish system.

I know that the Department of Education has commenced a project to integrate the four Teacher Education funded Support Services into one single Integrated Support Service. In September 2023 a new integrated service named Oide will be established. The vision for this new integrated support service is to support the professional learning of teachers and school leaders through the development of high quality, innovative and responsive professional learning.

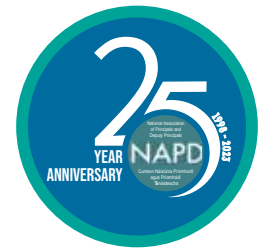
The Oide Leadership Division which forms part of the Oide Support Service involves an evolution of the existing partnership between IPPN, NAPD and the Department. It is the shared objective that Oide will be a centre of excellence for school leadership and the lead provider of professional learning supports to school leaders and aspiring school leaders.

Over the last 25 years, Ireland has undergone significant evolution in terms of innovation, technology, and the economy. NAPD has played a crucial role in guiding school leaders during this often turbulent period of change.

I foresee that you will continue to play this pivotal role in education. I wish you every success in the years to come.



I know that the Department of Education has commenced a project to integrate the four Teacher Education funded Support Services into one single Integrated Support Service. In September 2023 a new integrated support service named 'Oide' will be established.



25 Years – Presidential Roll of Honour

1998-2000	Shay Bannon	2011-2012	Dónal Ó Buachalla
2000-2001	Mary Hanley	2012-2013	Kay O'Brien
2001-2002	Ger Looney	2013-2014	Padraig Flanagan
2002-2003	Michael McCann	2014-2015	Mary Nihill
2003-2004	Derek West	2015-2016	Paul Byrne
2004-2005	Michael Parsons	2016-2017	Cathnia Ó Muircheartaigh
2005-2006	Clive Byrne	2017-2018	Mary Keane
2006-2007	Patricia McDonagh	2018-2019	Kieran Golden
2007-2008	Áine O'Neill	2019-2020	Alan Mongey
2008-2009	Ciarán McCormack	2020-2021	Michael Cregan
2009-2010	Tim Geraghty	2021-2022	Rachel O'Connor
2010-2011	Patricia O'Brien	2022-2023	Shane Foley

■ Spring
 ■ Summer
 ■ Autumn
 ■ Winter

In the Spring Leader we carried the reflections of Shay Bannon, Derek West, Áine O'Neill, Dónal Ó Buachalla, Paul Byrne and Alan Mongey.

In the Summer edition we carried the reflections of the Mary Hanley, Michael Parsons, Ciarán McCormack, Kay O'Brien, Cathnia Ó Muircheartaigh and Michael Cregan. In this Autumn edition we carry the reflections of Ger Looney, Clive Byrne, Tim Geraghty, Padraig Flanagan, Mary Keane and Rachel O'Connor.

In the Winter edition we will carry the remaining reflections.



Members of the first National Executive at the launch of NAPD – 22 September 1998

Back row (left to right):

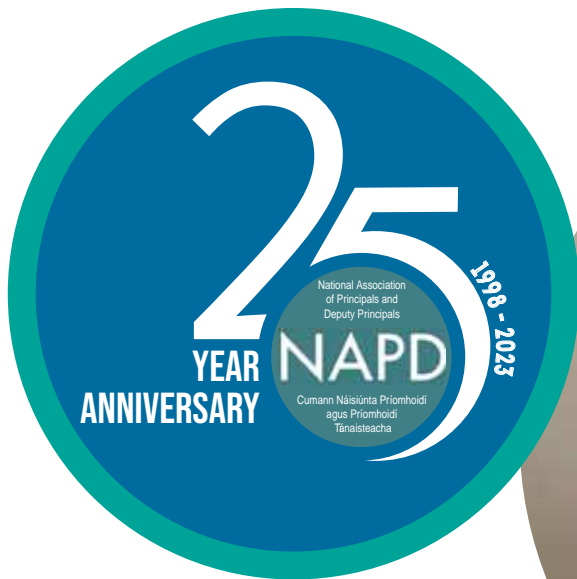
Kevin Bonner (Facilitator), Michael McCann (SSPAI), Mattie Kilroy (AVPSCC), Jean Geoghegan (SSPAI), Dick O'Connor (VPPA), Ray Kennedy (SSPAI), Ivan Bolton (ISA), Sheila McManamly (SSPAI), Derek West (APVC), Robert Kirkpatrick (VPPA).

Front Row (left to right):

Mary McGlynn (ESHA), Larry Kavanagh (APVSCC), Josephine O'Donnell (APVSCC), Shay Bannon (SSPAI), Mary Hanley (APVC), Tomás Ó Séaghdha (ESHA), Michael Naughton (APVC).

GER LOONEY

President 2001-2002



I was very proud to take on the office of President in 2001 as the first representative from what was then the VEC (now ETB) Sector. At the heart of NAPD is the inclusion of all three sectors, which works particularly well with the rotation of the presidency, because across every three year cycle the President, Vice President and immediate Past President will each have been a nominee representing one of those sectors. This ensures a continually strong knowledge base across the education system.

As you move through your own three-year cycle you develop a close bond with those around you. In my time, I worked with our first Director, Mary McGlynn as well as Presidents before me, Shay Bannon and Mary Hanley, my own Vice President Michael McCann as well as Derek West who later served as Vice-President to Michael.

NAPD took ownership of the space between the Unions and Management Bodies, not by invitation from either

side, so being 'careful and cautious' had to be the hallmark of everything that we did in the early years. This really pulled the five of us together, as Shay and Michael were very familiar with the workings of ASTI and the JMB, while Mary Hanley and Derek West knew the ACCS.

Mary McGlynn was a marvel in dealing with the DES and was equally comfortable in dealing with ASTI and the JMB and I had dealt with the IVEA (now ETBI) and knew many of the

Head Office people in TUI. NAPD was described at that time as an organisation that 'had arrived' and was 'emerging' as a 'powerful force' in Irish Education.

SUPERVISION AND SUBSTITUTION

When I think of my own year as President of NAPD in 2001/02 the issue that immediately springs to mind is the first and very bitter Supervision and Substitution Dispute, a side effect of which ignited at a very early stage the debate around whether NAPD should push for Trade Union Status.

It's hard to believe that the history of S&S goes back that far, but at the very first NAPD Conference Shay Bannon actually called for a properly organised and paid system for S&S. The following year during Mary Hanley's Presidency and just year two of NAPD, the unions began to use S&S

as a weapon in a general pay dispute. My year as President – year 3 of NAPD was a nightmare for Principals and Deputies, as the unions withdrew from all S&S, while at the same time the DES and Management Bodies were determined to keep schools open and proceeded to organise contingency plans which Principals and Deputies were expected to manage.

The very best we could do for our members in those early days was to maintain a strong public profile and highlight the difficulties in schools. We visited all the regions to listen to members, reassure them and keep them informed, while all the time we worked in the background to try to influence discussions and put our stamp on a solution.

I remember well chairing an EGM during the year where members vented their anger and frustration and while their perception might have been that the meeting served little purpose, it did give us the ammunition we needed to exert more pressure on all parties. It was early days and it put a huge strain on NAPD as an emerging organisation at the time, walking a tightrope in that space between management and unions.

Contingency plans set up at the time operated for more than 16 weeks in the schools – half the academic year and ultimately cost €20 million. The legacy damage to relationships in the schools cost far more and lasted for many years afterwards. History, of course, repeated itself in recent years with yet another S&S dispute. The difference with the most recent manifestation of the dispute was that NAPD was by now in a far stronger position to influence the contingency arrangements and protect its members.

NAPD OR NUPD? THAT WAS THE BIG QUESTION

In most school disputes it is the Principal and Deputy who are the ones to get caught between Unions and Boards of Management; hence there

“ We set up an NAPD Further Education and Training (FET) Committee to represent the particular interests of the sector. This subcommittee later gained representation on the Executive Committee of NAPD. ”

has been a long running debate around what exactly NAPD can/can't or should/shouldn't do. That first S&S dispute almost 25 years ago put the issue centre stage for the first time and it remains topical to this very day. In the early days our focus had to remain firmly on building a solid base for the organisation and develop good working relationships with the DES, Management Bodies and Unions.

I believe that we managed that – the proof being that Association has grown significantly from then to the point where is now capable of doing so much more for members. The Centre for School Leadership is but one example, with headline initiatives in Mentoring and Coaching. The organisation is now highly respected on the national stage, with unprecedented access across Government Departments and officials.

HIGHLIGHTING THE NEEDS OF FURTHER EDUCATION

I am particularly proud that that I was able to shine a light on Further Education/Post Leaving Cert (FE/PLC) provision during my Presidency. FE/PLC provision had its beginnings in 1985, well before the arrival of NAPD and largely in vocational schools and Colleges, using an EU funding stream dedicated to the preparation of young, disadvantaged adults for the workplace. There was little understanding of the work of the sector at that time and no organisation to represent those leading the sector. We set up an NAPD Further Education and Training (FET) Committee to represent the particular interests of the sector. This subcommittee later gained representation on the Executive Committee of NAPD.

The 'FET' title which the Committee adopted was reflective of NAPD policy, which from the very beginning sought a fully coordinated and integrated approach to the delivery of Further Education and Training in a single, coherent and transparent structure, accessible to all. It has been a 'slow burner', but it is so gratifying to see much of what the Committee worked for down through the years coming to fruition in the new sector – and with its very own Government Minister.

The committee is far stronger now, with a solid representative structure built across the FET sector. It is firmly established as a lead committee of NAPD and now works under the title 'Further Education and Training Colleges Ireland' – the voice of FET College Leaders. It has maintained the Association's position as a key player and partner at national level in the developing FET Sector.

It may have taken 25 years to reach the point where FET now sits, but I am very proud under my Presidency to have worked with that small group of then PLC Principals in taking the initiative to set up that first FET Committee and provide representation for the developing sector.

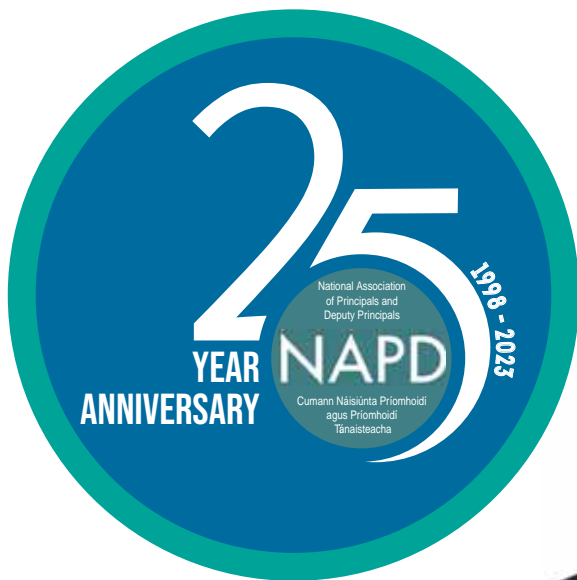
Ger Looney

retired in 2011 as Principal of St John's Central College, Cork, now Cork College of FET.



CLIVE BYRNE

President 2005-2006



“What’s for you won’t pass you” was a great phrase in our house while growing up and in a sense, there was much happenstance in my professional life over the years. After a fulfilling and rewarding teaching career in Mount Temple, I was appointed Principal in Presentation Brothers Glashule in 1994 and later Principal of St Mary’s Rathmines in 1997.

My emergence as a school leader coincided with the establishment of the Secondary School Principals Association of Ireland which played a vital role in the emergence of NAPD. I was the chairperson of region 9 – the largest of the 9 NAPD regions and the representative on the National Executive was Brian Fleming, Principal of Collinstown Park. Brian was reluctant to take on the role of President of NAPD into the future and the region decided that I would replace him on the National Executive.

Within a year or two it was the voluntary secondary’s turn to join the

presidential triumvirate. I was reluctant to take on the role of NAPD Vice-President as the Principal of a fee-charging school, but I allowed my name to go forward and took on the role of Vice-President. I was the third NAPD President from the Voluntary Sector and by 2005, much of the initial suspicion evident from the unions and the management bodies had dissipated or vanished altogether.

NAPD was becoming part of the education furniture because of the great work of the previous office holders and Director, Mary McGlynn. Mary had a high profile and her

common-sense approach dealing with the Supervision and Substitution controversy which greatly affected school leaders. As the role of President is a non-seconded role, unlike our colleagues in the primary sector, I was experiencing the worst effects of the S&S dispute in my role as Principal of St Mary’s. The leadership shown by NAPD at the time was central to schools coping and being able to stay open. It is a great tribute to all school leaders that this was the case.

As President of NAPD my aim was to raise the profile of the office by visiting each of the nine regions. I’m glad to report that with the support of my Deputy and the manager of my school I was able to visit all regional Conferences and many regional meetings during my year of office. School leadership was coming to the fore and because of government initiatives and the publication of Green

and White Papers in the 1990s, education was a hot topic of discussion and debate during my time as President when visiting the regions.

At the time the number of lay Principals replacing religious school leaders was increasing. A job description and the role of the Principal in the day to day running of the school needed acceptance from the school community. There was uncertainty as to how the lay Principal would combine the role of Principal and secretary of the Board of Management. With the different perspective of the lay Principal and without the collegial support of religious brothers and sisters in the monastery or convent, proper provision needed to be in place for in-service of staff and school planning. These and other issues such as clearly defined conditions of work, a realistic job description, support structures and adequate financial support gave plenty of opportunities to members to voice their concerns and suggestions during well-attended regional meetings.

For me a personal highlight during my year as President, was the address of former Taoiseach, Dr Garret Fitzgerald, at Annual Conference. A committed European, he was pleased (I think) by the range of European languages and references in my Presidential Address. He realised that in addressing leaders of learning in our schools, he was speaking to individuals of quality and influence. Garret spoke to the topic of Civic Republicanism and had the

“ **For me a personal highlight during my year as President, was the address of former Taoiseach, Dr Garret Fitzgerald, at Annual Conference. A committed European, he was pleased (I think) by the range of European languages and references in my Presidential Address.** ”

audience in the palm of his hand. The former Taoiseach's passion for the topic was so evident and because of the reaction of members to his speech, he became a great supporter of the NAPD and was a constant attendee at Conferences, briefings and Symposia organised by the Association. I'm proud to report that one of the last public addresses he gave shortly before his death was at an NAPD event. For him, the vision we had for Irish society and the values we wished to promote were a constant.

There is still a great debate about Church control of primary education, the baptism barrier, the divesting of schools to the state but it was at an NAPD symposium held in Kilmainham that the issue was widely discussed by Dr Fitzgerald and Archbishop Diarmaid Martin who first referenced the possibility of the Catholic Church handing over control of some schools to the State for use in the non-denominational or multi-denominational sector. NAPD can be proud that the earliest public reference to it was at an NAPD

Symposium as Irish society needed to evolve along the lines of civic republicanism.

As I remarked at the outset "What's for you won't pass you". I think my professional life has borne this out. I've been involved in NAPD from my time in the Secondary Schools Principals Association of Ireland (SSPAI), the Collin's Barracks launch, member of the Executive, President of NAPD, President of ESHA, Council member of NCCA, Council Member of ICP and Director of NAPD.

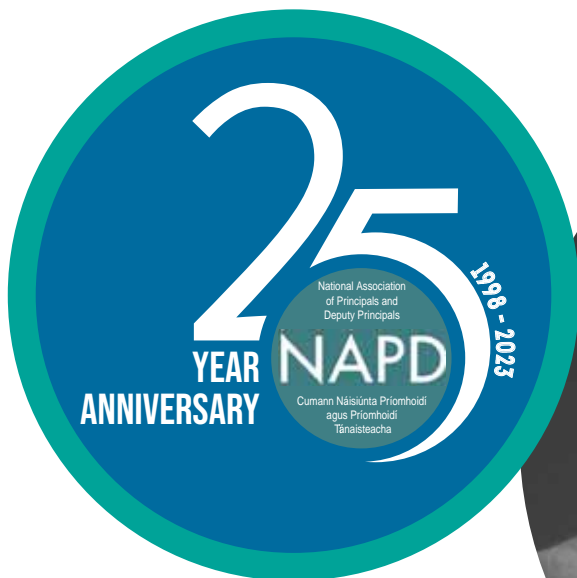
What was for me didn't pass me! It has been a privilege.

Clive Byrne is a former Principal of St Mary's College, Rathmines, Dublin. He retired as NAPD Director in 2021.



TIM GERAGHTY

President 2009-2010



“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times” - Charles Dicken’s opening sentence to *A Tale of Two Cities*’ is probably a fair reflection of my year as President of NAPD in 2009/10.

Remember:

- Salary cuts of up to 15% in Budget 2010
- The moratorium on Posts of Responsibility
- The establishment of NAMA
- Income Levies
- Bank Guarantees
- Austerity Budgets

I recollect observing in one of my presidential reflections for the Executive Report, precursor to Leader, that it seemed as if nature itself was in sympathy with the economic plight of our land. Do you recall the November rains of 2009, the highest ever recorded and the consequent severe

flooding? Then there were the eruptions of Eyjafjallajökull in Iceland which caused enormous disruption to air travel across western and northern Europe over an initial period of six days in April and into May 2010.

Throughout that year NAPD remained steadfastly focussed on its mission:

- To provide a united voice nationally for Principals and Deputy Principals on issues of common concern
- To promote the interests and welfare of Principals and Deputy Principals

It formed alliances with the management bodies and the Post Primary Education Forum and lobbied

incessantly to highlight the impact of the loss of middle management capacity and the high volume of retirements among Principals and Deputy Principals. The ASTI and TUI played their part in wresting concessions from the government which resulted in the Croke Park Agreement. It was the least worst option on offer, with government commitments on the pupil teacher ratio, salary stability until 2014, continued payment of increments, retirement on pre-cut salary up to 2011 and a moratorium on Posts of Responsibility.

The one-day strike in December 2009 had highlighted the unique position of Principals and Deputy Principals when industrial action takes place. While many school leaders are members of the teacher unions, our role clearly transcends the teaching role: our responsibility for the welfare of students, our obligations to parents, our duty to all the staff employed in

school and our accountability to Boards of Management - all place a heavy burden on our shoulders, sometimes not widely appreciated.

Whilst dealing with the immediate, NAPD continued to plan for the future. The title of our symposium in February 2010 was *"Turning Challenges to Opportunities - Developing a Wider View of Educational Achievement"*. Professor Richard Pring posed the question *"What counts as an educated 19 years old in this day and age?"*

It is still a pertinent question today.

That February we initiated our first Education Law Seminar in conjunction with Legal Island in the Stillorgan Park Hotel, Dublin, a series which continues to provide invaluable legal insights to school leaders.

We also published our Three Year Strategic Plan 2010-2012. Its first objective *"The Promotion of Educational Leadership"* was to have a seminal influence in the establishment of the Centre of School Leadership.

NAPD also took the initiative in working with GLEN - Gay and Lesbian Equality Network - in developing guidelines for schools on how the inclusion of LGBT students should be fostered and given practical recognition in key policy areas.

We had been awarded the International Conference of Principals (ICP) Convention for 2013. Intensive work had begun with a working title *"From Ogham stone to iPhone"* and a draft programme and list of possible speakers compiled. The new Convention Centre in Dublin's dockland had been booked and we were determined to showcase Irish Education to the world, despite our economic woes. Sadly, a subsequent decision by the ICP executive deprived us of that opportunity.

In December 2009 NAPD signed contracts to purchase our current Head Office and we moved in to our new home in January 2010. It was a signal accomplishment for a young organisation.

I was also privileged to be a judge on

“ It was an extraordinary privilege to be President of NAPD and the morning after Conference I received news that Anne and I had a grandson, Jack. Such joy! ”

the Pramerica Spirit of Community Awards for the first time to witness the selfless generosity of so many fine young people in our care.

The theme of Conference 2010 was *'Ireland's Education System - Is there a better way?'* Keynote speakers were:

- Professor Ferdinand Von Prondinski, DCU asked *"Why stop at Junior Cert"*, making the case for far reaching second level reform
- Professor Richard Pring, Emeritus Professor of Educational Studies, University of Oxford, emphasised the need for a wider vision of teaching and learning
- Harold Hislop, the newly appointed visionary Chief Inspector, presented on Management, Leadership and Learning - the reform of Whole School Evaluation in post-primary schools.

Conference also acknowledged the retirement two giants on the Irish Educational Stage, Eamon Stack, Chief Inspector and John White, General Secretary, ASTI.

At the beginning of the year Mary Hanley, always a wonderful mentor, had phoned me to wish me well and to assure me I would really enjoy the year - and I did.

It was an extraordinary privilege to be President of NAPD and the morning after Conference I received news that Anne and I had a grandson, Jack. Such joy!

As I reflect on what I had written to

celebrate *"Fiche Bliain ag Fás"*, I recollect T.S Eliot's opening to Little Gidding in the Fourt Quartets:

*"We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time"*

The terrible weather we experienced in 2009/10 we now see as a part of a climate emergency. Today, the DE has a new Chief Inspector and a new Secretary General and NAPD has a new Director, each of whom will explore the education and social challenges and opportunities with fresh eyes.

The case made by Professor Ferdinand Von Prondinski for far reaching second level reform, Professor Richard Pring's passionate pleas for a wider vision of teaching and learning and the need to develop a sustainable model of school leadership still require fresh, creative and innovative approaches.

Most of all I remember the warm collegiality of executive meetings. The founding Director, Mary McGlynn, her successor, Clive Byrne and the Presidents of the early years all fostered open and honest debate, as befitted a professional association of school leaders. It was often vigorous but never adversarial. It was a model of leadership I aspired to.

Consequently, as I worked with executive colleagues to faithfully represent members' interests at a difficult time, I remember my year as President as being the best of times even in the worst of times.

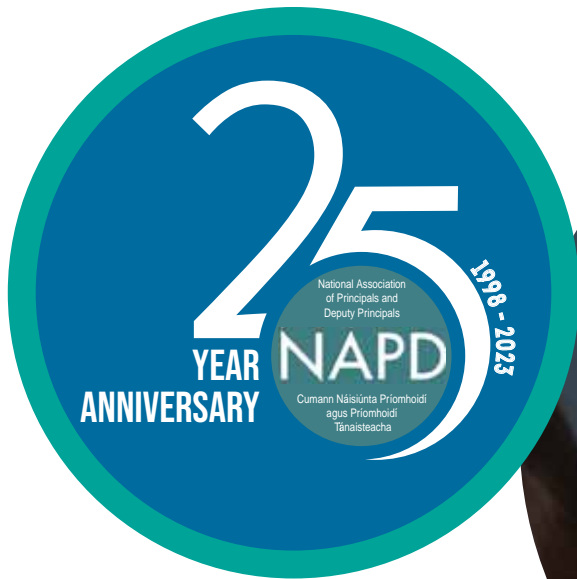
Tim Geraghty

retired as Principal of St. Tiernan's Community School, Balally, Dublin in 2011. He retired as NAPD Deputy Director in 2021.



PADRAIG FLANAGAN

President 2013-2014



On a rainy night in Templeglantine I attended my first NAPD regional meeting. The local committee was formed that night by the five attendees – demonstrating then, as now, that “decisions are made by those who turn up”. The following month I attended my first NAPD Conference in Killarney. I knew nobody and felt like a new first year student in secondary school. However, I was strangely renewed and invigorated following the Conference and I very quickly realised that embracing NAPD would facilitate meeting other school leaders outside of my own sector – a simple but crucial realisation.

Twenty years of local and national involvement with NAPD has followed. I was deeply honoured to serve as President and to seize the opportunity to apologise to the Minister for all the “convenience we cause”. I have been privileged to work with great people from all over the country, with Executive and Directors who celebrate and share school leadership and whose positivity never fails to lift the spirits.

NAPD Conference speakers have always inspired me. I recall countless brilliant key note speakers in Killarney, Kilkenny and Galway none more so than the late Aidan Halligan who was then the Assistant National Director of the NHS in the UK. His powerful and evocative address was deeply moving and was testament to the universality of good leadership.

Very enjoyable trips to Scotland,

Finland, Croatia and Australia frequently made me realise how lucky we are in Irish education – meeting with colleagues from all over the world who were overcoming significant challenges such as poverty and war and always seeking to improve their leadership skills.

I am delighted to have been involved with CSL from the very outset. It has been a wonderful success and is a key component in ensuring that our noble profession continues to attract and retain school leaders of the highest calibre. Likewise, I have also enjoyed my involvement with NCSE and espousing a key NAPD message of inclusivity.

I recall great nights in Galway with Region 6 colleagues when we celebrated and shared leadership. Wonderful times were enjoyed in Killarney with my Region 7 friends –

great craic but then “that is how the light gets in”. Educational discourse interspersed with reflections on Munster rugby, sulky racing, Bandon lunch menus and Skibbereen yachts – what else would you be talking about?

I was privileged to work with good people from management, parents, unions and the department – all representing different constituencies but all having the same agenda of trying to improve Irish education.

I recall many enjoyable soirees over the years, many of which meant I did not always get to bed by ‘quarter past’. Enthusiastic renditions of ‘An Poc ar Buile’ and ‘Joyce the Librarian’ were always more enjoyable in the wee hours.

NAPD is as important and relevant as ever. However, unlike the earlier years, educational leadership is now a crowded arena. Our most distinctive features are our cross sectoral foundations and our appreciation of the challenge of leadership at Principal and Deputy Principal level. These features are the basis for ongoing

“ **NAPD is as important and relevant as ever. However, unlike the earlier years, educational leadership is now a crowded arena. Our most distinctive features are our cross sectoral foundations and our appreciation of the challenge of leadership at Principal and Deputy Principal level.** ”

NAPD relevance and need cultivation at local and regional level.

The challenge for all of us is to lead learning and teaching, whilst all the time cultivating distributed and sustainable leadership. NAPD has to enable all school leaders to successfully negotiate this challenge if we are to lead schools of the future.

Long may school leaders appreciate the necessity of supporting and learning from each other. The camaraderie and bonhomie that characterise our gatherings is a key attraction of NAPD and is so important in what can be a lonely job.

Tending to our own wellbeing is a prerequisite to looking after the wellbeing of others. NAPD has played a major role for me in that respect ... that and chatting with Trigger on our Maigne-side meanders.

Padraig Flanagan is Principal of Castletroy College in Limerick



A lone walker on the ledge

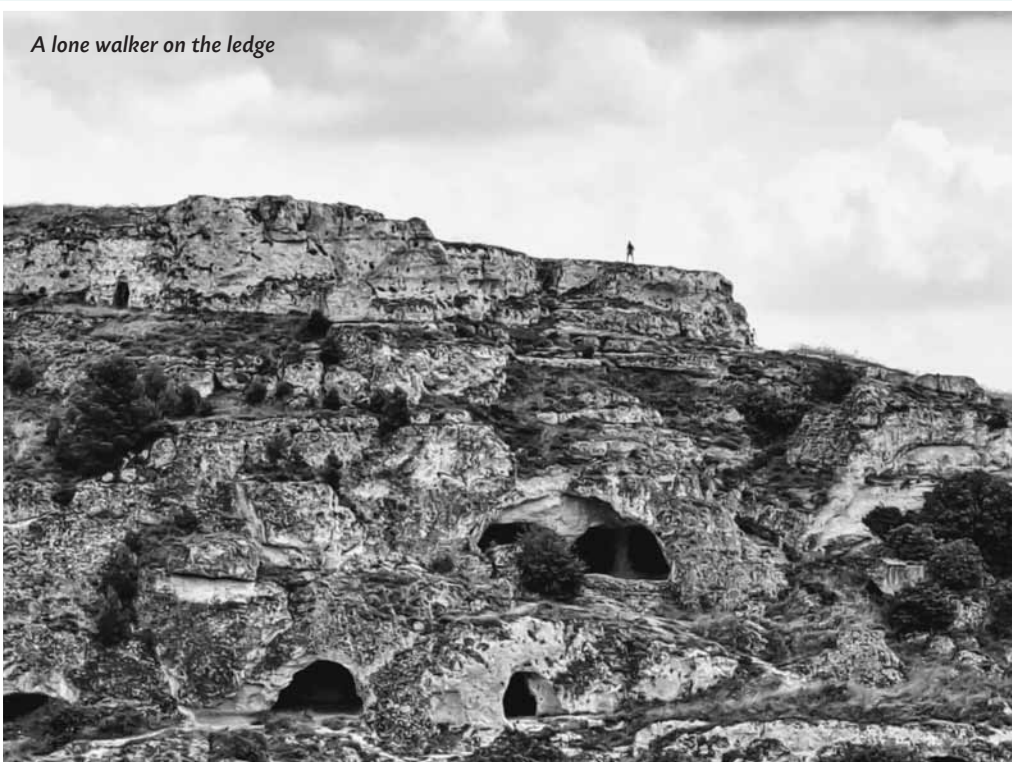


Photo by Barry O’Callaghan, June 2023

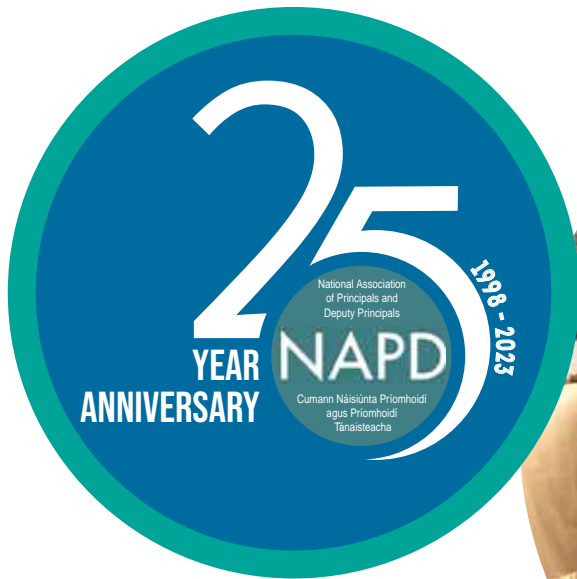
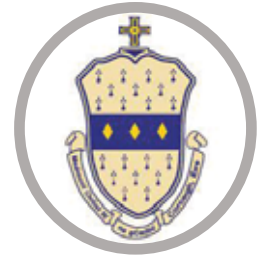
Matera, in the Basilicata region of southern Italy, is claimed to be the third-oldest continually inhabited settlement in the world after Aleppo and Jericho. It has been home to people for at least 9,000 years.

In 1950, the impoverished city was declared the “shame of Italy” by Prime Minister, Alcide de Gaspari. This culminated in the eviction of 15,000 residents who were living in the caves (known in Italian as the Sassi), in a deep ravine running through the city.

Matera is now a UNESCO World Heritage site and its Sassi have been re-inhabited with homes, museums, restaurants, hotels and artisan shops.

MARY KEANE

President 2017-2018



When I was appointed Deputy Principal in 2003, I received the most valuable advice from a NAPD colleague, Sean Crowley – to never miss Regional NAPD meetings and the annual Conference. I followed that advice to the day I retired in 2019.

Attending regional meetings helped me immensely in my leadership journey, through the professional support and advice from more experienced colleagues. Meetings afforded the opportunity to network with colleagues from the three different sectors and this enriched our professional conversations and debates. There was also great comradery and banter at these meetings and the most notable aspect was that it was a safe place to discuss any professional issue or concerns.

I served for many years on the organising committee of Region 7 and learned that the local support

reflected the support that head office was offering to all NAPD members by focusing on the health and well-being of members.

I was very honoured to be elected to the National Executive as the rep for Region 7. I served two terms on the Executive and I began to appreciate the stalwart work that was done by Director Clive Byrne. At Executive meetings I was amazed at the number of meetings, formal and informal that Clive attended on the behalf of the members. It was only whilst being a member of the Executive that I began to understand the benefit of these 'side-bar' meetings. Issues affecting all three sectors from all regions were

discussed and action plans devised to address members' concerns.

What always amazed me was the high esteem that the DE held for NAPD and for Clive. I remember senior DE officials coming to one of our Executive meetings to hear our concerns about increasing workload and to listen to our suggestions to address these issues.

It is reassuring that the new Director, Paul Crone is continuing and expanding the work of NAPD on behalf of all the members on these very important matters.

I was honoured to be elected President from 2017 to 2018. During my time as President-elect and as President, I witnessed great developments in the structure of NAPD. One of these was the DE granting of a Deputy Director, which greatly helped with the workload at

head office. This was a clear recognition from the DE of the work of NAPD in supporting school leaders. Past-President Paul Byrne was appointed to this new role and he worked closely with Clive in further developing the supports offered by NAPD.

During this period there was an acknowledgment that schools had become very complex places dealing with challenges of societal changes, advances in technology, changes in pedagogy, effects of globalization, demographic changes, increased autonomy and robust accountability processes. The role of the school leader has greatly expanded. Other challenges included the pace of change, initiative overload, legislation and legal compliance, safeguarding and protection, administrative requirements, staff management, teacher professional development, building a collaborative culture amongst teachers, resource development, facilities maintenance and the emphasis on outcome and evaluation.

Together, NAPD and IPPN began to look at ways to address these issues and after several consultations with the DE, the Centre for School Leadership was set up. This was one of the most exciting developments that occurred during my time on the Executive. It was a watershed moment to bring both the Primary and Post Primary sectors together to provide professional support for new school leaders and to address the sustainability of the role.

Providing coaching and mentoring for school leaders was a momentous development on the leadership landscape. As Principal, I signed up for a coach and was amazed at what the process taught me about myself and how it helped me to further work on developing my leadership skills.

“ **Providing coaching and mentoring for school leaders was a momentous development on the leadership landscape. As Principal, I signed up for a coach and was amazed at what the process taught me about myself and how it helped me to further work on developing my leadership skills.** ”

I served on the steering committee of CSL representing NAPD, from its inception until the final meeting that was held this year, with CSL now being subsumed into OIDE. I hope that the constructive work of team at CSL can continue to develop in this new entity.

Past President, Michael McCann, set up mentoring for NAPD Principals in their second year and for Deputies in their first year. Since Michael retired, Máire Ni Bhróithe and myself continue this work which is an invaluable support for new members.

Around my time as President there was great concern around teacher supply, and we made a presentation to the Oireachtas, along with other education partners, on this continuing issue for schools. NAPD is still working with DE on how best to address this.

The highlight of the NAPD year was the Conference, which involved structured planning and the President's speech. The 2018 conference was held in the Galmont Hotel in Galway, attended by the then Minister Mr Joe McHugh. The preparation of the speech took many weeks so as to ensure all current issues were addressed.

Another significant development that occurred during my time on the Executive was the provision of access to legal support for members. This arose from the many enquiries to head office from members experiencing legal issues in their schools and from

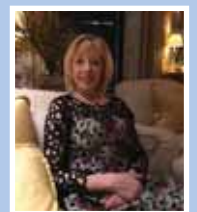
the fact that management bodies supported only Boards of Management. This was a game changer for members.

I found that most learning came from moving outside one's comfort zone and not becoming insular. NAPD supported this sentiment and since we are members of ESHA and ICP, I travelled to many ESHA conferences and to one ICP conference and had the opportunity to listen to renowned inspirational speakers. Many of these speakers were subsequently invited to speak at our National and Regional Conferences.

At the very young age of 25, NAPD has achieved and developed numerous supports to help senior leadership teams in Irish second level schools. May it continue to progress and develop into the future and to promote education as a public good.

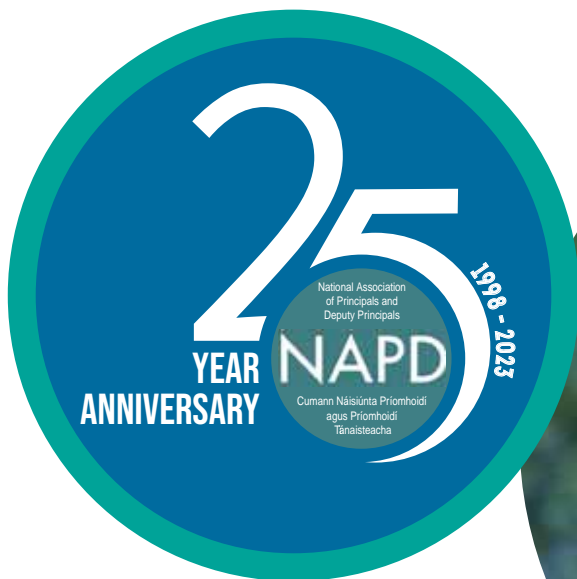
Mary Keane

retired as
Principal of
Christ King
Girls'
Secondary
School, Cork in
2019.



RACHEL O'CONNOR

President 2021-2022



As President of NAPD during 2021- 2022 and as a member of National executive since 2017 it was my privilege to meet many school leaders around the country, especially as we opened our society again post-Covid. The success of NAPD lies with all of those who have served as Presidents, Directors, Deputy Directors, Executive Members, Committees, in head office and beyond. As President, you take the baton and build on the work being done by so many before.

NAPD continues to grow from strength to strength. As a valued education partner, it is imperative that the message we deliver is that of our members. 2021 saw a rigorous review begin throughout the Association. Months of meetings at national level, regional level, school level, internal and external focus groups, surveys, and questionnaires culminated in the Statement of Strategy for the Association 2022-2027.

It became abundantly clear through the feedback received that members

wanted NAPD to be a strong voice for them. With the highest membership since its establishment, NAPD will continue to advocate for school leaders across all sectors under the four pillars of Profile, People, Process and Pedagogy.

Our core belief is that school leadership is at the centre of all that is positive and successful in Irish education and our vision is to connect and unite the voice of Principals and Deputy Principals. Together we continue to build an Association that is

member-led and responsive to the current and emerging needs of school leaders.

For my presidential address at NAPD conference 2022, I thought to myself – if I had the opportunity and privilege to speak directly to our Minister what I would say? What could I possibly highlight out of all that needed to be addressed?

And then I decided, since this was in my 10th year as Principal, having served as a Deputy prior to that, that maybe I should just highlight the goodwill that sustains the system. This might just highlight yet again just how fragile the current system was.

The Cambridge dictionary simply defines goodwill as 'kindly and helpful feelings'. There is a wonderful quote from Richelle Goodrich "*There is strength in numbers, yes, but even more so in collective goodwill. For those*

endeavours are supported by mighty forces unseen".

It was my hope that what I spoke to at Conference reflected the reality of what was happening on the ground, the holes in the dam being plugged by the goodwill of school leaders, and to highlight that without interventions from the Department, the continued erosion of that goodwill could be very damaging to school leaders and ultimately our school communities.

NAPD continues to be solution-focussed and has worked collaboratively with the DE since 2019 following an invitation from the then Minister for Education. We have worked incredibly hard on identifying solutions to the unsustainable administrative burden on school leaders. After many years work, a proposal, backed up by reliable research, was made to the Department.

This proposal is not a stop gap, a plug nor a patch on a sore, but one which would lead to real system changes. It would ensure sustainability within the school leadership structure; it would

make the post of Principal more attractive and it would ensure stronger retention in the role. It would also result in less human error and far more efficiency in the system.

We have shown incredible goodwill and determination to do what is right for our school communities – often to our own detriment. We must prioritise our own wellbeing.

Rasheed Ogunlaru gives us sage advice when saying that you only ever have three things:


1. Yourself, your wellbeing and mindset
2. Your life network, resources and resourcefulness
3. Your reputation and goodwill

“ NAPD continues to be solution-focussed and has worked collaboratively with the DE since 2019 following an invitation from the then Minister for Education. We have worked incredibly hard on identifying solutions to the unsustainable administrative burden on school leaders. ”

3. Your reputation and goodwill


He concluded that *"we must treasure and tend the first. It is advised that we value, support and build the second. And mindfully, wisely ensure that the third is always in credit"*.

Rachel O'Connor is Deputy Director of NAPD. She is a former Principal of Ramsgrange Community School, Wexford



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Tribute to **PAUL BYRNE**

Paul Crone, Director, makes a presentation to Paul Byrne to mark his retirements as Deputy Director.



Petra van Haren ESHA Director

Several years ago, I had a deep conversation with Paul at a European School Heads Association meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia. It struck me how deep his commitment was for making a difference in the lives of young people, which came straight from his heart.

Next to that, he showed a great breath of knowledge about education and leadership. People like Paul are needed in education to close the gap between the academic world and the reality of our schools. Research gives so much valuable information and tools, but to make it practical and effective, we need people who can connect both ways.

The way Paul talked about Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) offered proof of his professionalism and passion as school leader. I saw Paul become energised on seeing a fine piece of woodwork or instruments to craft wood. It showed that his roots as teacher never left him, nor did his passion for the job.

Being president of the Dutch School Heads Association, AVS, I wanted to share Paul's story with my Dutch colleagues - a school head who actually implemented PBS and what came on his path.

Therefore, I invited Paul to come over to our national conference in Nieuwegein, which he accepted. His

workshop was one of the best received ones of that day. What shall I say? Once a teacher - always a teacher! Sharing experiences and learning together, while always being supportive of people and for the job, characterises Paul.

I am very sure that both NAPD and his school will look back on working with him as time spent with a true professional, with his educational heart in the right place. Personally, I hope to see a lot more of Paul and be able to count on both his experience and passion for education.

David Ruddy Mason, Hayes & Curran LLP

I have known Paul for many years, initially through the offices of IPPN, when we worked with NAPD on different projects. Paul has an incredible energy and capacity for work. His unique background of having served in the Defence Forces was clearly demonstrated through his organisational skills.

Equally, Paul's other background role as a Deputy Principal was enlightening and enriched contributions. He valued relationships and this was evident in forging the close links that both Paul and Clive Byrne and latterly Paul Crone had with their primary school counterparts, IPPN.

Another facet of Paul's work as Deputy Director was on the international stage. I was amazed with the contacts and influence he had through ICP and

ESHA. Paul, being a practical man, would harness learning and best practice with a view to improving the lot of school leaders.

Above all, Paul has left a significant footprint on the Irish educational system in his understated manner. On a personal level, Paul is good company and is a skilled fisherman.

I have no doubt that he will continue to both contribute to the educational system and hopefully to get more of a chance to cast a line.

Shay Bannon

Chair NAPD Welfare Committee

It is an honour to acknowledge Paul Byrne's sterling work as Assistant Director and to thank him for his outstanding leadership role in shaping and growing NAPD.

I have had the privilege of working closely with Paul for many years and have always enjoyed his company and friendship. He was encouraging, supportive, unfailingly courteous a man of great integrity and decency – what you see, hear and get is always the same.

One of his great traits is his generosity, giving of himself and of his time. Paul allowed those with responsibilities to carry out these roles without interference and his genuine interest in people along with his "can do" attitude marked him as a special colleague.

He is an excellent administrator, reliable, talented and a very positive person who has given selflessly of his time and expertise to enhance the image and reputation of NAPD at home and abroad. His attention to detail and planning is exceptional, as are his organisational skills.

He was totally committed to working on behalf of school leaders. Paul has a mischievous sense of humour and a great ability to stay calm even in the most difficult of situations. As Deputy Director he was always open to innovative change and to creative new ideas, while at the same time being willing to accommodate and listen to all points of view. His time in NAPD has been characterised by hard work, empathy, creativity and above all his ability to use his experience and knowledge to inform new initiatives and projects. He ensured too that the Association remained faithful to its aims and objectives, despite the challenges faced as President and as Deputy Director.

Paul's role and his position as Vice President of European School Heads Association (ESHA) and his involvement with the International Confederation of Principals (ICP) has ensured that NAPD has built relationships and connections with school leadership organisations globally. This has provided NAPD with access to information and research from the wider global community.

Paul's work with ESHA has provided him with opportunities to travel to several interesting European cities. He enjoyed both the social and professional aspects of ESHA, which provided opportunities to influence and shape the diverse European leadership scene.

Paul will no doubt rise to the challenges in the new phase in his life. Knowing how well he served the Irish Education system, he will find many new interests and challenges in the years to come. I am reminded of the advice of C.S Lewis who said "you are never too old to set a new goal or dream a new dream".

I hope that he will continue to enjoy his passion for fishing and that he will also get the time to experience the joys of being on the Shannon with his new boat. I wish Paul and Siobhán well as they plan for the future and I hope that they get to enjoy long years of new experiences together.

Maria Doyle

Europe Representative ICP

As Paul steps down as NAPD Deputy Director, it is my pleasure to reflect on his professional influence as a national and international education leader.

From the very early days of meeting Paul at NAPD & IPPN 'Think Tanks', he impressed me as a reflective, dedicated and, above all, kind school leader with a gritty determination to make a difference to the lives of Principals and Deputy Principals both at home and abroad.

As a quietly spoken, yet influential leader of learning, Paul has always been known to meticulously research topics that he feels impact on the lived experience of school leaders. No doubt this steely determination was recognised by colleagues at a very early stage in his career as Deputy Principal at the Community School in Carrick-on-Shannon.

Paul and I became President of our respective organisations (IPPN & NAPD) in 2015 and my abiding memory of the NAPD Conference that year was not just his delivery of his Presidential speech but when he rose to a personal challenge to incorporate the word 'mule' into the complex text. It would be worthwhile asking Paul the history behind this request!

Paul has represented NAPD at numerous ICP (International Confederation of Principals) events and has always supported me personally throughout my long journey with this amazing organisation. My current role as Europe Representative on the ICP Executive has been made all the richer by Paul's inputs at meetings and his good humour and quirky wit at networking events. Paul was honoured to accepted a special commendation on behalf of his great friend and associate Clive Byrne in Singapore at ICP Council in 2022.

Paul's attention to detail as he researched numerous papers and publications, aligned to his close relationship with practitioners at the coal face made him the ideal candidate to become the first Deputy Director of NAPD in 2019. Paul has worked tirelessly in this role from the beginning and has made the position essential to the long-term viability of NAPD.

He has brought this vast experience as Deputy Director to the international stage at both ICP and ESHA events, which has enriched both organisations considerably.

On a personal note, I consider Paul to be an influencer in the truest sense of the word, a respected confidant and above all a valued friend. I sincerely hope that whatever he chooses as his next chapter will be exciting and satisfying.

Clive Byrne, former NAPD Director

Following in the Shoes of a Fisherman

In every organisation, there are individuals who leave an indelible mark on the organisation, their colleagues and the work they do. Paul Byrne is one such individual - a true visionary, leader, colleague and friend to the many Principals and Deputy Principals he encountered both as President and as Deputy Director of NAPD. I got to know Paul first as a member of the Executive and then when he was President. I subsequently enjoyed working closely as an effective team with him as Deputy Director. In all those roles, he exemplified dedication, passion and an unwavering commitment to the betterment of education and to the empowerment of school leaders.

Paul is an expert angler and is often to be found on the banks of a river mulling over the day's events, pitting his wits and skills against a fine salmon or brown trout. I have benefitted from his expertise, I might add. As any angler knows, when you are fishing, you will spend far more time waiting than you will reeling in fish. You must wait, observe and read your surroundings to succeed; you must be determined, organised and adventurous.

Paul brought these qualities to his role as Deputy Principal of Carrick-on-Shannon Community School. His achievements stemmed from his ability to understand the waters he was fishing in. His previous experiences in the Defence Forces honed his ability to understand all aspects of a problem, test scenarios and work out the logistics of attaining his goal, while keeping all sides informed and convinced of his competence, integrity and sound judgement.

When appointed Deputy Director, he brought a fresh perspective and a determination to drive positive change. His ability to identify key issues and to develop innovative solutions have been instrumental in shaping NAPD's strategic direction.

Through his leadership he fostered a culture of collaboration, ensuring the voices of school leaders are heard and valued. Paul routinely - and successfully - engaged with all education partners including the Department of Education, the three post-primary Management Bodies, both second level Teacher Unions, the Irish Second-level Students Union and the National Parents' Council.

He was willing to play the long game - skills he uses to good effect while fishing. NAPD continues to benefit from his involvement as an Executive Board member of the European School Heads' Association (ESHA) and as a Council member of the International Confederation of Principals (ICP).

One of the hallmarks of Paul's tenure has been his unwavering commitment to advocating for the role and needs of school leaders. He has been a tireless champion for fair and equitable policies, seeking to ensure that leaders had the necessary resources and supports to fulfill their roles. His efforts have not only elevated the status of school leaders but has also empowered them to create positive change within their school communities.

The NAPD is a founding partner of the Centre for School Leadership along with the Department of Education and the Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN). Paul was a member of the Steering Committee of CSL and actively participated in relevant discussions with the leadership arm of the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), the Inspectorate and the Teaching Council to promote school leadership.

Recognising the importance of continuous learning and growth, Paul has played a pivotal role in enhancing professional development opportunities for school leaders. He has spearheaded initiatives that provide access to cutting edge research best practices and networking opportunities.

Given his earlier background in the army, Paul contacted Capt. David Marquet, the captain of a US navy nuclear submarine and author of *Turn the Ship Around* - an account of transformative change on his submarine to drive *USS Sante Fe* from a poorly performing nuclear submarine to the best in the fleet, by making small incremental changes over time. Paul saw the resonance with education and convinced David be a keynote speaker at Annual Conference.

By fostering a culture of lifelong learning at regional Meitheals, he empowered school leaders to stay abreast of emerging trends and lead their schools with confidence and competence.

Paul ensured that the voice of the NAPD was heard at the highest levels. These partnerships have influenced policy changes and enabled continued expansion of funding for education and improved support systems for school leaders. He presented submissions on behalf of NAPD to the Joint Oireachtas Committees on issues as diverse as Reduced School Timetables and Reopening Schools after Covid.

As Paul embarks on a new chapter in his professional journey, his legacy within Irish education and NAPD will endure. His passion, dedication and unwavering commitment to the betterment of education has left an indelible mark on our organisation. He has set a high standard and the Association's ability to inspire and empower school leaders will continue to shape the future of Irish education.

As he moves on, we celebrate his many remarkable contributions - in Carrick-on-Shannon, on the Executive, as Past President and as Deputy Director. His integrity, leadership, advocacy, and commitment to professional development has transformed the Irish education landscape and empowered school leaders.

Throughout his professional life, Paul's family has been a constant support. His wife Siobhán, daughters Lauren and Maria and the recent addition of his grandson Paddy mean the world to him.

On a personal note, while Director and since I retired, I very much appreciated his friendship, loyalty, wisdom and good humour. Though Paul's primary choice of recreation is solitary, he was, and remains, a team player.

It was a great pleasure to work with Paul and to count him as a friend.

Paul Crone, NAPD Director

NAPD to the Core

Paul Byrne was elected as Vice President in 2014, after spending a number of years as a valued member of the National Executive Committee. This was a culmination of the high esteem in which he was held by colleagues. In 2015-2016, he became only the 4th Deputy Principal in the history of NAPD to hold the prestigious role as President. This was to be the springboard for his journey with NAPD.

Since his first involvement with NAPD, Paul has devoted his time and experience to support school leaders. He was appointed as the first Deputy Director in April 2018. Since his appointment, he has worked tirelessly on a full-time basis for the NAPD members, only rarely taking some time out to wrestle with the odd bull trout on the rivers in Kilkenny and elsewhere.

Paul has his fingerprints on every NAPD initiative, from the legal indemnity, to the confidential support service, the workload and wellbeing campaign, the Regional Ambassador initiative and all of the NAPD publications as a valued member of the editorial team. However, his most significant legacy lies in our international relationships and the work he has done on behalf of NAPD members.

Paul was appointed Vice-President of ESHA in 2018 and has represented Ireland admirably on a European stage and on a wider stage with the International Confederation of Principals (ICP), where he brought an international learning and perspectives to the Irish context. This has been instrumental in raising the profile of NAPD among other education stakeholders, at home and abroad, and most importantly with national policy makers and specifically with the Department of Education.

I first met Paul in 1987 at the first-year induction programme in Thomond College in Limerick, as we both began our training as woodwork teachers. He had a significant head start on me, having served his time in the Defence Forces as a carpenter before starting teacher training.

This experiential learning Paul brought into the course earned him a year less study (something the Teaching

Council are renewing their interest in). His professional learning and life experience meant he brought a healthy dose of common sense and realism to every situation.

We subsequently regularly crossed paths at NAPD events. I was delighted when he was appointed Deputy Director, since his commitment and dedication to NAPD was always evident. When I became Director, Paul was an immense support to me. He was the corporate memory of NAPD and his positive can-do attitude was key to the continuity of the NAPD.

We soldiered together for the past two years and in that short time we have developed a five-year Statement of Strategy to ensure NAPD's development. We have grown the confidential support service for members to build the leadership capacity in our system and we have cemented the place that NAPD occupies as a key stakeholder in education.

Paul has been a leader for leaders. As Deputy Director he represented school leaders and used his voice on their behalf. He supported us all through COVID and drove NAPD forward positively and proactively. As he embraces the next challenges in his professional career, from myself and on behalf of all school leaders past and present, I wish to thank Paul for his service to NAPD, for his support to me personally and for his support for school leaders. The contribution that he has made in NAPD ensures a solid foundation for us to continue to build on. For that, I will always be grateful.

I have only recently learned that in Ireland there are many different types of trout, including two of the most common, brown trout and rainbow trout, with rainbow being more desirable on a plate. May Paul's future endeavours lead to many delicious rainbow trout enjoyed with friends and colleagues in NAPD.

Paul's place in NAPD, with his photo on the wall in Head Office, as 17th President and first Deputy Director, is preserved. His legacy will live on; he can be immensely proud of all he has achieved.

He is indeed NAPD to the core. I look forward to toasting his contribution to NAPD.

Páirc Clerkin

CEO, Irish Primary Principals Network

During his time as NAPD Deputy Director and also in his role as ESHA Board member, Paul has collaborated with IPPN on a number of important projects, including Sustainable Leadership, research on wellbeing of school leaders, the development of Sub Seeker and the EducationPosts.ie recruitment portal.

He also collaborated with IPPN as advocacy on key leadership and management issues affecting Principals and Deputy Principals at both primary and post-primary levels.

Paul has been a true ally to IPPN and to all school leaders and we are indebted to him for his professionalism and collegiality. We wish him the very best for the future.

Tim Geraghty

Former NAPD Deputy Director

Paul Byrne's contribution to NAPD has been immense. His commitment to the wellbeing and welfare of school leaders has been selfless and generous.

During the Covid crisis he worked tirelessly with the then Director, Clive Byrne, to convey to the Department of Education (DE) the complexity of issues facing all in post primary schools. He instinctively understood the challenges students faced, parents' anxieties, teachers' apprehensions and the immeasurable responsibility placed on school leaders.

He reimagined and facilitated virtual regional meetings, which enabled a flow of communication between the DE, the State Examinations Commission and NAPD members. This was instrumental in creating acceptable national solutions to the learning and assessment problems faced by the entire second level system. Clive and Paul were powerfully present at every significant meeting of the partners as they grappled with the unparalleled impact of the pandemic. Their unique ability to reflect the concerns and advice of NAPD members informed the major decisions which had to be taken.

For this, Irish education owes a great debt of gratitude to Clive and Paul.

Paul was never self-aggrandising. His mission was to serve the interests of second level school leaders and to promote their voice in every forum. As only the third Deputy Principal to be elected President he had made an indelible mark on the Association; his Conference address will long be remembered for its insight, humour and wisdom. I can clearly remember senior DE officials smiling ruefully in acknowledgement as Paul, light heartedly but seriously, enumerated the diverse duties school leaders had to discharge.

It was an inspired decision to appoint Paul as full-time Deputy Director when the post was sanctioned by the DE. Deputy Principals make up over half the membership of NAPD and it was a fitting recognition that we are an Association of Principals and Deputy Principals that the senior leadership team of NAPD should comprise a Principal and a Deputy Principal. There was also now sectoral diversity.

Paul's contribution has been wide ranging. He was critically involved in establishing a national database of substitute teachers, which the Teaching Council was delighted to repurpose as it struggled to find solutions to teacher shortages. He was a highly regarded member of the Corporate Advisory Board and a valued member of the executive board of the European School Heads' Association. His many presentations to European audiences raised the

profile of Irish school leaders and an appreciation of the quality of Irish teaching.

Paul's acumen and affability made him a welcome and influential participant in every meeting of stakeholders be they management bodies, parents' organisations, unions, other professional associations or statutory bodies.

A strong supporter of research on leadership, he actively promoted the Philip Riley Research on leadership, both as Deputy Director and as a member of the Welfare Committee under the Chair, Shay Bannon, the founding President of NAPD.

Prior to the final pre-Covid 2020 Symposium, "*Wellbeing, Workload and Work-life Balance*" he worked closely with Maynooth University on significant research on wellbeing among school leaders. The results of the research "*The Role of Wellbeing in Sustainable School Leadership*" were presented by Dr Yolanta Burke. Together with Paul's paper on "*A European Perspective*" and other guest speakers from industry, public service and academia, the Symposium extended and developed the conversation on school leadership.

That conversation had been given fresh impetus by the establishment of the DE/NAPD Leadership working group by the then Minister for Education Joe McHugh, as a result of Kieran Golden's Presidential address to conference in 2018. The working group had begun to map the diversity, complexity and sometimes unrelenting demands of the role of school leader and had started to explore how together we might reimagine and construct a more sustainable model.

While Paul was an integral part of this committee, he was acutely aware that, in the now, school leaders, on occasion, need urgent expert advice and counsel. He arranged the NAPD telephone response so that any query was immediately directed to an appropriate adviser. He was a strong supporter of the Regional Ambassador programme and ensured appropriate recruitment and CPD.

He leaves a legacy beyond measure. He has raised awareness of the capacity and authority of the role of the Deputy Principal in the Senior Leadership Team and the parity of esteem extended by Director Clive Byrne to him on his appointment was a model for SLTs in our schools.

Paul was that unique individual who had vision and could always see the bigger picture but also had meticulous attention to detail. His loss to NAPD is incalculable.

I know that I am at one with all members of NAPD in thanking him for his unstinting service and in wishing him, his wife Siobhán, daughters Lauren, and Maria and grandson Paddy every happiness and fulfilment as he hopefully continues to contribute to education and the development of a sustainable model of school leadership.

Shane Foley NAPD President

I am very pleased, as President of NAPD, to recognise and honour the service Paul has given to our organisation.

He is a man who embodies the essence of leadership, honesty, kindness and friendship. As a leader, Paul's mere presence commands respect and inspiration. In his role as Deputy Director Paul has led not by authority, but through his actions and the integrity he upholds.

Honesty and integrity define every facet of Paul's character. These, for me, have been his key qualities, since they create an atmosphere of trust and authenticity around him, allowing others to confide in him without hesitation.

Beyond his professional roles, Paul is a genuinely kind individual. He takes an interest in people and is very observant when it comes to bringing new people into the fold. I have observed over the years that these acts of kindness are genuine and are driven by an innate desire to make people feel at ease. I know that so many members of

our national Executive will have had this same experience of Paul.

At the core of his being is his role as a friend. His friendships are built on loyalty, empathy and a genuine interest in others' well-being. When I was elected Vice-President, it was Paul who first came to me to offer advice and support. He was the one that made himself available to help me understand the role and what the demands were to do the job effectively.

I should also add that in the last year he has also shown exceptional patience while waiting for me to send on the articles for the magazine. This, however, is one that he will not get to proof in advance!

In a world where true leadership, honesty, kindness and genuine friendship can be hard to find, it is a pleasure to write this tribute to Paul.

Thank you, Paul, for all that you have done for me in my role - your support has been much appreciated.

Go forth and enjoy the next chapter.

FÉILTE 2023 – A Celebration of Education and Teaching Excellence – Avril Lennon



Since 2013, the Teaching Council has been extending a warm invitation to teachers, school leaders and education stakeholders to gather at FÉILTE to celebrate the remarkable profession and innovations happening in Irish schools every day.

What is FÉILTE?

FÉILTE, "Festival of Education In Learning and Teaching Excellence", a celebration of teaching excellence in Ireland, takes place every October to coincide with World Teachers' Day.

Purpose

FÉILTE celebrates teachers and the teaching profession. It provides an opportunity for teachers from primary, post-primary, and Further Education to come together, be inspired, reflect on their practice, connect with colleagues and reignite their passion for teaching and learning.

Reasons to attend?

- Choose from 16 workshops, almost 40 exhibitor showcases, and 13 Gasta sessions

- Panel discussion on Creativity in Action
- See the local talents in the Laois Creative Hub
- Drop into the NQTea chat space
- Visit the Teaching Council stand where we will be happy to answer questions
- Attendance can count towards Croke Park hours (subject to approval by your Principal)
- Newly Qualified Teachers will meet one of the criteria for Droichead, since this event qualifies as a professional learning activity
- Enjoy a complimentary lunch and network with colleagues

Where and When

Holy Family Junior and Senior Schools in Portlaoise on Saturday, 7 October, from 9am to 2:30pm.

Theme

'Creativity in Action' will be explored through various workshops, showcases, panel discussions and other activities led by fellow teachers.

Programme

Available on the Teaching Council website closer to the date. Updates will also be available on our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages.

Tickets

Available on Eventbrite. A fee of €10, refunded upon attendance at the event, is charged to allow us to manage attendance numbers for health and safety reasons.

FÉILTE promises to be a fantastic occasion for teachers to come together, learn, share experiences and celebrate their profession, while exploring "Creativity in Action".

For more information contact Avril Lennon at communications@teachingcouncil.ie





Retirement *here we come!*

Maureen Kenneally
Colaiste Mhuire,
Cork



Career snapshot

In 1983, I completed a BA in Maths and Geography at UCC and a year later the H Dip in Education. In the mid-80s computing was still in its infancy. With a degree in Maths, I was interested in gaining a skill base in computing. I was offered and accepted a place on a graduate course in computer programming with FÁS in Dublin. The skills and training I received during this six month course became central to my career path. I began working on vocational training projects which were community focused and aimed at providing training in ICT and project skills to a series of groups of young unemployed people.

In 1993, I graduated with a Diploma in Training and Development, which led to me taking up a role on the EU funded project "Euroform". This involved working with partners in France, the Netherlands, Germany and the UK. We worked in collaboration, sharing and adopting new vocational training practices. On completion of this project, I was offered a teaching position in Colaiste Muire Secondary



School in Cobh Co Cork. I taught ICT, Maths and Geography for twenty years before being appointed Deputy Principal. I spent nine years in this position. During this time, I created and developed a strong middle management team and brought a series of innovations to daily school practices.

I nurtured an ethos of collaboration, encouraging the formation of communities of practice. I have a strong belief that learning is central to growth in leadership. In November 2022, having completed a five-year doctoral degree in education with specialism in leadership, I successfully defended my doctoral research thesis "Supporting Teachers capacity in the pedagogic use of ICT, An Action Research Case Study", I was awarded a Doctorate in Education by Maynooth University.

Best part of being a Deputy Principal

It was an honour to be the Deputy Principal of our school. Having been a teacher for twenty years in my school, the opportunity of entering into senior management provided me, in collaboration with the Principal, a chance to innovate and lead change, while supporting and encouraging our teaching staff.

Toughest part of being Deputy Principal

As the only Deputy Principal, there was a constant demand on my resources. At times this was exhausting. This motivated me, in the early years in my role, to focus on developing and encouraging a networked leadership

model within staff. This approach to leadership resulted in me working collaboratively with a wonderful group of year head teachers who provided me with much needed support and assistance.

Best moments

I have many proud moments during my time as Deputy Principal. In my role as a senior school leader in 2017, I undertook a Leaving Cert Student evaluation survey to learn about student experience in our school. This survey identified an issue regarding the use of ICT in teaching and learning, where students highlighted their wish to have greater use of ICT throughout school practices.

I communicated this finding to staff and the outcome led to the formation of an ICT committee, a group of teachers, who were committed to addressing this issue. I coordinated this committee and this led to the school's adoption of Microsoft Office 365 as a school ICT framework in 2018. This committee led the roll out of the tools of Office 365 over the next two years. This path of action meant that when schools closed in March 2020 due to COVID, our staff and students were well positioned to transfer teaching and learning online with little difficulty.

Overall, what I am most proud of is the form of leadership I adopted. As John Maxwell put it "*Leadership is not about titles, positions or flowcharts. It is about one life influencing another*". For me, this was central to my leadership. Over my time in senior leadership I encouraged and supported teachers to strive and take opportunities to develop leadership skills and take opportunities that arose. This culminated in a strong leadership ethos in our school which has greatly benefited, and added to, the overall successes in teaching and learning in our school.

Biggest mistakes

I am sure I made mistakes over my nine years in senior management, however there are none that come to mind that I would consider as big mistakes. When I was appointed to the role of Deputy Principal, the Principal, who had been the Deputy Principal in our school, was also appointed at the same time. We formed a new senior management team. We both learned and adapted together to our new roles. He was generous in providing me with the support and guidance I needed in established myself and, no doubt, when making mistakes in my new role.

Words/phrases staff might use to describe me

Empathetic, Collaborative, Innovative.

Best advice given to you as Deputy Principal (as it happens, this is the same advice I would give to a newly appointed Deputy Principal)

Look for help or support when times get tough. Be genuine in your leadership. In difficult times be honest. Always be aware of the impact your interactions have on members of staff and the student body.

Retirement Plans

The Doctorate mentioned above has provided me with a number of opportunities which I have decided to pursue, hence the early retirement.

Olive Laffoy
Dominican College,
Griffith Avenue, Dublin



Career snapshot

I began my career in 1986 as a Science teacher at Dominican College Griffith Avenue, where I taught Science at Junior level and Biology and Chemistry at Senior level. Before sustainability was widely spoken about, I introduced horticulture as part of our Transition Year programme in 1992.

After 19 wonderful years I moved to St. Finian's Community College in Swords to take up a new role as Deputy Principal. I spent three very enjoyable years there until I was appointed Principal of a new greenfield site in Donabate. I was appointed Principal Dominican College Griffith Avenue in 2013, returning back to where I had started. Now, 10 years later the time has come to retire, having spent a total of 29 years in Griffith Avenue. Each one on them were a pleasure and an honour.

Best part of being Principal

The best part of being Principal is working with the people I encounter every day. It is the students, teachers, the parents and the Dominican Religious Congregation that makes this school the most enjoyable and the friendliest of places. It's all about developing those relationships. Having those sit-down chats with the students and teachers every day - that's special. The privilege of knowing you can make a difference in the lives of others.

Toughest part of being Principal

Without doubt, the toughest part of being a Principal is being the bearer of bad news. That terrible walk from a classroom when you collect an innocent child knowing that their lives are about to change forever because they are minutes away from being told that a parent or sibling has just died. That never gets easier. The sudden death of a colleague during school time stays with you forever. Yet these deeply sad experiences create moments of great unity as a community and the formation of bonds that bind us together forever.

Best moments

Receiving a positive MML/WSE reports is very encouraging to all in the school - when our students said *'that they feel*

very safe and well cared for, they are proud of their school, and that there is a good atmosphere in the school! That's a very good and proud day for everyone in the school. The icing on the cake was that *'the quality of school leadership and management is very good'*. Yes, that was a very good moment.

Every year at the sixth year graduation, it is hard not to be proud of our students who look back on their school journey with smiles and great memories. To be able to play a role in forming these memories, that's a proud moment. Whenever one of our students engage in random spontaneous acts of kindness, that makes me very proud. Really, there have been so many proud moments....

Biggest mistakes

Trying to stretch my teacher allocation beyond its elastic limit, in order to retain teachers, then worrying in September if I have cut things too tight. It always worked out! And bright young teachers received good starts to their careers.

Words/phrases staff might use to describe me

I actually asked staff about this (just to be accurate). Recurring words were loyal, supportive, kind. I'm happy with these!

Best advice given to you as Principal

Be decisive, people expect that. Do not make assumptions and just do your best every day!

Key advice to somebody becoming Principal

The most important piece of advice I could give to a new Principal is not to lose focus on what matters. It is always people that matter most. Spend time with students and teachers, meet and greet them every morning and try to say goodbye to them when school is over every day, especially on a Friday. Stop for a chat at lunchtime, visit them in their classrooms, have an open door policy, be seen (and heard) on the corridor and get to know people at a personal level, that is what makes the job special. As the job becomes more and more administrative, never lose focus on what matters most – people.

Retirement plans

I have not yet had time to give this too much consideration. I have been involved in education at many different levels including third level. I will most likely continue with this interest for a while longer. I will also continue to work in the area of educational leadership in different roles and with different post graduate courses, sharing my own experiences with future leaders and assisting where I can.

Of course I will get to spend more time the garden and in garden centres. I am looking forward to travel to my favourite spots along the Mediterranean coastline. Learn Italian. No absolute plans ... let it happen.

Padraig Nolan

**Scoil Mhuire Community School,
Clane, Kildare**



Career snapshot

In January 1988, I was appointed Business and Mathematics teacher in St Patrick's Classical School in Navan. In September 1999 I became Deputy Principal in St Patrick's Community College Naas and was appointed Principal of Scoil Mhuire Community School Clane in January 2007. I'm now retiring after nearly 17 years as Principal.

Best Part of Being Principal

I have been very lucky to work closely with so many good people and together we made many small changes which improved the school for everyone.

Toughest Part of Being a Principal

Solving problems that you did not create yourself.
Communicating difficult decisions.

Best Moments

Graduation night every year was a huge highlight. Sharing in the extra-curricular success of students and teachers. It is always very nice to meet a past student or parent who is complementary about the school. To a lesser extent the improvement in the school facilities.

Biggest Mistakes

Placing cameras in the toilets – the mistake was not communicating to students and parents.

Words/phrases staff might use to describe me

Fair, practical and approachable.

Best advice given to you as a Principal

Never deal with difficult issues on a Friday.

Key advice to somebody becoming Principals

Make sure you can delegate well.

Retirement plans

More time with the family, more golf and more farming.

Anthony Doogan
Moville Community College,
Donegal



Career snapshot

I started work as a volunteer teacher in Chikwawa, Malawi, Central Africa in 1983. This was followed by one year in Knockbeg College, eight years in Coolmine Community School and almost seven years in St. Peter's College, Dunboyne. As one of the first cohort teachers in Dunboyne, I was well prepared to become the first Principal of a new school in Moville, Co. Donegal. After twenty-two years as Principal (three on secondment with Junior Cycle for Teachers), I have completed forty years in education and have seen the light. As I pass the weight of responsibility to Caroline, my successor, I have begun to feel light also.

Best part of being Principal

Seeing young people reach their potential is undoubtedly the highlight of my Principalship. Being part of the facilitation to create the time and space where a teenager excels in academia or in extra or co-curricular activities makes working with young people so rewarding. I hope I have given teachers the time and confidence to develop themselves and by extension the students in their care to excel in sport, on the stage, writing poetry and prose and many other activities.

Taking All-Ireland trophies back to Moville in Basketball, Soccer and Judo come to mind. So does winning Presspass awards this year among many other writing achievements in English and Irish.

Toughest part of being Principal

Balancing the needs and desires of staff, students, parents and community was tough. Covid was tougher. But when a staff member lost a two-year-old in July, we lost a student to a road traffic accident in August and two staff members lost their eight-year-old in October the nadir appeared near.

Best moments

School musicals show staff and students at their cooperative best. Music, Drama, Dance, Art, Construction, Engineering, Business, Film and SEN classes and teachers join together to create an atmosphere that survives well beyond the performance. Taking some productions to a thousand-seater auditorium in Derry gave many a confidence to tread boards professionally. Similarly, the Christmas Carol Service creates a celebration of the Christmas season that engrosses the school community. Many sporting achievements come to mind. To have a small part in past pupils becoming All-Stars is very rewarding.

Biggest mistakes

If 5-10% of the school community don't think that you are making a big mistake today, then you are not doing your job right. Just hope that the 5-10% keep changing from day to day.

I make the biggest mistake because I have the most power!

Words/phrases staff might use to describe me

My two phrases to staff are: "Life is easy" and "Nothing to do and all day to do it". I'm not sure if they believe me!

Best advice given to you as Principal

A Principal must live in the gray. Nothing is ever black and white.

Key advice to somebody becoming Principal

You are a gardener. All the roses around you have to bloom.

Retirement plans

Montreal in the Fall to visit my son. Coaching Gaelic football will never be far away. Inishowen Traditional Music Project will continue to be a part of me. Is Cathaoirleach mé de Gaelscoil Cois Feabhail. Tá baint agam le IDP fosta. Seeing my children environmentaleadai and doogandesign (Insta handles) in real life is a top priority.

One Good School Prioritising Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

Alan Mongey



At a time when mental health concerns among students are on the rise, schools play a crucial role in supporting their wellbeing. Recognizing this pressing need, we, like many other schools, have looked to implement a programme to foster a healthy environment conducive to learning and personal growth.

In 2021 we reviewed the *Junior cycle Wellbeing Guidelines* and set about identifying how we, as a school, would implement these guidelines in the areas of Culture, Relationships, Policy and Planning and Curriculum.

This led us to consider the One Good School (OGS) programme, devised by Jigsaw.

- School mission and ethos
- Physical and social environment
- Classroom culture
- Teaching, learning and assessment

- Student/teacher relationships
- Peer relationships
- Student voice
- Partnerships with parents/guardians, community and wider supports



- CSPE, PE and SPHE
- Guidance
- Other subjects and learning experiences
- Extra-curricular and co-curricular learning

- School policies
- School self-evaluation
- Subject and whole-school planning
- CPD planning

Four Aspects of Wellbeing in Schools, Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines, 2021.

The main reason we adopted OGS was that it offered and followed through on a promise of a “comprehensive and integrated approach to mental health promotion in schools requires initiatives and supports for young people, teachers, parents and school leadership teams”.

CREATING A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

At the heart of the OGS initiative in our school was a working group, comprising dedicated staff, students and parents which, in partnering with Jigsaw and regional support representatives, conducted surveys developed action plans and strategies and implemented changes.

By involving students and parents, we created an open and supportive environment that empowered individuals to actively participate in the decision-making process. Too often, lip service is given to parent and student representation.

The National Strategy on Childrens and Young People's Participation in Decision Making 2015-2020 (Department of Children and Youth Affairs) and the Child and Youth Participation strategy 2019-2023 (TUSLA-Child and Family Agency 2019) both state that "True participation is attained through engagement in dialogue, in an interactive, on-going and inclusive process", the One Good School Team model and supports provided by Jigsaw ensure students and parents are included in the process in a true and meaningful way.



SCAN ME



SCAN ME

RAISING AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS

Jigsaw's OGS Initiative provided excellent resources and templates to support us in raising awareness, to assist in connecting the whole school community to our goals and to keep all involved in what was happening, as we progressed through the initial stages.

This was done using surveys to gain a comprehensive understanding of the mental health needs of the school community. Surveys were distributed to students, parents and staff members, enabling them to provide valuable feedback on their experiences and to highlight areas of concern. By gathering this data, we identified prevalent issues and tailor our approach accordingly.

DEVELOPING ACTION PLANS

Data obtained from surveys, initial meetings of the OGS Team and engagement with Jigsaw served as the foundation for developing action plans that addressed the specific mental health needs identified within the school community.

The OGS Team analysed the survey results and collaboratively formulated strategies and interventions that were both effective and practical. These action plans provided a roadmap for implementing targeted initiatives aimed at promoting mental health and wellbeing.

Theses action plans were incorporated into our School Improvement Plan and then implemented . This was not a separate initiative but was central to the



The OGS initiative is an attempt to prioritise student mental health and wellbeing within school settings.

SIP process and will continue to inform it in the years ahead.

RESPONSIVE APPROACH: ADAPTING TO EMERGING NEEDS AND INTEGRATION INTO EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Recognizing that mental health concerns are dynamic and ever-evolving, the OGS initiative ensured a responsive approach to cater to emerging needs. The working group remains attentive to the changing landscape of mental health within the school community and adapts its strategies accordingly. By being agile and flexible, the initiative can provide timely support to students and parents when they need it most.

To foster a holistic approach to mental health and wellbeing, the OGS initiative integrates its efforts into the school's Wellbeing Programme but more specifically in to our SPHE curriculum and the topics for our school assemblies. We changed the sequence of our schemes of work and planned



By fostering a nurturing environment that values mental health, OGS is paving the way for a brighter, healthier future for students, which will allow them to thrive academically, emotionally and socially.

content for year assemblies to respond to issues that emerged during the course of the year.

By embedding mental health awareness, resilience-building and coping strategies into the curriculum, the initiative ensures that students receive consistent support throughout their educational journey. This approach helps to create a school culture which values mental health and promotes emotional well-being.

JIGSAW AND ONE GOOD SCHOOL: EMPOWERING THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Jigsaw played a pivotal role in providing resources and online training to support the mental health needs of staff, students and parents. By empowering all stakeholders, the initiative established a collaborative network of support that extends beyond the school's physical boundaries.

CONCLUSION

The OGS initiative is an attempt to prioritise student mental health and wellbeing within school settings. By establishing a collaborative working group, conducting surveys, developing action plans and partnering with Jigsaw, this initiative has created a comprehensive framework that addresses the diverse needs of students, staff and parents.

By fostering a nurturing environment that values mental health, OGS is paving the way for a brighter, healthier future for students, which will allow them to thrive academically, emotionally and socially.

Alan Mongey is

Principal of Coláiste Bhaile Chláir, Claregalway, Galway.



New Year Resolutions for 2023-2024



David Ruddy
B.L.

Now that you have hit the ground running, here are some issues that you might wish to consider during the rest of the term and indeed year.

MANAGING UNDERPERFORMANCE

Every staff member has a duty to be professional. When someone falls below an acceptable level of performance, they ought to be supported in the first instance. There can be genuine reasons which account for the underperformance. Informally addressing the issue generally works well.

However, in some circumstances the disciplinary procedures need to be invoked to address issues. Always familiarise yourself with the relevant 2018 circular for teachers – Circular 48 (ETB) or Circular 49 (non ETB) and the 2011 Circular 72 for SNAs.

The courts take the view that students, having a constitutional right to an education, are better in school than being out of school. If parents cannot agree as to which school the student should attend, the solution should be sought in the family law courts.

Equally, you should seek appropriate advice in advance of initiating formal disciplinary procedures.

ADMISSIONS/ENROLMENT

It is that time of year when the Board must publish its annual Admissions Notice. By its nature this notice will vary in content from year to year. If any amendments (no matter how slight) are to be made to the admissions policy, the Board must seek patron approval in advance. Be aware that some parents in family law disputes may seek to embroil the school by objecting to the decision of the school to accept an application for admission of a student by the other parent.

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MANAGING BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN

Schools have experienced a transformation over the last 20 years in the provision of education for students with complex special needs. These students would ordinarily have attended special schools in the past or may have only

Unsurprisingly, school leaders feel greatly challenged in dealing with Behaviours of Concern. A poll of participants conducted by Mason, Hayes & Curran during a webinar on "Managing Behaviours of Concern" in 2021 indicated that managing challenging behaviour was an issue for 75% of participants, 66% did not feel confident in dealing with these behaviours. A further 81% did not have a Behaviour of Concern policy.

availed of limited schooling or home schooling. Mainstream schools now have typically several special classes.

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WHY HAVE A BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN POLICY?

The Code of Behaviour on its own may not be enough to protect your school. Section 29 committees and courts hearing appeals against the suspension/expulsion of students look for evidence as to how schools manage these behaviours. Have schools gone over, above, and beyond to access supports? Schools that have a Behaviour of Concern policy and training are in a much stronger position to limit liability. Equally, when there are assaults on staff, a Board of Management with such a policy in place is in much better standing in defending claims than a Board that does not.

WHAT SHOULD A BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN POLICY CONTAIN?

In the first instance, the policy needs to define what constitutes a serious and imminent risk.

Examples may be of a student physically attacking another or about to, putting themselves in danger, carrying a weapon with intent on using violence or throwing furniture near others.

The policy should not be a stand-alone document. It ought to reference the child Safeguarding Statement, Code of Behaviour and Health and Safety policy. The use of a physical intervention may be necessary in exceptional circumstances to prevent an injury to a student or others. Physical intervention needs to be defined. The protocol for such an intervention should be referenced.

What happens when there is a serious incident or indeed a near miss? One of the essential ingredients of your policy ought to be the recording and reporting. Reporting can reduce the risk/severity of future incidents by providing information/data to inform risk assessments and behaviour support plans. Recurring incidents have a negative impact on the student, staff members and school. Reporting provides a clear, factual account of what happened to all stakeholders including parents and board of managements.

It helps safeguard students, staff and limits liability in the event of a legal challenge. It's essential to find out what's going wrong and what can be done to reduce the risk of re-occurrence. Reporting can inform the Behaviour Management Plan for students, herby improving outcomes.

Critically, it also demonstrates the willingness of the school to learn from incidents and adapt the environment and/or actions of staff. Too often, schools just pick up and carry on. Whilst we cannot eliminate risk, we can reduce it.

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CONCLUSION

Its in the interests of everyone that you have a successful year. While there is no doubt that the role of school leader has become more complex, there are lots of supports and expertise available to support you – *'a problem shared is a problem halved'*.

I hope you all have a great year. If you have any queries on the above, contact me at druddy@mhc.ie



David Ruddy works with Mason, Hayes & Curran LLP as an adviser and trainer. For further information on this article, contact David at E: druddy@mhc.ie.

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT SEX

Ciara Lynch



In 2020, one in seven cases of detected sexual violence involved a victim and suspected offender under 18 years. According to CSO figures, in 2022 just over half of all victims of reported incidents of sexual offences were aged under 18 when the incident occurred, and 12% of suspected offenders of suspected offenders were also aged under 18 years at the time of the incident. Children at Risk in Ireland recently highlighted research from the UK which shows a link between children's exposure to pornography and the sexual abuse of other children. This is very sobering data.



We in Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, and indeed many other advocacy bodies at the frontline of supporting survivors of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, feel it is crucial that young people receive proper, well-informed, age-appropriate information on core life issues like consent and healthy relationships.

If they are not getting this information from the educators in their lives – their parents, teachers and youth workers, they can - and will - find other sources of information. According to Youth Work Ireland data, a sizeable proportion of young people believe internet pornography is a useful source of information about sex. This can have damaging and sometimes devastating consequences for themselves and their peers.

Access to these alternative sources is all too easy. Smart devices, owned by 92% of children aged 8-12 years, offer always-on access to the Internet and, almost inevitably, to pornography and other, often violent, revenue-driven and misogynistic content. With no indication that porn does not portray real life situations, it can strongly shape their understanding of how to behave in real-life relationships and sexual encounters.

And it does. DRCC created our own trauma-informed Youth Programmes some years ago, in response to demand from educators working in various youth and educational settings. These programmes cover topics like critical engagement with media, including pornography, and how to deal with issues of sexual violence. Those we train tell us that the young people they work with believe they must follow heavily stereotyped, porn-influenced roles and practices in their interactions. What they are seeing online influences their self-esteem, body image and sexual scripts, and leads them to carry out and accept behaviour they are not always comfortable with.



When finally given the space and time, many are, understandably, angry and disappointed to learn that the information they sourced themselves, in the absence of solid, caring and factual information at home or in school, is wrong-headed and damaging. Some disclose that they have been sexually assaulted by peers. Sexual offences data also tells a story, as we indicate above.

We hear from educators that young people want access to proper guidance in a safe space, not just on the mechanics of sex, but on what makes a healthy relationship and understanding consent. Ideally, children and young people will discuss and learn about these issues at home. We Consent campaign aims to equip and enable people of all ages to have those important conversations in a safe, informed way.



But people in Ireland also believe our state education system is one of the most appropriate places for children and young people to gain such critical formation, as our research shows: An overwhelming 84% of people support sex education in schools.

In May 2023, The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment published its updated Social, Personal and Health Education curriculum for Junior Cycle covering sexual consent and healthy relationships, as well as the potential impact of popular culture and the online world on young people.



Now the Senior Cycle programme is under review and the NCCA is inviting views via public consultation from educators, parents and students themselves until 18 October. Reactions to this development range from warm welcome – including from DRCC – to moral outrage.



Despite what some would have you believe, young people will not be studying porn or be pressured into unwanted acts as part of the curriculum. But they very well might be coerced and pressured into such activities if they don't have a strong awareness of their own boundaries, or what constitutes healthy relationships or how to articulate – or accept – a 'no' in a sexual encounter.

Feedback from educators has been extremely insightful and valuable as we update and develop our two trauma-informed youth programmes, *BodyRight* and *Let's Get Real*. DRCC recently hosted an alumni event for youth programme facilitators where we learned about issues facing the young people they work with, including:



- an increase in 'influencers' communicating harmful, misogynistic and sexist views which instil toxic masculinity
- a lack of positive male role models for young people, especially boys
- Internet safety, appropriate online behaviour, safety around messaging
- Issues with self-esteem and self-worth
- Easy access to adult, pornographic material on their phones as well as the lure and glamorisation of online platforms where images and videos are shared in exchange for money (e.g. Only Fans)
- The subsequent influence of pornography on what young people think sex is – their sexual scripts are being shaped by what they see in pornography
- Lack of knowledge of what constitutes sexual violence - i.e. the various forms that sexual violence can take. Sexual harassment, in particular, is seen as 'normal' and is largely accepted by young people
- Not knowing the difference between healthy and unhealthy behaviour in relationships

- Not knowing how to help or support someone affected by toxic behaviours or sexual violence
- The need for parents, teachers and all educators to be more aware of the issues facing young people and to be able to have ongoing conversations about these important topics with young people.

While young people need solid information and support about what they are encountering in real life and popular culture, the teachers and youth workers who work with them also want and need guidance on how to effectively teach and deal with such topics. These are not always easy matters to discuss, particularly if you have never had appropriate training.

They mention other barriers such as not being given either the adequate time to do the training themselves or enough space in timetables to facilitate delivery. They tell us that they need support from leadership and management in schools and other youth / educational settings – at least from the school Principal or Deputy Principal, but ideally, from the whole staff. And in reality, the number of educators who currently deliver such programmes represent only a fraction of the number actually needed to deliver this vital formation to all our young people.

If we want this important content to be delivered to young people in an effective way, we must give adequate support to those delivering it.

Given our mission to prevent the harm and heal the trauma caused by sexual violence, DRCC believes that the new Relationship & Sex Education programmes will have a positive impact. Young people are going to come across harmful content throughout their lives. They need to understand how to critically engage with it, so they can make good, healthy decisions.

With sexual violence at epidemic rates in our society, it is beyond urgent that we equip our young people – all our young people – with the skills and information they need to be full, safe and empowered members of our society. Let's not deny another generation of our young people access to adequate, appropriate and accessible sex education. Anything less is a disservice to them and another barrier to a safer, healthier society for all.

For more information, email us at etadmin@rcc.ie or visit www.drcc.ie.



Ciara Lynch is Education and Training Officer with the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, primarily delivering training in the *BodyRight* and *Let's Get Real* youth programmes. She also works part-time as a Psychotherapist.

ANYONE FOR CLASSICS?

Louise Maguire

"You teach Latin? That's a Dublin job if ever I heard one". A comedically perfect response, but not an unexpected one. The perception of the Classical subjects as elite, stuffy, old-fashioned and irrelevant still has traction, but with new courses, committed teachers, the support of a new Access Classics programme, invested school leaders and an explosion of ancient mythology in popular culture, the tide is turning.

Firstly, let's dispel the popular conception that the Classical Subjects are 'only for private schools'. September returns for 2022 show the following spread of schools with at least one of the Classical subjects: 31 fee-charging schools, 6 DEIS schools and 48 non-fee-charging. We have also noticed a trend whereby Classics/Classical Studies is being offered in new Educate Together schools.

This is a welcome, but unsurprising, development. The subjects' specifications and content offer an excellent base from which to explore ideas of ethics, philosophy, society and the context of the Ancient World and, as such, can offer an excellent curricular alternative where Religion is not offered.

Access Classics is an outreach programme run by Dr Bridget Martin in University College Dublin. Dr Martin started this project with the intention of bringing Classical Studies and the Classical languages to more, and a wider-range of, students. It allows students to visit the UCD Classical Museum, take part in hands-on sessions, dip their toes into the Classical languages and much more.

Sessions can take place remotely and the team is sometimes able to visit schools. The pilot programme took place in St. Aidan's Community School in Tallaght, Holy Faith Secondary School in Clontarf, and Blackrock College



The success of the pilot programme allowed Dr Martin and her team to expand to other schools. To date, they have connected with over 40 schools and this year alone students have visited from as far away as Wexford and Leitrim.

One of the most attractive elements of the Access Classics programme for school leaders is likely to be the Transition Year module. This resource is provided free of charge on their website. Any school wishing to trial Classical Studies or to bring it to a wider audience through their Transition Year programme can download the PowerPoint, along with the teachers' manual, and begin to plan.



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The manual provides guidance and reassurance to teachers who may not have taught the subject before (or not in many years) and the team has provided a student certificate that can be downloaded at the end of the course. Dr Martin urges teachers to adapt the fully editable resource to suit their needs or to simply use it as a plug in and play.

The new Junior Cycle programme is now fully embedded and we have had two full exam sittings. This new Common



The subjects' specifications and content offer an excellent base from which to explore ideas of ethics, philosophy, society and the context of the Ancient World and, as such, can offer an excellent curricular alternative where Religion is not offered.

Level subject combines the old subjects Classical Studies, Latin and Greek. All learners take Strand 1, which covers myth and daily life in Ancient Rome and Greece. They can then choose Strand 2, the Classical Studies route, where they learn about the city of Rome and the Homeric World, or Strand 3, where they can study Latin or Greek.

For readers currently feeling a cold chill remembering learning reams of poetry for the old language courses, the new approach to the languages is completely different. While they still allow for a great challenge for strong learners, the common level approach has allowed much greater differentiation and accessibility. We have moved completely away from rote learning and into a space where students can learn to parse, decode, and translate at a level in line with other Junior Cycle languages. Anecdotally, this seems to be greatly improving retention into Senior Cycle.

Students and teachers alike are particularly in favour of CBA1, which allows students to retell or recreate a myth in any format they wish. We have had everything from traditional written accounts to graphic novels, jigsaws, digital creations, myths relocated to Irish secondary schools, sculptures and an 80s Synth Rock ballad about Athena and Arachne.

The final exam is a well laid out and multi-faceted, which allows for differentiation across the whole spectrum of candidates. The SEC has provided an excellent layout which builds from lower to higher order tasks and which is also visually inviting and reassuring.

Teachers have welcomed the new Senior Cycle Classical Studies course. With a 2-and-a-half-hour exam, it is much more student friendly. There are two essays and source questions at Higher level and one essay and source questions at Ordinary level. In addition, a newly introduced research essay, carrying 20%, gives students a real insight into the research side of studying the ancient world.

The new specification also includes many interesting topics that were not in the old course, for instance Roman gladiatorial games and Julius Caesar. Subject teachers are reporting a significant increase in the number of incoming fifth years who have chosen to study the subject for their Leaving Certificate.

The Classical Association of Ireland – Teachers (CAI-T) played an active role in the development of the new Junior and Senior Cycle courses and is working with the NCCA on the final leg of the new Senior Cycle Latin and Ancient Greek courses. The CAI-T was originally formed as a branch of the wider Classical Association, but over the years has developed into an active and expansive subject Association.

In addition to providing representatives for Syllabus development groups, we advocate for the subjects and our students, work closely with the universities, host an annual conference and organise ongoing CPD for our members. We are a growing but tightly-knit group and have a formal online forum for sharing resources and ideas, as well as for allowing members to ask questions. This is backed up by an honest and generous approach to sharing ideas,

concerns, methodologies and insight into classroom experiences, which is particularly important since the majority of our members are the only teacher of a classical subject in their school.

In addition, we run free, online courses for teachers wishing to learn or refresh Latin or Ancient Greek. We can be contacted at classicsteachers@gmail.com for more information.

Teachers needing support who are not in touch with the Association can make contact by email, or on the CAI-T website.



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We are committed to supporting schools to bring these wonderful subjects to new learners. If school leaders need help in recruiting teachers or PMEs for the Classical Subjects please contact us at classicsteachers@gmail.com.

As a final word from the Association; this year some students taking Leaving Certificate Classical Studies outside of school ran into difficulty when it came to their school signing off on their research projects. Please contact us if you have any students in this position – we will be happy to help in any way we can.

The Access Classics Team is conducting a survey of Classics (including Classical Studies, Latin and Ancient Greek) in second-level schools in Ireland. The survey aims to:

1. Gain a greater understanding of the current landscape of Classics in second-level schools in Ireland (e.g. how many schools offer Classics in some form, how many students take Classics/Greek/Latin, how many schools offer Classics at TY level)
2. Gain a greater understanding of why second-level schools cannot/do not offer Classics
3. Gain a greater understanding of the impact of Access Classics, particularly the use of the Access Classics Transition Year Unit on Classical Studies

They would like feedback from school leaders. Information provided will be collated into a report which will be shared outside UCD Access Classics. All information will be anonymised.



Louise Maguire is the current chairperson of the *Classical Association of Ireland – Teachers*, the combined subject association for Classics, Classical Studies, Latin and Ancient Greek. Louise teaches in Blackrock College, Dublin.



Standing Up for LGBTQ+ Students

Stephen Cassidy



Belong To, the national organisation supporting LGBTQ+ youth across Ireland, is running its annual Stand Up Awareness Week, supported by the Department of Education, from 6 to 10 November 2023. Stand Up Awareness Week is a national LGBTQ+ anti-bullying week running in second-level schools, Youthreach centres and youth services across Ireland each November. At Belong To, we are proud to now be in our 14th year of running Stand Up Awareness Week and to have steadily increased the number of young people taking part year-on-year. It's a time to celebrate LGBTQ+ youth in all of their diversity and to come together in support of LGBTQ+ young people. The campaign also acknowledges the harms of anti-LGBTQ+ bullying and makes clear to young people that this behaviour is both serious and unacceptable.

During Stand Up Awareness Week, LGBTQ+ young people and their allies learn about LGBTQ+ identities, take part in LGBTQ+ solidarity actions and come together to create a safe and supportive environment for all young people.

We are proud that the Department of Education has funded and supported Stand Up Awareness Week for many years. The new national action plan on bullying,



Belong To, Naas Community College

Cineáltas, commits to the Department's continued support for Stand Up Awareness Week. The plan also recognises the importance of age-appropriate information on LGBTQ+ identities as a mechanism to prevent and address bullying.

This year, the theme of Stand Up Awareness Week is allyship. Everyone has a role to play in Stand Up Awareness Week, not just staff and young people who are LGBTQ+. We want to celebrate the allies who are an invaluable part of creating spaces where LGBTQ+ people are safe and supported to be themselves.

STAND UP AWARENESS WEEK OBJECTIVES

- Increase friendship and support of LGBTQ+ students by other students



Belong To, Scariff Community College

- Increase awareness of LGBTQ+ students among other students, teachers, Principals, Deputies and others in the school community
- Increase respect for diversity and LGBTQ+ identities
- Increase the likelihood that LGBTQ+ students will report bullying

In the 20 years since *Belong To* first opened our doors, we have seen huge changes for LGBTQ+ people in Ireland. When we were first established as a youth service in 2003, it was only ten years since the decriminalisation of homosexuality and just three years after new equality laws were introduced to protect LGBTQ+ people from discrimination in their workplaces and communities.

For many of us, the wonderful Marriage Equality referendum of 2015 doesn't feel too long ago. With this perspective, the steady rise in anti-LGBTQ+ hate, discrimination and violence we have seen across the globe in recent years feels shocking.

Sadly, for LGBTQ+ young people today, open homophobia, biphobia and transphobia has become the norm in their online worlds. As part of our *School Climate Survey*, *Belong To* asked LGBTQ+ students about their experiences with online anti-LGBTQ+ content. A shocking 87% of LGBTQ+ students had seen or experienced anti-LGBTQ+ hate and harassment online.

We have steadily seen this online hate translate to real-world violence in Ireland and further afield. This year, An Garda Síochána reported a 29% increase in recorded hate crimes and hate-related incidents. Targeting on the basis of sexual orientation was the second-highest recorded form of violence.

“Stand Up Awareness Week added an incredible energy to our school and left our students with a taste for social justice” - Peter, Class Teacher at Bishopstown Community School, Cork

LGBTQ+ STUDENTS' SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

Last year, we spoke to 1,208 LGBTQ+ second-level students living in Ireland as part our *School Climate Survey* with Columbia University. Our research shows that, in the 2021-2022 school year, among second-level LGBTQ+ students in Ireland:



Belong To, St Flannans College

- 76% feel unsafe at school
- 86% have been deliberately excluded by peers
- 69% heard other students make homophobic remarks
- 3 in 10 missed at least one school day in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable
- 1 in 10 is unsure of whether they will complete the Leaving Certificate
- 58% heard a school staff member make a homophobic remark



Belong To, North Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School

Although LGBTQ+ youth face many challenges, there are a number of actions that individual staff members, and their school, Youthreach centre or youth service, can take to support LGBTQ+ young people.

We were delighted to see that half of LGBTQ+ students who responded to our *School Climate Survey* could identify ten or more school staff members supportive of LGBTQ+ identities. Additionally, 99% of LGBTQ+ students in Ireland could identify at least one school staff member supportive of LGBTQ+ students. Our findings show that LGBTQ+ students who enjoy a higher level of staff support for LGBTQ+ identities, who are taught an inclusive curriculum and have staff who proactively intervene with homophobic remarks are:

- More likely to feel accepted by the student body
- More likely to feel like they belong in school
- Less likely to miss school days because of school safety

Stand Up Awareness Week is a great opportunity for all staff in schools to be visible in their support for their LGBTQ+ community.

STAND UP AWARENESS WEEK TRAINING – SEPTEMBER 2023

Schools can sign up for our training sessions starting 12 September where staff will be equipped with the tools and knowledge needed to feel confident to host Stand Up Awareness Week in their school.

This year, staff can avail of online or in-person training – whatever is most suitable. To secure a place, visit www.belongto.org/standup, call 01 670 6223, or Email: info@belongto.org.



When staff sign up, we will email them a link (for online sessions) or venue details (for in-person sessions) closer to the time. A €10 charge will apply to all training sessions. This small fee is to support our work with LGBTQ+ youth across Ireland.



Belong To,
Mount Temple
Comprehensive School



Belong To, Colaiste Iosef agus Ide Abbeyfeale

By participating in Stand Up Awareness Week, schools are taking an essential first step in creating an environment where LGBTQ+ young people feel safe to be who they are. Download resources including a guide, a toolkit and posters from www.belongto.org/standup.

We are here to support schools become safe, supportive spaces for LGBTQ+ students, allowing them to reach their full potential and realise their true selves.



Belong To, Loreto College, St Stephen's Green



Stephen Cassidy is the Education & Training Officer at Belong To, which works to support educators in schools and alternative education to create safe and supportive spaces for LGBTQ+ young people. Stephen can be reached at stephen@belongto.org

Builders or Breakers?

Zachary Walker

We are – all of us – builders and breakers. Each action, inaction and interaction provides us an opportunity to build or break. We either build people up or we break people down. All we have to do is choose.

Builders are those who make an effort to help others develop into their best self. A compliment here. A thank you there. A small word of encouragement when a friend or colleague is down. Admiration in front of others for a job well done. Seizing an opportunity to bring up a colleague in a positive light even when they are not in the room. A simple knowing smile when things are not going to plan and an offer to lend a hand.

Builders are constantly spending time helping people feel their best, to create environments that are positive, productive, inclusive and nurturing. We all experience tough times but some of us are fortunate to be supported by Builders and we become stronger simply because our self-esteem and confidence have been reinforced. Sometimes this is because of a builder's words; other times it is because of their actions.

Breakers, on the other hand, fracture people in ways both small and big. They can be like a bulldozer – with words or actions that metaphorically raze the earth. Or a slow drip of water that eventually leads to the erosion of a large rock. This can happen through feedback that is unnecessarily harsh or jokes that are always a bit too pointed. A look as they pass in the hallway. An email that never uses a first name. A constant stream of negativity on social media.

Breaking can also occur through omission – not speaking to people unless there is a problem. Ignoring individuals in meetings or not answering emails. Overlooking someone when others who are 'more important' are around. Breaking behaviours may not always be malicious or intended but it is the effect, not the intention, that matters in the context of interpersonal relationships.

There is the famous saying, "hurt people hurt people." Breakers are often those who have been broken – and they may not even recognize they are tearing others down.



It is important to note here that providing critical feedback, having a "rumble" as Brene Brown calls it, or delivering bad news does not have to be a breaking behaviour. Even these difficult interactions can be opportunities to build; in fact, some of the best building of trust happens when we are engaging in direct, honest ways. Uncomfortable truths, delivered with sensitivity and trust, can be both a cushion that comforts us and a cushion that props us up.

Being a leader who builds means that we prepare our words, our minds, and our hearts for those conversations, so that we can have them in the most constructive way possible.

We do not get to define ourselves as builders or breakers. Instead, those we interact with decide whether we are a builder or a breaker. We also don't get to decide if we are a role model, an expert, an ally – these are descriptors bestowed on us by our families, our friends, and our colleagues. But we can be conscious and self-aware of our behaviour, so that we have the best chance to build others up and be seen as a positive individual others want to help and be around.

Here are three questions to ask yourself when thinking about building or breaking:

1. What choice do you want to make? You have the power to build or to break with every interaction.
2. Are your jokes and "banter" usually at someone else's expense? Are you constantly "teasing" others? Have you had to say "I am sorry, I was just teasing!" very often?
3. How often do you give compliments or say thank you to others? Do all your colleagues, not just your closest ones, know what you appreciate about them? When is the last time you shared a thank you publicly with a colleague, being explicit about what you are thankful for?

As leaders, we have disproportionate power relative to our colleagues. Every word, every action, every movement is magnified – and the impact of those words and actions help those we are interacting with either become stronger or splinter just a bit more. We must always be conscious of our own behaviours to understand what we are doing.

Are we building or are we breaking? Would you want to work with you?

Zachary Walker is the Head of Department for the Department of Psychology and Human Development (PHD) at the University College London Institute of Education (IOE). He is a Senior Fellow with the Higher Education Academy. Zachary is recognised as an expert in individual and organisational learning performance. In the last ten years, Zachary has worked with educators and policymakers in more than 30 countries on learning, inclusive leadership and innovative practice. He also enjoys frozen yoga, tackle chess, and wrestling with rhinos.



An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta



Toirdealbhach Ó Lionáird

Súil siar ar Chomhdháil COGG: Do Phríomhoidí, Do Phríomhoidí Tánaisteacha agus Do Mhúinteoirí atá i bhFeighil ar Aonaid a fheidhmíonn in Iar-Bhunscoileanna Gaeltachta agus i nGaelcholáistí.

Ba chúis áthais do COGG, i gcomhpháirt le Gaeloideachas, an chomhdháil seo a eagrú in Óstán na Páirce sa Mhuileann gCearr ar an 19-20 Aibreán 2023. Bhí os cionn 100 toscaire i láthair; ceannairí scoile, ionadaithe ón NAPD, Boird Oideachais agus Oiliúna Éireann, An Foras Pátrúnachta, An Lárionad Ceannaireachta Scoile, An tSraith Shóisearach do Mhúinteoirí, An tSeirbhis um Fhorbairt Ghairmiúil do Mhúinteoirí agus Cumann na Scoileanna Pobail agus Cuimsitheacha.

FOCAL ÓN BPRÍOMHFHEIDHMEANNACH

Léirigh Jacqueline Ní Fhearghusa a sástacht an chéad chomhdháil ceannaireachta a thionól don eanáil. Dar léi go dtarraingeodh téama na Comhdhála, "Ceannaireacht, Comhoibriú agus Cumarsáid" go leor cainte is tuairimíochta. Bhí go leor cúiseanna ann mar sin gur cruthaíodh an deis seo le teacht le chéile mar eanáil - chun na príomhphointí tumoideachais a chioradh, dea-chleachtais a roinnt, agus deiseanna líonraithe a fhorbairt. Luaigh sí go mbeadh COGG ann le tacú le scoileanna T1 ar aon slí arbh fhéidir léi agus le héisteacht leis na moltaí a bheadh ag na toscairí, faoi shlíte éagsúla ina bhféadfaí tuilleadh cabhrach agus tacaíochta a sholáthar do na scoileanna.

DÉ CÉADAON, AN 19 AIBREÁN

Ag dinnéar na Comhdhála, is é Frank Reidy, saineolaí ar chúrsaí taidhleoireachta agus míleata agus ball de Bhord TG4, a thug an chaint. Leag sé béim ar an gceangal idir



Caoimhin Ó hEaghra, Ard-Rúnaí, An Foras Pátrúnachta
Micheál Ó Ceoinín, Príomhoide Gaelcholáiste Mhaigh Nuad
Cormac Mc Cashin, Bainisteoir Tacaíochta, An Foras Pátrúnachta
Conchubhair Mac Ghloinn, Príomhoide Choláiste de hÍde

ceannaireacht agus dearfacht in eanáil an oideachais, go háirithe trí Ghaeilge agus sna Gaeltachtaí. Ag tarraingt ar a thaithí ceannaireachta féin agus ar a ról ar Bhord TG4, spreag sé an grúpa le smaoineamh ar chur chuige nua, bunaithe ar cheannaireacht atá dearfach agus réalaíoch.

DÉARDAON, AN 20 AIBREÁN

Faoi stiúir Fheargail Uí Ghiolláin (Coláiste Chilllain) mar Chathaoirleach, thug Lisa Nic Dhoinnléibhe (An tAonad um Oideachas Gaeltachta/An Roinn Oideachais) spléachadh ar an méid a baineadh amach i gcur i bhfeidhm An Pholasáí don Oideachas Gaeltachta agus forbairt an Pholasáí don Oideachas lán-Ghaeilge lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht. Ina dhiaidh sin, d'inis Nigel Mac Pháidín (Príomhoide Tánaisteach Phobalscoil Ghaoth Dobhair) scéal na scoile sa Scéim Aitheantais agus thug sé roinnt mhaith moltaí chun tacú le hiar-bhunscoileanna T1 atá páirteach sa scéim.

Sa dara hábhar, **Ag fás na scoile i suíomh an Tumoideachais**, ba í Gean Gilger (Boird Oideachais agus Oiliúna Éireann) an Cathaoirleach. Bhí Mairéad Ní Fhátharta (Coláiste Naomh Eoin, Inis Meáin), Diarmaid Ua Bruadair (Gaelcholáiste Dhoire) agus Dáithí Ó Géanaí (Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh) ar an bpléphainéal.

Sa phlé i ndiaidh cuid 1 agus 2, tháinig sé chun solais gurb iad na dúshláin chéanna, a bheag nó a mhór, a thuiriscítear na laethanta seo agus a tuairiscíodh ag an gComhdháil ar



Cathnía Ó Muircheartaigh, Cathaoirleach COGG
Jacqueline Ní Fhearghusa, Príomhfheidhmeannach COGG
Paul Crone, Stiúrthóir NAPD
Feargal Ó Giolláin, Príomhoide Choláiste Chilllain



*Diarmaid Ua Bruadair, Príomhoide Ghaelcholáiste Dhoire
Gean Gilger, Oifigeach um Bheartas agus Fhorbairt Oideachais – Iar-bhunscoil, Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna na hÉireann
Mairéad Ní Fhátharta, Príomhoide Choláiste Naomh Eoin, Inis Meáin
Dáithí Ó Géanaí, Príomhoide Tánaisteach (Gníomhach)
Ghaelcholáiste Luimnigh*

Sholáthar Múinteoirí Iar-bhunscoile: Deiseanna agus Dúshlán i Meán Fómhair 2016.

Seo roinnt moltaí agus pointí cainte a cuireadh chun cinn:

EARCAÍOCHT MHÚINTEOIRÍ:

Moladh:

- Go gcuirfi liúntas lán-Ghaeilge ar fáil arís agus luach saothair a bhronnadh bunaithe ar cháilíochtaí sa Ghaeilge. (Luadh easpa ama agus muinine ag múinteoirí díriú ar an obair seo. Níl siad muinineach as a gcuid Gaeilge agus níl aon inspreagadh nó córas aitheantais chun í a fheabhsú. Tá easpa tuisceana i measc múinteoirí i leith a ról teanga – is gá é seo a shoiléiriú leo.)
- Go ndéanfaí gach iarracht na múinteoirí is fearr a mhealladh chun na hearnála.
- Go gcuirfi béim ar iarscoláirí/iardhaltaí a mhealladh ar ais.
- Go soláthrófaí deiseanna chun múinteoirí a mhealladh ó earnáil an Bhéarla nó iad a aistriú go scoileanna T1 (córas ag an ETBI).
- Go mbeadh Máistir Gairmiúil san Oideachas (MGO) ar fáil in oirthear na tíre.

CEANGAL IDIR MHÚINTEOIRÍ/FGL NA MÚINTEOIRÍ

Dúradh go bhfuil:

- líonraí ag teastáil do mhúinteoirí chun dea-chleachtas agus acmhainní a roinnt – tá gá le pobail chleachtas – Fóram Feasa an ETBI, mar shampla?
- an-tábhacht ag baint le caighdeán a leagan síos agus cumarsáid agus struchtúr cumarsáide a leagan síos idir an scoilphobal ar fad.
- na critéir theangabhunaithe atá mar chroílár an Pholasaí don Oideachas Gaeltachta a leagan amach sa Pholasaí don Oideachas lán-Ghaeilge lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht.
- tábhacht ag baint le tacaíocht leanúnach a chur ar fáil do mhúinteoirí (An Teagasc Ábharbhunaithe, mar shampla).



*Proinsias de Poire, Príomhoide Choláiste Eoin
Deborah Ní Cheallaigh, Múinteoir i bhFeighil Aonad Loch Gile, Sligeach
Aoife Ní Riordáin, Oifigeach na Gaeilge, Coláiste an Phiarsaigh
Seán Delap, Príomhoide Choláiste Íosagáin*

AM/AITHEANTAS:

- Éilíodh go gcuirfi am agus aitheantas don FGL ar fáil do mhúinteoirí T1 – chun feabhas a chur ar a gcuid cumais agus cruinnis sa Ghaeilge – laethanta ag teastáil mar a bhíonn i gcás na bunscoile.
- Léiríodh imní agus amhras láidir maidir le sonraíochtaí éagsúla a bheith i gceist don Ghaeilge T1 agus T2, ach go háirithe ag leibheál na Sraithe Sinsearaí agus go n-aithneofaí é ar shlí éigin.
- Áitíodh go neamhbhalbh go bhfuil géarghá le haitheantas a léiriú sna marcanna a ghnóthaíonn scoláirí i scoileanna T1 a léiríonn an tsáriarracht a chuirtear isteach chun máistreacht a fháil ar an nGaeilge.

ACMHAINNÍ AGUS TÉACSLEABHAIR

Tugadh aitheantas do na forbairtí atá déanta i bhforbairt na dtéacsleabhar, ach aithníodh an gá le:

- na hacmhainní breise (sleamhnáin, leabhar an mhúinteora, srl) ar fad a chur ar fáil trí Ghaeilge do shuíomh T1.
- buntéacsleabhar an ábhair i nGaeilge (an tSS).
- bunachar maith litríochta don Ghaeilge – leabhair atá i gcló a chur ar an liosta de bharr go gcruthaíonn a mhalairt frustrachas i measc na múinteoirí, gan chúis.

Aithníonn COGG na riachtanais agus na heasnaimh atá luaite anseo. Tabharfar fúthu le dúthracht agus scaipfear na forbairtí go forleathan.

CEANGAL LEIS AN BPOBAL

Moladh an gá:

- le bolscaireacht mhaith sna bunscoileanna chun go bhfeicfi an buntáiste a bhaineann le leanúint ar aghaidh leis an oideachas trí Ghaeilge – laethanta oscailte agus spraoi do rang 5/6 eagraithe ag iar-bhunscoileanna Gaeltachta agus lán-Ghaeilge.
- le deis a chruthú do mhúinteoirí bunscoile an cur chuige ranga a fheiceáil san iar-bhunscoil agus *vice versa*.
- le saol spreagúil na scoile a léiriú os comhair an tsaoil

mhóir – tá eiseamláirí den chineál seo scoile ann agus is féidir na straitéisí atá idir lámha acu a thaispeáint ag tarraingt ar an teicneolaíocht.

- le ceangal níos cinnte/éifeachtaí leis an bpobal mór agus na teachtaireachtaí á gcrabhscaoileadh ón scoil.

Do chuid 3, **Cur chuige an Tumoideachais i scoileanna T1/ Comhtháthú Ábhar agus Teanga**, ba í Sinéad Nic Stiofáin (Coláiste an Eachréidh) an Cathaoirleach agus ba í an Dr Sarah Ní Dhuinnín (Ollscoil Luimnigh/Coláiste Mhuire gan Smál) an cainteoir. I measc na moltaí a d'eascair as an méid a roinn Sarah, moladh:

- gur chóir deis a thabhairt do chuile mhúinteoir triail a bhaint as FCÁT nó a bheith feasach faoi.
- go bhfuil gá le líonra náisiúnta do mhúinteoirí ábhar a chruthú (cosúil le Misneach).
- nasc a dhéanamh idir eochairfhocail trasna na n-ábhar éagsúil – focal/frása/nathanna na seachtaine.
- fiseáin ag cur síos ar ghnéithe éagsúla de na hábhair mar gheall ar chaighdeán aistriúcháin na leabhar atá ar leibhéal ata ródheacair ag na scoláirí.
- go gcuirfí treoirinte ar fáil do mhúinteoirí mar thaca don mhúineadh teanga agus ábhar – forbairt ghairmiúil leanúnach ag teastáil do gach múinteoir – ní díreach do phríomhoidí.
- páirtnéireacht éifeachtach idir múinteoirí ábhar agus múinteoirí Gaeilge na scoile. Múinteoirí uile na scoile ag tacú lena chéile leis seo – samplaí ag múinteoirí difriúla dá chéile chun dul i ngleic lena gcruinneas.
- cúrsaí samhraidh a eagrú do mhúinteoirí ar an ábhar seo, ach laethanta EPV a thabhairt dóibh.
- béim a chur ar rialacha gramadaí ar bhonn comhtháite – gach múinteoir sa scoil ag díriú ar an bpointe gramadaí céanna.
- gur cheart ranganna rialta gramadaí a dhéanamh leis an bhfoireann – 10 nóiméad ag tús gach cruinnithe foirne mar shampla.
- go gcuirfí cúrsaí Gaeilge ar fáil do mhúinteoirí laistigh d'am scoile agus aitheantas a thabhairt dóibh as iad a dhéanamh.

San iarnóin, pléadh **Gaeilge Labhartha na Scoláirí sna Hlarbhunscoileanna: Dea-Chleachtais is Dúshláin**. Bhí Proinsias de Poire (Coláiste Eoin), Deborah Ní Cheallaigh (Aonad Loch Gile, Sligeach), agus Aoife Ní Riordáin (Coláiste an Phiarsaigh, Corcaigh) ar an bpléphainéal. Ba é Seán Delap (Coláiste Íosagáin) an Cathaoirleach.

Tháinig moltaí fiúntacha chun cinn sa phlé. Moladh:

- gur cheart ról a thabhairt d'iar-scoláirí na scoile – iad a úsáid mar eiseamláirí teanga chun an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn sna scoileanna.

- gan cur chun cinn na Gaeilge a fhágáil faoi choiste amháin – is gá do gach scoláire, do gach múinteoir agus don scoil uile a bheith páirteach ann.
- gur cheart breis uaireanta an chloig a thabhairt d'fheidhmiú na nAonad. Liúntas 26 uair an chloig ag Aonad mar nach féidir feidhmiú leis an méid seo chun gach rud a dhéanamh agus Gaeilge labhartha a chur chun cinn chomh maith.
- teacht an pholasaí chun plean bóthair agus treoirinte a dheimhniú.

CRÍOCH

Ba é Caoimhin Ó hEaghra (An Foras Pátrúnachta) an Cathaoirleach. Thug Pádraig Ó Beaglaioich (Leas-Phríomhfheidhmeannach COGG) spléachadh ar fhorbairtí agus ar chomhpháirtíochtaí reatha COGG. Bhí an focal scoir ag Cathnia Ó Muircheartaigh (Cathaoirleach COGG). Spreag an chuid seo go leor deiseanna plé agus ciortha.

FOCAL ÓN GCATHAOIRLEACH

D'aithin Cathnia gurb "é an tacaíocht a fhaighimid óna chéile a thugann deis mhachnaimh agus am athbheithnithe dúinn chun filleadh ar ár scoileanna le fuinneamh agus fonn féinmheastóireachta." Luaigh sé nach ionann gach scoil Ghaeltachta, gach Gaelcholáiste agus gach Aonad, ach mar sin féin, go mbionn na riachtanais chéanna againn go léir.

Dúirt sé gur thuig sé "freisin na deacrachtaí leanúnacha a bhaineann le soláthar múinteoirí agus le feasacht an phobail i gcoitinne maidir le buntáistí agus deiseanna an dátheangachais. Tugaim suntas faoi leith do na deacrachtaí agus na sainriachtanais a bhaineann leis na hAonaid lán-Ghaeilge, go háirithe, agus easpa sainmhínte go fóill ar cad is Aonad lán-Ghaeilge ann."

Thagair sé don am cinniúnach seo don earnáil agus tréimhse an Pholasaí don Oideachas Gaeltachta ag teacht chun deiridh agus na scoileanna Gaeltachta i mbun aitheantais a lorg, i dteannta leis an bPolasaí don Oideachas lán-Ghaeilge lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht atá i mbun forbartha faoi láthair.

Teastaíonn ó COGG buíochas a ghabháil le gach éinne a thug lámh chúnta don ócáid luachmhar seo agus beifear ag súil le himeachtaí den chaighdeán céanna a réachtáil arís amach anseo.

Scríobh **Toirdealbhach Ó Lionáird**, Oifigeach Oideachais Iar-bhunscoile Gaeltachta, an tuairisc seo. Ceapadh Toirdealbhach ina hOifigeach Iar-bhunscoile in Eanáir 2023. Tá sé ar iasacht ó Choláiste Ghobnatan, Baile Mhic Íre, Co. Chorcaí, áit ar fheidhmigh sé mar Phríomhoide ó 2017-2022 agus Leas-Phríomhoide ó 2012-2017. Faoi láthair tá dochtúireacht idir lámha aige atá ag fiosrú: Tionchar an Pholasaí don Oideachas Gaeltachta ar eispéireas, féiniúlacht agus ról an phríomhoide iar-bhunscoile Gaeltachta.



Whither the Further Education Colleges?

Food for Thought

Tom Collins

An undercurrent of angst pervaded the NAPD Conference of FE Colleges held in Portlaoise last March and reported on elsewhere in this edition.

While the presentations were in all cases upbeat and forward-looking regarding the role of the FE Colleges and their future configuration, one sensed unease among the participants and a suspicion that in the laudatory and motivational narrative, the lady was protesting overmuch.

Generally, the Further Education and Training (FET) sector defies ease of definition. It is rather a broad church, working at multiple levels of the National Framework of Qualifications, with disparate constituencies and partners and with sometimes very different pedagogical methodologies and objectives.

The FE Colleges are just one component of this eclectic mix. Over the last couple of decades, as they evolved from the second level system mainly in response to falling school numbers, they have forged a certain coherence and identity. They are now attaining distinctiveness as a unique subset within the broader FET domain.

What must now happen to ensure that this distinctive identity and contribution continue to grow?

In the discourse on the need for better integration within Tertiary Education, it might be better to recast the debate as one of better integration between FE Colleges and HE Colleges.

If good fences make for good neighbours, integration is best approached from a starting position of clarity of the distinctiveness of both of the respective partners, rather than any attempt to blur the boundaries or compromise their respective uniqueness.

The FE Colleges, therefore, require clarity of definition and differentiation *within* the FET sector overall. This is to be followed by similar clarity with regard to their distinctive contribution on an FE/HE continuum. In particular, it might be argued they need to orient themselves towards Third Level model and culture, rather than self-identify as extensions of the second level.

Both of these objectives could be realised in a situation where the FE Colleges are effectively cut adrift of their respective ETBs and reconfigured as the FE arms of the newly established Technological Universities (TUs). As satellite FE providers of their respective TU, the FE Colleges would be subject to:

- TU oversight on programme provision and student intake

- The QA system of the TU
- Programme accreditation, validation and certification of the TU
- The progression regulations of the TU

In this scenario, coherence on the FE/HE continuum would be established at the outset. The FE College would be a significant feeder mechanism to the TU and would become a crucial partner in the access and lifelong learning agenda of the TU.

It would also customise and target programmes more effectively on local social, economic and environmental challenges. As differentiation is a function both of what is done and what is not done, the FE College would not become a substitute or alternative HE provider.

Clearly, this new arrangement would raise challenges regarding the funding, staffing and governance of the FE Colleges. The evolution of the TUs themselves might be instructive in this regard. Established as Regional Technical Colleges (RTCs) in the early 1970s as sub-degree technician training centres – sometimes with a Leaving Cert cohort also – they were located firmly within their respective VECs both from a governance and administrative viewpoint.

Twenty years later, in the early 1990s, the RTCs would morph into Institutes of Technology – each with their own Governing Body, a Director who reported to the Governing Body and with the possibility of gaining devolved awarding powers. Essentially, they had now been moved out of the second level ecosystem.

Finally, in 2018, with the passing of the Technological Universities Act, the RTCs could now attain full University status and be designated to make degree awards up to and including Level 10. Within four years of the passing of this legislation all but two of the original RTCs had now fulfilled the requirements of the Act.

In being given the freedom to be the best they could be, the original RTCs have emerged as critical players in Irish HE, where about 40% of all Higher Education participation is now to be found. They have played a critical role in widening and deepening participation in Higher Education, in addressing the skill needs of the country and in meeting regional development aspirations.

Freeing up the FE Colleges to forge new alliances and partnerships with the recently established TUs could have a similar developmental impact on the FE sector. This would guarantee a distinctive and complementary provision from both sectors and ensure optimal integration and coherence along the FE/HE continuum.

Tom Collins is President Emeritus and former Professor of Education at Maynooth University. He was Chair of the NCCA between 2006 and 2012. In 2016 he led the development on a national framework of student engagement in Irish Higher Education Institutions on behalf of the Higher Education Authority. In 2019 he was the founding chair of TU Dublin, Ireland's first Technological University.





**Further Education and
Training Colleges Ireland**
The Voice of FET College Leaders | A Committee of NAPD



2023 FET Colleges Ireland Conference March 2023



Leading Quality Teaching and Learning in the FET College of the Future: *The Role of the Principal and Deputy Principal*

Markita Mulvey

NAPD: FETCI have organised Further Education and Training (FET) Conferences annually since 2007. Over the years, themes such as '*Leading Learning for Skills Development*', '*Including Students with Special Education Needs*', '*Diversity*', and '*Employer Engagement*' have informed this event. More recently, since the establishment of SOLAS, the ETBs and QQI, this event has focused on providing a platform to discuss elements of the two FET Strategies.

Beginning in 2019, NAPD FETCI organised an annual Symposium to facilitate the development of a consensus amongst the Principals and Deputy Principals of FET Schools and Colleges regarding the design of the governance model. That became known as the '*FET College of the Future*' in the second FET Strategy and also the theme of our events in 2019, 2020, and 2021. In April 2021, FETCI launched a discussion document entitled '*A Vision for the FET College in a Tertiary Education Sector*'.

The 2023 Conference focused on the role of the Principal and Deputy in the FET College of the Future. The Conference provided an opportunity to discuss and articulate our professional identity and role as Principals and Deputies. A culture of professional development exists among NAPD: FETCI Principals and Deputies and is also associated with the knowledge and best practice within an EU and global context. To enhance knowledge and understanding, NAPD: FETCI engaged with national stakeholders and had an opportunity over the two days of Conference to engage in dialogue with the various stakeholders.

The first day was thought-provoking and focused on the national context. The Conference was opened by William Beausang, Assistant Secretary in the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, who presented the national context. He noted the timing couldn't be better, since it corresponded with the planned

finalisation of the OECD Review of Ireland's National Skills Strategy. William's presentation was situated within this context, development and place of FET to underpin this direction of travel. It became apparent that the Government Department has a clarity around the role of this pillar of education to society and the economy. An important question was posed at the Conference opening - what role is FET prepared to play in creating the "learning society" essential to underpinning our "knowledge economy" aspirations?

On behalf of NAPD FETCI, I gave an on-the-ground insight into the daily work of a Principal in a FET College and outlined the traits and skills required of a College leader, as well as the challenges experienced in FET College leadership.

SOLAS CE Andrew Brownlee outlined the integrated FET College structure in line with the Strategy Future FET Transforming Learning. He acknowledged that there had been really important inputs into shaping what the FET College of the Future looks like in practice and he highlighted the documents from ETBI and FETCI. It was empowering to hear Andrew outline how FET will develop in Ireland.

David Leahy CE GRETB posed questions and challenges for the future of FET and identified that we all must be clear on where we are going and role of adaptive leadership during a time of development and change. He emphasised the importance of putting the student at the centre of FET and arriving at a shared vision for the future direction of FET.

There was an international dimension to the Conference. Fiona McMillan OBE, a speaker of international standing in the field of leadership and management in FET in the UK, addressed the Conference. She reviewed and presented international best practice in the role of the FE Principal and the strategic importance of their leadership, management and vision to development of FE within a local and national economy.

Joe O'Connell presented the role of the FET leadership from

an Irish perspective and was clear on the dual role of Principals and Deputies as managers and leaders. He stated 'while management drives the engine, leadership maps the journey'. Joe emphasised the fundamentals of leading in education and the importance of trust. He reinforced the fundamental values that are at the heart of educational leaders.

Colm Kelly, TUI Assistant General Secretary, set out the legislation and circulars that underpin the roles and responsibilities of Principals. He followed by posing question about the 'FET College of the Future' and stated that this needs analysis to define what structure is intended. Colm was clear about how, within legislation and workplace agreements, this could be achieved and developed and gave examples.

A plenary panel discussion followed, which provided an opportunity for an engaging Q&A.

To close the Conference, Rapporteur Tom Collins presented a summary of the key findings from the Conference, along with his personal reflections. The goal of the Conference was to produce a discussion document that would distil the learning from the presentations, the changes already taking place in FET Schools and Colleges and the role of the Principal and Deputy Principal in leading quality teaching and learning.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to all Conference presenters for sharing their expertise and insights. I also wish to thank members of the FETCI Committee and members of the Conference Working Group for all their hard work which ensured a hugely successful and vibrant engagement over the 2 days.

Markita Mulvey is Principal of Carlow Institute of Further Education. She is chair of the FETCI Committee.



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THE LEADER PROFILE

Katriona O'Sullivan

by John Walshe



Dr Katriona O'Sullivan is in a hurry to change the world - starting with the education system. And who can blame her? Her early life was full of 'mayhem and pain', as she aptly describes her childhood in her searing autobiography *Poor*.

An upbringing with drug addicted parents was like living under 'a blanket of cloud' but every so often the sun shone through. A love of books and some exceptionally caring teachers brought shafts of light into her extraordinarily difficult childhood. They guided her on an educational journey that brought her to the Trinity Access Programme and then to Maynooth University where she now lectures.

"Teachers have the power to change your future. I wouldn't be here without them, so there's much love in my heart for teachers. But I would change who becomes a teacher in our country. There are some absolute phenomenal teachers. I've met hundreds of them but every one of them knows the bad teachers in their schools - the ones who are focused only on the curriculum and the ones who don't care for their pupils".

She strongly favours interviews to select candidates on their motivation to become teachers. She recounts the story told by

Finnish educationist Pasi Sahlberg of a family member who had all the grades but failed the interview for teaching on three occasions, as she didn't show enough care and her motivation for wanting to become a teacher wasn't in line with what a teacher should have. *"I believe we should check and ensure that we have teachers who are motivated"*.

"The belief that the Leaving Certificate should be the only metric for teaching potential is just beyond me. How can intelligent people not see that your Leaving Cert is affected by your socio-economic status, by your psychological state, your disability, your language capabilities"? she asks in exasperation. She also wants greater diversity in intake to teacher education and argues that Irish should not be a barrier to applicants.

Once selected for teacher education she believes that the successful candidates should be taught about the reality of educational disadvantage. Irish schools do very well in OECD international tests of literacy and numeracy, but too often we use these findings to say "sure, aren't we great"? She agrees that we have *"an amazing system"* that works very well for the majority of students but adds that we have anything from 15% to 20% for whom it does not work well. The achievement

differences between DEIS and non-DEIS schools are still the same, she argues.

Warming to the theme of what's missing in teacher education, she says: "I don't think we teach our teachers how to care and how to build relationships". Nor is there any set module on disadvantage. "There is some amazing work which is beautiful but there is also really a biased perspective that is not necessarily challenged".

Yes, there is work placement in DEIS schools but when the student teacher comes from a privileged background that can just reinforce stereotypes. "In the staff rooms they sometimes hear other teachers make really disparaging remarks about kids that come from disadvantaged backgrounds. That's happening across the board". She believes initial teacher education has a responsibility to ensure that teachers think about equality in education.

She rails against the unfairness of the Leaving Cert system which allows students from affluent backgrounds to compensate for bad teaching in some subjects by paying for grinds and extra help, whereas students from poorer backgrounds cannot. Ideally, she would get rid of a terminal Leaving Cert exam and allow for a much greater measure of continuous assessment. If that were not possible, she would reduce the number of subjects that students take in the Leaving to three or four, as they do with A levels in the UK. The argument against this approach is that a broad-based range of subjects allows students to decide at a later stage what type of courses they want to pursue in higher education. But she doesn't accept that 16 is too young to decide and says that in the UK you're not that restricted in the type of university course you want to do with three or four A levels.

She would also scrap the Points System and allow every applicant to enter higher education if they wanted to. This could lead to overcrowded first year classes and high failure rates, but she retorts "what's wrong with failing in first year? It can teach you that the course is not for you".

Ireland has one of the highest participation rates in third level education in the OECD and many courses cannot fill all their places so what's the problem? She readily acknowledges the rise in numbers going to College but says that the real question is what kind of courses do disadvantaged students get into? They are not entering medicine or teaching or psychology but often end up in arts courses which have much lower points.

Turning to the jobs that disadvantaged youngsters will get she says that we are at a crisis point right now. "That's because the type of jobs that were available for disadvantaged groups are rapidly disappearing. We are moving into a situation where we need people to be STEM ready. We need to ask - what kind of country do we want to be? Do we want a country which reproduces inequality forever"?

Research shows that working class girls are being deprived of opportunities to build STEM skills. With the future of work changing and growing dependence on digital capabilities, these young women are at real risk of poverty.

Dr O'Sullivan leads the *STEM Passport for Inclusion* initiative which helps well over 1,250 socio-economically disadvantaged girls across Ireland. It addresses the huge gender gap in STEM participation. "Unless the gap is addressed, women from deprived communities will be more likely to end up in low-paid, low-potential jobs and remain entrenched in poverty, due to a lack of STEM opportunities" she says.

Katriona O'Sullivan, who dropped out of school as a pregnant 15-year-old, is clearly passionate about doing her best to ensure that the current and future generations of disadvantaged young people get a better educational start in life than she did.

You're going to hear a lot more from her in the future.

Poor is reviewed by Paul Mooney later in this publication

Katriona O'Sullivan is a lecturer of Digital Skills in the Assisting Living & Learning Institute in the Department of Psychology, Maynooth University. She is the principal investigator on the *STEM Passport for Inclusion* project, featured recently on RTÉ Changemaker series. She holds research grants from the Irish Research Council and Science Foundation Ireland, leading an initiative to tackle digital inequality in education.



Katriona was research fellow in Trinity College Dublin and worked with Lady Margaret Hall and Kellogg College, where she led the programme of research which informed the development and assessment of the first foundation year in Oxford University.

She also led the largest HEA PATH funded programme entitled *Turn to Teaching*, which focused on diversifying teacher education. She has been an invited speaker at the World Education Forum, the European Gender Action Workshop on Women and Digitalization and the UN.

An award-winning journalist, **John Walshe** was appointed special adviser to Ruairi Quinn who was Minister for Education and Skills from March 2011 to July 2014. Prior to that, John was an educational editor, mostly with the *Irish Independent* but also with the *Irish Times* in the early 1990s. He was a consultant to the OECD in Paris, where he was involved in four major studies on education.



He is the author of 'A New Partnership in Education', which chronicled many of the major changes in Irish education in recent decades and he also wrote 'An Education' which recounted his experience as a Ministerial adviser. A graduate of both NUIG and UCC, John was born in Galway City. He is currently a consultant and commentator on educational issues.



Highlights from recent Irish research on internet use among young people

Gretta Mohan

The stimulation and entertainment offered by modern digital technologies has resulted in our children and young people glued to screens. Educators and parents are challenged in their consideration of the benefits and drawbacks afforded by the use of smartphones and information and communications technology (ICT) devices at both primary and second level.

In response to growing concerns about negative wellbeing effects of smart devices, in May this year Parents' Associations across all eight primary schools in Greystones, Co. Wicklow, agreed a "no smartphone voluntary code" until children start secondary school. The hope of the collective action is to reduce the pressure parents may feel to provide their child with a phone by fifth or sixth class.

Principals of the schools have outlined that the move is not from an anti-technology stance, but rather the limiting of access to such technologies at sensitive developmental ages may be of benefit for wellbeing and educational outcomes. The schools plan to organise expert-led talks for children in sixth class to prepare them for the possibility of owning a phone at second level.

The concerns of parents and teachers on these issues have been borne out in Irish evidence using data from the longitudinal *Growing Up in Ireland* (GUI) study, which suggests that delaying mobile phone ownership for children may offer advantages on academic, developmental



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and wellbeing fronts. One study found that 40% of children owned a mobile phone at the age of 9, and children attending more socially disadvantaged (DEIS) schools were more likely to have mobile phones (Dempsey et al., 2019).

Children with parents who have higher incomes and higher levels of education were less likely to own their own mobile phones. The investigation revealed that children who owned a mobile phone at age 9 scored 4% less on average in standardised reading and maths tests at age 13, controlling for a range of other child and family factors which typically influence test scores, such as socio-economic status (SES).

A subsequent study using the same GUI dataset, found that girls who had a mobile phone at 9 years old fared less well in terms of their behavioural adjustment and academic self-concept at 13 years (Dempsey et al., 2020).

“

Almost two-thirds of the 17-year-olds sampled reported at least one symptom of EIU, while 6.8% reported 5 or 6 symptoms of EIU. Modelling revealed that females were significantly more likely to report symptoms of EIU than males.

Bridging the primary and second level years, research published this year using GUI examined trajectories between 9, 13 and 17 years, finding that digital screen time increased markedly from early to late adolescence (Bohnert and Gracia, 2023). The growth in screen time was greater for children from less affluent families. Their modelling analysis revealed that heavy levels of digital screen time (i.e., 3+ hours daily) was associated with declines in wellbeing, although engagement in learning oriented digital activities and gaming was associated with better adolescent outcomes.

The authors found that low SES adolescents were more harmed than high SES adolescents by their digital engagement, while high SES adolescents benefited more from moderate levels of digital use and from engaging in learning oriented digital activities. The study concluded that digital engagement was associated with socio-economic inequalities in adolescents' socio-emotional wellbeing and, to a lesser extent, educational outcomes.

Another study published this year using GUI, focusses on the factors which influence excessive internet use (EIU) as captured for 17 year olds (O'Reilly and Mohan, 2023). The definition of EIU in this study was not so much concerned with *time online* but rather the *pre-occupations, compulsions or urges* people have to be online. EIU was measured using an internet addiction measure where six statements were presented to the adolescents about different behaviours associated with their internet use.

The EIU variable counted the number of 'very or fairly often' statements of experience of the following:

1. Felt bothered when I cannot be on the internet
2. Caught myself surfing when I am not really interested
3. Spent less time than I should with family, friends or doing coursework because of the internet
4. Tried unsuccessfully to spend less time on the internet
5. I have been annoyed or reluctant when a parent or other adult has asked me to stop using the internet or playing a digital game
6. Gone without eating or sleeping because of the internet

Almost two-thirds of the 17-year-olds sampled reported at least one symptom of EIU, while 6.8% reported 5 or 6 symptoms of EIU. Modelling revealed that females were significantly more likely to report symptoms of EIU than males.

A key feature of the study was that it examined factors recorded at 13 years and 9 years which potentially had a bearing on the young person's internet behaviours at 17. The analysis did not find a statistically significant association between internet-specific mediation practices (e.g., supervising internet use, employing an internet filter system) in early adolescence and EIU in later adolescence.

How parents dealt with misbehaviour was revealed to be a strong predictor of EIU, where more frequent power assertive discipline (including corporal punishment, deprivation of privileges, psychological aggression, and penalty tasks (e.g. chores) was positively associated with EIU symptoms. For females, regularly playing games or sports together was a protective factor, while parent-adolescent conflict and spending time home alone were estimated as risk factors for EIU.

The authors of these studies highlight the role that schools may have in preventing and resolving cases of excessive internet use and screen time. Schools may be well-placed to educate children and adolescents on the findings from such studies.

Such evidence could be incorporated into the Junior Cycle Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), and wellbeing programmes in schools at primary and second level, giving students the awareness of risks associated with behaviours like EIU.

The evidence can also support school leaders in policies on the use of personal devices in school and in discussions on maximising the potential of ICT in teaching and learning, while guarding against the risks.

Parents can be made conscious of the various channels through which their interactions with their children in early adolescence may lead to the development of EIU through awareness campaigns, parenting support groups etc.

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Gretta Mohan is a Research Officer with the Economic and Social Research Institute and Trinity College, Dublin.



Adolescent Cannabis Use

Why Are Doctors Concerned?

Bobby Smyth

Cannabis is the most widely used illegal drug in Ireland. There is increasing evidence that it has adverse impacts on adolescent brain development. It contributes to major mental health problems. Adolescent use is associated with poorer educational attainment. Cannabis alone generates about 75% of all referrals to adolescent addiction services in Ireland. In spite of all these harms, teenagers and their parents in Ireland are taking an increasingly benign view of cannabis. This is a source of major concern for doctors.

We know from the European school survey project on alcohol and other drugs (ESPAD) [QR1 Cannabis – www.espad.org] survey that about 9% of Irish 16-year-olds have used cannabis in the past month. A further 10% have used it at some point in their lives.

Use in males is about twice that of females and rates of use are quite similar across socio-economic groups.

Cannabis has changed greatly in Ireland in the past 30 years. In the 1980s and 1990s, cannabis resin, known as 'hash', was the dominant form of the drug. This is a solid substance, which was typically sprinkled into a rolled cigarette mixed with tobacco. Since 2000, hash has been almost completely displaced by herbal cannabis, referred to as 'weed', comprised mainly of the dried buds of the cannabis plant. Again it is typically smoked in a joint, usually mixed with tobacco.

The main active drug in cannabis is Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Modern growing techniques have produced more potent forms of cannabis, with much higher concentrations of THC than a generation ago. Weed in Ireland typically retails for about €20 per gram.

Cannabis can also be prepared for edible consumption, and mixed into cookies for example. With legalisation of cannabis in USA, there has been a major expansion in edible products, some of which have found their way to Ireland. Unfortunately, these products are often made to look like sweets and jellies. There is a long time lag from eating the product to intoxication and many people miscalculate the dose. This has resulted in a big increase in cannabis related presentations to emergency departments in legal locations in USA & Canada. It is also causing increased presentations in Ireland.

There has also been wider development of synthetic cannabinoids in the past 15 years. These are human-made chemicals which act at the same brain receptor as THC. These products produce a more intense intoxication effect and have more severe side effects than THC. There is evidence that many of the edible jellies sold in Ireland contain synthetic cannabinoids and no THC. There are also some black-market vape products which contain THC or synthetic cannabinoids.

We estimate that about one-in-three people who are using cannabis at least weekly will have some degree of dependency upon it. The modern name for this problem is a cannabis use disorder (CUD). The latest national estimate in Ireland indicates that there are about 45,000 people with a CUD, young males being most at risk.

A heavy user can smoke around two grams per day, so this can cost over €200 per week. For teenagers with no income this can be hugely problematic. Debts can mount up and this can lead to threats against the person and also their family. Teenagers can drift into a pattern of minor dealing, 'sorting out their friends', to fund their own use.

Beyond issues with addiction, there are many other reasons to be concerned about adolescent use of cannabis. We know that the human brain undergoes substantial development across adolescence and into the early 20s. There is growing evidence that THC can adversely impact that process. Studies have shown that teenagers who use cannabis have altered white matter. Long term studies which have followed people over many years indicate that teenage cannabis use is associated with loss of a few IQ points into adulthood. We know from studies, such as the Dunedin study in New Zealand, that adolescent cannabis use is associated with higher rates of school dropout and educational failure.

There is now almost overwhelming evidence that adolescent cannabis use is associated with increased risk of developing psychotic illness, both in the short and longer term. It probably increases their risk of having psychosis by two- to three-fold. Drug use can be an important contributory factor for young adults admitted to psychiatric hospitals in Ireland. Cannabis is the drug involved in the majority of these admissions.



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Due to this multitude of risks, society seeks to deter cannabis use, especially by adolescents. Schools are clearly a key setting for primary prevention. The 'Know the Score' module of the Senior Cycle of SPHE was developed and launched a few years ago. The Department of Health has recently commissioned a research project to look at roll out of this module. Schools will likely require more support in implementing this important program.

Beyond direct teaching about substance use via SPHE, schools do provide a multitude of other protections and benefits for children from a substance use perspective. Research on youth mental health by organisations such as Jigsaw has highlighted the importance of youth having access to at least 'one good adult'. Not infrequently, that is one of their teachers.

Schools are also instrumental in supporting social and personal development, by providing teenagers with opportunity to develop and hone their emerging social and inter-personal competencies, through collaborative working with peers, exposure to new subjects, hobbies and activities. Schools form a very central part of the scaffolding which society seeks to place around adolescents, guiding them towards independent adulthood. This 'scaffolding' acts as a partial protection against development of drug problems. In our adolescent addiction services, when we encounter a young person who is out of education, efforts to facilitate a re-entry into the educational system form a very key element of our patients' care plans.

With regard to legislation, there has been an enormous amount of discussion about our drug laws in recent years. Internationally, there is a well-funded movement which is seeking to persuade societies that drugs, especially cannabis, should be made legally available for adult use. This will create a new multi-billion euro industry.

There has been incremental liberalisation of cannabis policy in North America over the past 30 years. This started with campaigns about so-called "medical cannabis". This resulted in easy access to cannabis and required minimal input from any health professionals, evolving into de facto legalisation. The hype and exaggerations about health benefits of cannabis has probably contributed to the decline in perceived risk of cannabis use and increased willingness of some people to support full legalisation.

From 2012, some states in US started to fully legalise cannabis. Canada followed suit in 2018. The data from these locations indicates that legalisation is associated with decline in cost, increase in potency, increase in CUD among young adults, increases in cannabis

related psychiatric problems, increases in cannabis related motor vehicle accidents and increases in cannabis precipitated emergency department attendances. There is no decent evidence of any health benefits arising from legalisation. For this reason, a growing number of professional medical organisation globally are starting to argue against legalisation. The black market continues to thrive in legal locations as drug dealers can always undercut the prices in regulated stores.

Another threat which legalisation brings is that of a new cannabis industry, which will then seek to install itself as a legitimate stakeholder on drug policy discussion in Ireland. We have seen alcohol corporations successfully distorting and undermining public health informed alcohol policy in Ireland, since it threatens their profits. We should expect that a new cannabis industry will behave in the exact same manner. This seems inevitable, particularly since both big alcohol and big tobacco are now major investors in the emerging cannabis industry in Canada.

Doctors in Ireland are increasingly concerned about the extent of cannabis related harm. There has been insufficient response to date. This is a drug which poses very significant threat to our youth. Legalisation of cannabis is likely to simply be akin to pouring oil on the fire. As a society, we should take encouragement from our past successes in addressing teenage substance use.

These range from the reductions in cigarette smoking and the major declines in adolescent heroin addiction since the 1990s. Tackling teenage cannabis use warrants similar focused and determined efforts now in 2023.

This will require input from parents, teachers, community organisations, health professionals and politicians. Together, we can turn the situation around, while accepting that there are no simple quick fixes.

Bobby Smyth is a Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist, who has acted as clinical lead across three adolescent addiction services in Dublin since 2003. He is a Clinical Professor with the Department of Public Health & Primary Care in Trinity College Dublin. He has published over 80 scientific papers in the field of addiction. His PhD thesis examined strategies to reduce the harms arising from substance use by youth. He is a member of the National Oversight Committee which monitors implementation of the National Drugs Strategy in Ireland. He is vice-chair of Alcohol Action Ireland.



REGIONAL AMBASSADORS

Paul Byrne

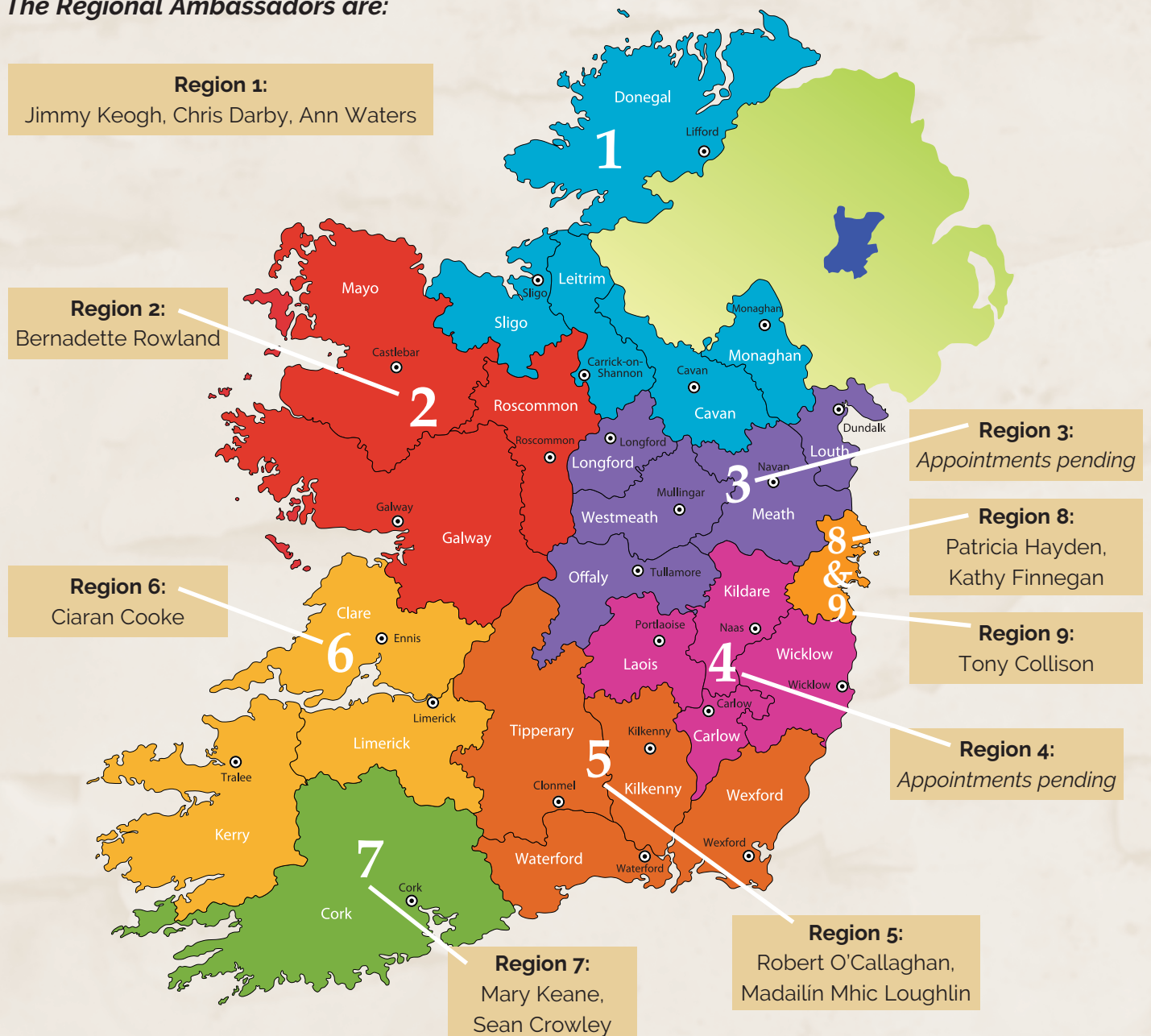
The Regional Ambassador initiative was launched during the 2022/2023 school year in order that Ambassadors would:

- be a personal link between NAPD and school leaders
- identify school leaders needs to guide NAPD on future developments
- keep school leaders informed about recent developments

While most existing school leaders will be familiar with how the Regional Ambassador programme works, the following information will be useful for new appointees.

We arrange a suitable meeting time with the Principal/Deputy. Meetings last for a minimum of 30 minutes, with the understanding of a safe and confidential space.

The Regional Ambassadors are:



Feedback from Ambassadors has highlighted various issues that affect the functioning of schools. Key issues recently identified include a lack of administration staff; ever expanding workload; difficulties in staff recruitment and retention and a shortage of qualified substitute teachers. Other challenges include elevated levels of stress for Principals in smaller schools; fundraising struggles; continual changes to school timetables; staff fatigue; mobile phone challenges and concerns about the long-term impact of COVID-19 on staff and students.

The feedback highlights the value of networking through NAPD membership and the impact of social issues in the surrounding community on schools; the need for clearer

definition roles within schools; more classroom accommodation; the need for more innovative teaching practices; the need for greater recognition of the complexity of the role and the workload attached to school leadership; the need for greater advocacy by the NAPD for its members.

Feedback has proposed practical solutions to the teacher supply crisis; the need for provision of more guidance and better communication channels at the local NAPD level; suggestions for the provision of supervision for Principals and guidelines for the incoming Principals/Deputy Principals.

The following are some of the observations of ambassadors following visits:

“

Members were delighted to be receiving up to date information and support from the ambassadors and school leaders highlighted the value of speaking to an experienced colleague from outside the school about internal .

“

They were delighted that NAPD was reaching out to the schools, that the Ambassadors were listening to their concerns and feeding them back to the Executive, while at the same time keeping them in touch with happenings in the region.

“

I received a warm welcome to this school and the Senior Management Team very much welcomed the fact that NAPD was listening to leaders on the ground.

“

I received a very warm welcome. Both Principal and Deputy Principal very much appreciated that someone from NAPD was listening to their specific concerns on the ground and feeding back to the organisation.

“

The Principal welcomed the meeting with an NAPD Ambassador and having the opportunity to personally voice her concerns but also having the opportunity to offer possible solutions for the future of school principalship.

Following a recent review, it was proposed that:

- Ambassadors would be part of the regional committee
- Each region would make members aware of their Ambassador(s)
- Ambassadors would receive an invitation to attend regional meetings/Meitheal
- An opportunity would be made available for Ambassadors to provide feedback at regional meetings.

School visits by Regional Ambassadors will resume in late September/early October. We look forward to the active engagement and support of colleagues in this important initiative.

Gaisce Takes Action on Supporting Youth Mental Health

Ger Brady



Gaisce – The President's Award – is continuously striving to positively impact the physical, emotional, and social development of young people. Through the Gaisce framework, young people are supported in their personal growth to develop skills to help them transition to adulthood, to develop their confidence to engage in career pathways and to partake in social activism.

Gaisce, a non-formal educational tool, is committed to raising awareness of physical and emotional wellbeing and positive mental health to help build skills such as self-awareness and resilience, develop healthy coping strategies and increase social connectedness. To help support the rounded development of young people, Gaisce is proud to announce *Take Action* a collaboration with Jigsaw, the National Centre for Youth Mental Health.

Take Action, a school programme that aims to develop young people's mental health literacy and skills, will be officially launched in early October 2023. *Take Action* is a thirteen-week programme for 14-16 year-olds, where students complete weekly guided tasks and activities, all with the aim of developing an understanding of mental health and wellbeing.

The programme will support students to put the skills for good mental health and wellbeing into action through a range of resources and activities. The programme culminates in students organising and hosting an event to promote mental health awareness within their school community.

At the end of the programme, students will:

- Have a greater understanding of mental health literacy
- Develop skills associated with maintaining good mental health
- Promote mental health awareness within their school community

Through engaging in *Take Action*, Gaisce participants will fulfil the criteria for either their Personal Skill or Community Involvement element of their Bronze Award. With Gaisce now available to 2nd Year students, *Take Action* is the ideal vehicle

for this younger cohort of students to achieve their Community Involvement aspect of the Award.

Gaisce and Jigsaw believe in the important role that the school setting plays in the development of a young person's mental health and wellbeing. School staff are in a unique position to facilitate conversations about mental health in their classrooms, and also to work together to create a supportive environment and culture to support mental health in schools.

By partaking in this initiative, young people will develop key protective factors to support their mental health, while working towards their Gaisce Award. It will also provide Gaisce's President Award Leaders (PALs) with a nationwide, readymade package for their Gaisce participants.

Take Action provides a range of flexible modes of delivery, with online teacher training and resources available after registration in October. To register your interest and find out more about *Take Action* email schools@jigsaw.ie.

You can find out more about the work of Jigsaw, by visiting jigsaw.ie or our dedicated Schools Hub, where you will find a wide range of classroom-based resources and e-learning options for school staff. For Gaisce enquiries contact E: ger@gaisce.ie or www.gaisce.ie



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Ger Brady is a Development Officer for Gaisce –The President's Awards for south Dublin and Kildare. As a mother of 17-year-old twins, she has a personal as well as professional passion for empowering the self-development of young people, with particular emphasis on supporting mental health and physical and emotional wellbeing.





ANALYSING EDUCATION

By Sean McDonagh

THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE



Ireland now has its highest population since the 1840s. Raising the standards of living of a growing population and competing successfully internationally in a future of technological and environmental change presents many challenges to the Irish knowledge infrastructure – including the educational system and the national research capacity.

Ireland is undergoing important population changes. This note, for discussion, seeks to draw attention to some challenging changes in the population structure – changes that require a major response from the education system.

Fertility Change: The Fertility Rate of a country or a region is the average number of children per woman. The replacement Fertility Rate for a population is 2.1. The Fertility Rate for the Republic of Ireland in 2022 was about 1.7, well below the replacement rate. Table 1 shows the major decline in that Fertility Rate over the last half century.

Table 1: Fertility Rate, Republic of Ireland, 1971-2022

Year	2022	2011	2001	1991	1981	1971
Rate	1.7	2.0	1.9	2.1	3.0	3.8

As the Fertility Rate declined the population increased. It reached its highest level – of 5.1.m – since the 1840s in Census 2022. This strongly illustrates the importance, now and into the foreseeable future, of net inward migration to Ireland’s population, economy and skills requirement. Census 2022 revealed that 20% of the population - 1,017,437 - were born elsewhere, which is an increase of 207,031 from the 2016 Census. The CSO informs us that in the year to April 2022, 70,300 (58.2%) immigrants had a third level qualification while 30,700 (51.5%) emigrants had such a qualification.

The Fertility Rate of the UK in 2022 was 1.75. In the EU now no country achieves the replacement rate. France, at 1.85, has the highest Fertility Rate in the EU, while Italy’s rate is a low 1.3. The largest 15 countries by GDP all now have Fertility Rates below the replacement rate. Countries now compete in the attraction of talented migrants and the retention of highly qualified people. The comparative quality of the educational system can be a major attractant of migrant families.

Decreases in the Fertility Rate have been accompanied by a rise in the average age of mothers and the average age of first-time mothers. In the Republic of Ireland, the average age of first-time mothers has risen to almost 32 years.

Annual Births: Table 2 gives an outline of the annual births in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland over the last half century.

Table 2: Annual Births, Rep. of Ireland, Northern Ireland, 1971-2021

Year	Republic of Ireland	Northern Ireland	Total
2021	58,443 (72.6%)	22,071 (27.4%)	80,514
2011	74,033 (74.5%)	25,273 (25.4%)	99,306
2001	57,854 (73.3%)	21,962 (27.7%)	79,216
1991	52,718 (66.9%)	26,028 (33.1%)	78,746
1981	72,158 (72.6%)	27,166 (27.4%)	99,324
1971	67,551 (68.0%)	31,765 (32.0%)	99,316

The highest annual births in the Republic of Ireland in this century was 75,554 in 2009. The highest in Northern Ireland in this period was 25,631 in 2008. These annual births were 29.3% and 16.1%, respectively, above their annual births in 2021.

Evidence of the growing diversity in Ireland are the statistics of the nationality of mothers giving birth in the Republic. In 2021, of the 58,443 births in the Republic, 45,381 (77.7%) were born to mothers of Irish birth. The nationality of the other 13,062 (22.3%) mothers in Ireland is outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Nationality of Mothers, 2021 Babies, Republic of Ireland

Nationality	Irish	EU 14	EU 15-27	UK	Other
%	77.7%	2.1%	8.4%	2.0%	9.8%

Irish schools are challenged and enriched now by both the diversity of backgrounds of Irish-born pupils and the diversity of migrant pupils.

Birth Rate Change: An important measure of population change is the annual Birth Rate per 1,000 population. It reflects the population structure and the Fertility Rate. In the Republic in 2023, the Birth Rate is 11.3. Table 4 shows the major change and decline in Birth Rates in the Republic over the last half century.

Table 4: Birth Rate per 1,000, 1971-2023

Year	2023	2011	2001	1991	1981	1971
Rate	11.3	15.7	14.8	14.9	21.0	22.5

The Birth Rates vary by region and county. In 2023 the county with the highest Birth Rate was Carlow at 13.2 followed by Westmeath (12.8), Meath (12.7) and Longford (12.7). Fingal and Waterford City has 12.8 Birth Rates.

The lowest Birth Rate of 10.4 was in Donegal. Mayo and Clare were at 10.6, Kilkenny at 10.7 and Roscommon at 10.9. The low Birth Rates remind us of the need for a regional development policy exploiting, for example, remote or decentralised working possibilities. In the 2022 Census, nearly 750,000, a third of all workers, indicated they worked from home at least some part of the week.

The Birth Rate in Northern Ireland fell from 16.7 in 2011 to 11.7 in 2021.

Population Structure Change: The Population Pyramid – the population structure by age – is obviously affected by Birth Rates, net migration and life expectancy. Table 5 gives information on the population structure of the Republic of Ireland and its changes in the last half century, by showing the % population in the age groups 0-14, 15-64 and 65+. Dependency rates in a society can be measured by the ratio of young and old to those of working age.

Table 5: % Population by Age, Gender, 1971-2022. – (0-14, 15-64, 65+)

Year	1971			2001			2022		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Age									
65+	5.1	6.0	11.1	5.3	6.6	11.1	7.1	8.0	15.1
15-64	29.1	28.6	57.7	33.8	33.5	67.3	32.4	32.9	65.3
0-14	15.9	15.3	31.2	10.9	10.3	21.2	10.1	9.6	19.7

Table 5 illustrates the significant changes that occurred in the population structure. The proportion of young people, 0-14, has declined strongly. The oldest group, 65+, has increased in percentage.

How are these age-based statistics going to change? One probable scenario is given in Table 6.

Table 6: Future % Population by Age, 2022-2042

Age Group	2022	2032	2042
65+	15.1	18.9	22.7
15-64	65.3	65.1	62.2
0-14	19.7	16.0	15.1

In Census 2022, the number of retired people increased to nearly 658,000, up by 21% from 2016. The highest growth by age group in this Census was amongst the over 70s. The predictions in Table 6, showing an increase in the old-age percentage and a decline in the youngest age group, raise serious questions and major challenges for the educational system. The productivity of workers through greater relevant skills must increase. Table 6 suggests longer working lives enabled by lifelong opportunities for skill acquisition and upskilling. The attraction and retention of talent becomes imperative. Table 6 underlines the future importance to Ireland of the attraction of international students at various levels.

A factor obviously affecting the Population Structure is Life Expectancy. For those born in 2020 in the Republic of Ireland the life expectancy for males is estimated at 80.8 years and for females 84.4 years – facts again supportive of longer working lives and life-long access to Education and Training. Eurostat claims that Ireland now has the highest life expectancy in the EU, ahead of Cyprus and Spain. Across the EU life expectancy now is Male 77.8 years and Female 83.3 years.

Name Changes: Ireland is a country undergoing major change. One illustration of this is the changes in the first names given to children. Tables 7 and 8 give the top 10 first names given to boys and girls respectively in 2022 and those given in the larger families half a century earlier in 1971. The number of first names in use continues to grow. In 2022 it was almost 9,000 with a majority, close to 5,000, of girls' names.

The top two names in 1971, by far – Mary and John – do not appear in the top 10 lists of 2022. Mary was ranked 87 in 2022 while John was ranked in 37th position.

Table 7: Boys' First Names, 1971, 2022

Northern Ireland 2022	Rank	Republic of Ireland 2022	Republic of Ireland 1971
James	1	Jack	John
Jack	2	Noah	Michael
Noah	3	James	Patrick
Theo	4	Rian	David
Charlie	5	Charlie	James
Oliver	6	Oisín	Thomas
Oisín	7	Tadhg	Paul
Henry	8	Liam	Mark
Cillian	9	Cillian	Brian
Thomas	10	David	William

- In 2022, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland shared 4 boys' names in the top 5 and 5 in the top 10. James is the only survivor from the 1971 top 10 to make both 2022 top 10s.
- William of 1971 has been replaced by Liam in 2022 – a name growing massively in international popularity.
- Noah, in the top 3 in Ireland, is the top name in England and Wales and also in Scotland in 2022.
- Jack, the most popular name in the Republic in 2022 has been the most popular name every year since 2007 (except 2016).
- Patrick, ranked third in 1971 was ranked 15 in 2022 and 19 in 2021.

Table 7: Girls' First Names, 1971, 2022

Northern Ireland 2022	Rank	Republic of Ireland 2022	Republic of Ireland 1971
Grace	1	Emily	Mary
Emily	2	Grace	Catherine
Fiadh	3	Fiadh	Margaret
Olivia	4	Sophie	Fiona
Isla	5	Lily	Sinead
Aoife	6	Éabha	Ann
Lily	7	Ava	Elizabeth
Annie	8	Mia	Sharon
Evie	9	Ellie	Anne
Freya	10	Olivia	Deirdre

- In 2022, Northern Ireland and the Republic share the same top 3 girls' names and, with Lily and Olivia, 5 of the top 10.

Transformation and greening of society and the economy and major urgent changes to sectors such as Renewable Energy and its efficient use and storage, Transport, Food Production, Building, Recycling and Waste Management and the skills needed to serve those sectors, with possibly new working arrangements, are urgent requirements.

- None of the girls' first names in 1971 feature in the top 10 in the Republic in 2022.
- None of the girls' names in the top 10 list for 2022 feature in the top 100 in 1971.
- Olivia, the top name in 2022 in England and Wales and also in Scotland, features on both Irish top 10 lists.
- In 1965, 293 girls were named Brigid but fewer than 3 in 2021. In 1964, 596 girls were named Bridget but only 20 in 2021.

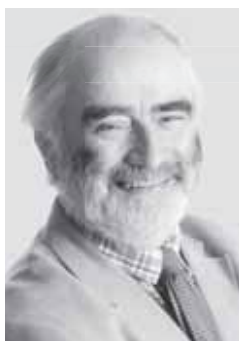
Climate Change: For the remainder of this century Ireland, in addition to Population Structure change, will face the major challenge of global climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has estimated that global warming due to green-house emissions will exceed 1 degree Centigrade and may reach 1.5 degree Centigrade – an agreed upper limit – by 2030.

Transformation and greening of society and the economy and major urgent changes to sectors such as Renewable Energy and its efficient use and storage, Transport, Food Production, Building, Recycling and Waste Management and the skills needed to serve those sectors, with possibly new working arrangements, are urgent requirements.

The highly developed countries, such as Ireland, are the major producers of greenhouse gases. These are the countries with low Fertility Rates – below replacement – and dependency on inward skilled migrant flows. Recent research suggests that countries with ageing populations have a decline in entrepreneurship and a decrease in creative disruptive research. Their Knowledge Infrastructure has the urgent task of informing all citizens of the consequences of Climate Change and of urgently identifying and producing the new skills and research outcomes that will enable a rapid productive transformation to a green economy.

Some undeveloped countries, with high Fertility Rates, are the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change – extreme weather events, flooding, drought, desertification, sea rises and fires. Climate change may lead to some major refugee flows, on top of existing economic migration and asylum-seeking flows. Again, education and research have a major and urgent task of enabling environmentally friendly development in some underdeveloped countries – with assistance from developed countries such as Ireland.

Ambitious urgent targets need to be set. Ireland, long known as the Green Isle, needs to establish a second environmental justification for this title.



Seán McDonagh is a former Director of an Institute of Technology and a former University Lecturer in Mathematics. He was Director of the Skills Initiative Unit promoting actions to increase the supply of technicians to the Irish economy. He was a member of the national Expert Group for Future Skill Needs. Recent activities have included membership of an international group advising on Educational Strategy in the Sultanate of Oman. He was keynote speaker at a European Conference of the Universities of Applied Science in the Hague and at a meeting of the Danish University Colleges at Kolding. He has spoken on education in Columbia and at the national conference of the British Educational Studies Association.

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Build a Career in Construction

Trish Flanagan



There has never been a more exciting time to work in the construction industry. It is a rapidly growing industry that offers exciting careers in many varied roles such as:

- Design
- Engineering
- Skilled Trades (e.g., plumbing, electrician, carpentry)
- Building Information Modelling (BIM) Specialist
- Construction Management
- Environmental Health & Safety
- Quantity Surveying
- Building Services Engineer

There are people needed in a diverse range of roles and so there is a position for everyone in the industry and a training route to get you there from third level courses to apprenticeships and traineeships.

The construction sector is currently experiencing shortages of talent to deliver on many projects, and it is estimated that 80,000 additional workers will be required to deliver on the National Development Plan, Housing for All and National Retrofit Scheme over the next 10 years. With approximately half the workforce over 45 years of age, it is crucial that there is a pipeline of skilled workers to both replace the existing workforce and to meet current industry demands.

CAREERS CAMPAIGN

The Construction Industry Federation (CIF) is working to encourage more young people into the industry through our latest careers campaign. To raise awareness of the career opportunities in the industry, CIF has developed three initiatives:

1 DIGITAL CAMPAIGN - TIKTOK

The CIF kicked off the New Year by promoting the variety of careers that construction has to offer through a TikTok campaign, featuring young construction workers across carpentry and electrical apprenticeships, building information modelling (BIM) specialist, projects and civil engineering and health and safety. The campaign has been run in line with CAO application dates and is targeting students on a platform that they use and engage with.

2 SCHOOLS SAFE PASS PROGRAMME

In association with SOLAS, Safe Pass courses were offered to over 550 TY and LCA students in 30 schools during the last school year. The programme was extremely popular and the uptake by students was high, showing that young people have a keen interest to work in the construction industry.

3 WORK EXPERIENCE COMPETITION - CONSTRUCTING YOUR FUTURE

The Construction Industry Federation launched a 'Constructing Your Future' video competition. We asked TY and LCA students to complete the work experience element of their course in the construction industry and then tell us the story of their experience in a short-form video.



With just over 9% of those working in the industry female, there's a large portion of the labour market not being utilised - this needs to change.

The competition received entries from across the country, with the winning entry from Rosses Community School in Donegal. The understanding of the construction industry and the creativity and enthusiasm shown in the video submissions stood out. This is most encouraging to see since the industry needs young, vibrant, creative, innovative and tech-savvy people to work in the industry.

APPRENTICESHIPS

In 2021 there were a total of 4,944 new construction apprentice registrations, the highest level of registrations since 2007. In 2022 the number was 4,504, a slight decrease due to uncertainty in the current climate. It is forecast to increase again between 2023 and 2025.

The CIF actively attends open days and events to promote apprenticeships. From recent engagements, there is a clear interest from students to go the apprenticeship route once they complete school.

Apprenticeships are a great way to gain practical on the job experience whilst in training and getting paid. We work closely with the Techno Teachers Association and the Institute of Guidance Counsellors to provide information and promote careers in the industry.

APPRENTICESHIP REGISTRATIONS

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Brick & Stonelaying	81	80	56	148	72
Carpentry & Joinery	591	597	563	847	713
Painting & Decorating	30	31	24	43	23
Plastering	29	36	20	38	31
Plumbing	653	628	560	875	792
Stonecutting & Stonemasonry	7	3	3	9	8
Wood Manufacturing & Finishing	95	102	75	155	144
Electrical	1841	1949	1740	2748	2648
Construction Plant Fitter	71	73	63	81	73
Total	3398	3499	3104	4944	4504

Source: SOLAS

DIVERSITY

The construction sector is constantly growing and will be the vehicle that provides solutions to housing, green energy and better infrastructure in Ireland. More women are needed in the industry for Ireland to meet its targets and to meet the current demand for skills.



Katie O'Connell, an electrical apprentice with Mercury Engineering, speaks to YouTuber and influencer, Jamie Jay Carr, about her apprenticeship and course as part of CIF's careers in construction TikTok campaign.

With just over 9% of those working in the industry female, there's a large portion of the labour market not being utilised – this needs to change. Women can take on any role in the construction industry and more women will lead to a more productive, diverse and efficient industry.

This gender imbalance needs to be addressed by breaking down the pre-conceived ideas of what working in the industry is like. Parents, schools, teachers and society needs to change their industry view and encourage more women to do an apprenticeship or a construction or engineering related course offered as part of CAO.

TRENDS IN THE SECTOR

The composition of employment across the construction sector has been changing in recent years, reflecting the emerging technological developments, which are transforming the way in which the sector is innovating into the future.

There are fast changing technological and environmental factors, such as the increasing importance of Building Information Modelling (BIM), off-site construction, and the additional upskilling needed to enhance the sector's response to the effects of climate change on the built environment.

Change in the sector is being driven by the need to improve competitiveness, to address climate change, and the need for dramatically improved sustainability.

With these advancements, the industry of today will look a lot different to the industry of the future – it's an excited space to work in.

Trish Flanagan is Education and Skills Executive with the Construction Industry Federation (CIF).



pieta

Eileen Cunningham



THE NATIONAL PICTURE

In recent years, Ireland has continued to be confronted with an issue that demands our collective attention: suicide and self-harm among young people. It is crucial for educational leaders and the education system to acknowledge the nature, scope and size of this issue and take proactive steps to address it.

The issue of suicide and self-harm in young people is complex and multifaceted. It is influenced by a variety of factors, including adverse childhood experiences, mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety, social and cultural pressures and academic stress.

The statistics surrounding youth suicide and self-harm in Ireland paint a difficult picture. Suicide remains one of the leading causes of death among young people aged 15 to 34. CSO Suicide Statistics from 2019 to 2021, show that 19 counties in Ireland had rates exceeding the national rate of 7.6 per 100,000 population. In addition to this, over the past 20 years, the highest rates of self-harm have consistently been observed in young people. Increases in self-harm among children aged 10-14 years indicate that the age of onset of self-harm is decreasing.

These trends underline the need for adequate child and adolescent mental health services across the country and the importance of well-being frameworks and preventative interventions in educational settings.

School leaders have a critical role to play in preventing suicide and self-harm among young people. They are in a unique position to identify and support at-risk students, promote positive mental health and create a safe and inclusive environment. However, we cannot solely rely on schools to address this issue. Our education system needs to take a top-down approach and prioritise mental health, well-being, suicide and self-harm prevention. We need to invest in mental health resources, including additional counselling services, and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health conditions.

Moreover, we need to create a culture where mental health is not just a "buzzword" but a fundamental aspect of our education system. We need to ensure that suicide and self-harm awareness and prevention is included in our curriculums, and our staff are adequately trained to identify

and support students and colleagues, who may be struggling.

How Can Pieta Help?

Pieta is a suicide and self-harm charity providing services within the Republic of Ireland. Our qualified counsellors specialise in suicide and self-harm prevention and bereavement services in the case of loss by suicide. 65% of Pieta's clients are currently under the age of 25 and 69% are aged 12 to 35.

If referring a student under 18, the first step for anyone to do is to involve the student's parents or guardian. If you are concerned about a student, you can call Pieta's Freephone helpline on 1800 247 247 to get advice on how to respond to the situation. You can also receive support for yourself on how best to process the information.

WHAT DO PIETA CURRENTLY OFFER IN SCHOOLS?

Education and Training

Pieta's Education and Training services provide the Resilience Academy and Amber Flag initiatives free to all who register. Our Education and Training team is also working on new resources related to suicide and self-harm for post-primary school staff and parents.

Amber Flag

The Pieta Amber Flag Initiative recognises the individual efforts of primary and secondary schools, Youthreach, third level institutions, community groups and clubs to create healthy, inclusive environments that support mental well-being. This year, 646 schools and organisations registered for Pieta's Amber Flag. Schools or organisations interested in participating in the Amber Flag can contact amberflag@pieta.ie for more information.

Resilience Academy

The Resilience Academy offers programmes for secondary school students aimed at equipping them with emotional resilience tools. Skills training programmes aim to increase protective factors such as coping skills, problem solving, decision making and cognitive skills. While these programmes don't directly target suicide, by targeting risk factors and giving youth important skills, the goal is to prevent the development of suicidal behaviour.

We aim to equip young people with the skills and knowledge to support themselves not just now but long into the future. This year, 76 schools around Ireland registered over 21,000 students to take part in our Resilience Academy. We offer the four week "Road to Resilience" programme for Junior Cycle groups and a short once-off workshop, "Building Resilience" for all year groups. School interested in participating in the Resilience Academy can contact resilience@pieta.ie for more information.

Signs of Suicide:

Schools can learn more about some of the SIGNS of suicide on our website pieta.ie. We also provide downloadable Signs of Suicide posters, leaflets, and social media assets to help spread the word on how to support someone who may be in suicidal crisis.

WHAT ELSE DO PIETA OFFER?

Our professional, qualified Pieta therapists offer one-to-one therapeutic services to people who are experiencing thoughts of suicide, those who engage in self-harm and those bereaved by suicide. Our services can be availed of over the phone, by video, or in one of our centres nationwide. All our services are provided free of charge and no referral is needed.

Crisis Helpline: The Crisis Helpline can be contacted by calling 1800 247 247 or texting 'HELP' to 51444 (standard text message rates apply). The Crisis Helpline is available for people throughout Ireland who need immediate support during a time of suicidal crisis. The service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and is accessible from anywhere in the Republic of Ireland.

Therapy Services: Pieta's therapy services include counselling for suicidal thoughts or self-harm. Call 0818 111 126 to arrange an appointment. We offer short-term, solution-focused counselling over the phone, by video, or in one of our centres across the country. Pieta provides up to 12 free, one-to-one counselling sessions. Counselling is offered nationally – by video, phone, or in-person at one of our centres across Ireland.

Bereavement Services: Pieta's bereavement services offer practical support and counselling to anyone who needs help in the aftermath of a loss through suicide.

Suicide Bereavement Therapy is available for children, adolescents, and individuals following a loss through suicide.

What can School Leaders do?

- 1. Raise awareness:** promote open discussions about mental health, de-stigmatise seeking help, and ensure that students, teachers, and parents are educated about the warning signs and risk factors associated with suicide and self-harm.
- 2. Implement mental health support:** establish strong support systems within schools and encourage staff training on mental health issues to equip teachers with the skills to identify and respond effectively to at-risk students.

- 3. Foster a positive school culture:** create a culture of inclusion, empathy, and respect where students feel connected, valued, and supported. Encourage the development of student-led initiatives that promote mental well-being and provide platforms for expression.

In addition to these general strategies, specific cases may require a more tailored approach such as:

- 1. Identify at-risk students:** develop comprehensive systems to identify students who may be struggling with mental health issues. Encourage staff to be vigilant for warning signs such as social withdrawal, changes in behaviour, or academic decline.
- 2. Establish partnerships:** collaborate with mental health professionals, local community organisations and parents to provide a holistic support network for at-risk students.
- 3. Develop individualised plans:** Work closely with students, their families, and relevant professionals to create personalised care plans. These plans should include strategies for managing mental health, regular check-ins, and clear communication channels between school, home, and healthcare providers.

In conclusion, suicide and self-harm in young people are issues that cannot be ignored. As school leaders and members of the Irish education system, we have a collective responsibility to support and protect our young people's mental health. While progress has been made in recent years, more must be done to address this pressing issue.

It is essential to continue raising awareness, destigmatising mental health, and prioritising the well-being of our youth. By working together and taking a comprehensive approach, we can create a world where suicide, self-harm and stigma have been replaced by hope, self-care and acceptance.



Ending Suicide
Beginning Hope

Freephone

1800 247 247

pieta.ie



SCAN ME

Eileen Cunningham is the Education and Training Manager with Pieta, responsible for the provision and development of Pieta's preventative education services. A qualified post-primary school teacher, she has worked in the various educational roles for over 13 years.



Oscars and BAFTAs in abundance in Ballyfermot College of Further Education

Cecilia Munro



Left to right: Andrew Jones, Richard Baneham, Joe Letter and Stephen Rosenbaum celebrate at the 95th Oscars March 2023.

Ballyfermot College of Further Education (BCFE) is widely recognised, nationally and internationally, for its excellence and success in the Creative Arts. Established in the 1970s, originally as a DEIS school, BCFE is a pioneer in the delivery of Further Education and Training (FET) and its model has been replicated throughout Ireland and across the globe.

Central to BCFE's success is the ability of its teaching and support teams to allow students to develop creativity, individually and collaboratively. Working with the College community, the Senior Leadership Team ensures that the learning environment places the development of students at the centre of everything it does.

BCFE has consistently high standards of teaching and learning and this has resulted in College graduates being highly respected and sought after, having the creative skills needed to succeed in a wide range of areas such as Animation, Art, Media, Music and Visual Effects. BCFE fosters and encourages graduates to develop their creativity, having first learned and embedded the basic building blocks. The key to the College's success is having deeply committed, forward looking and experienced staff with a detailed knowledge of, and connections to, the national and global Creative Arts industries. Many Ballyfermot graduates have won global recognition and awards for their skills and talents, particularly in Music, Animation and Visual Effects.

Richard Baneham is one of BCFE's well known graduates. In 2010 he won an Oscar for his work on the movie *Avatar*. Earlier this year he won his second Oscar and first BAFTA for the visual effects that Richard and his team created for the movie *Avatar: the Way of Water*. Richard is considered to be a trailblazer and global leader in his field.

Since graduating from BCFE in 1994, he has continued to innovate and develop his craft and has led different teams in the production of his creative vision. They are loyal to him and they, in turn, have supported him in delivering on his vision. Within Richard's team are numerous BCFE graduates who have also established themselves within the Animation and Visual Effects

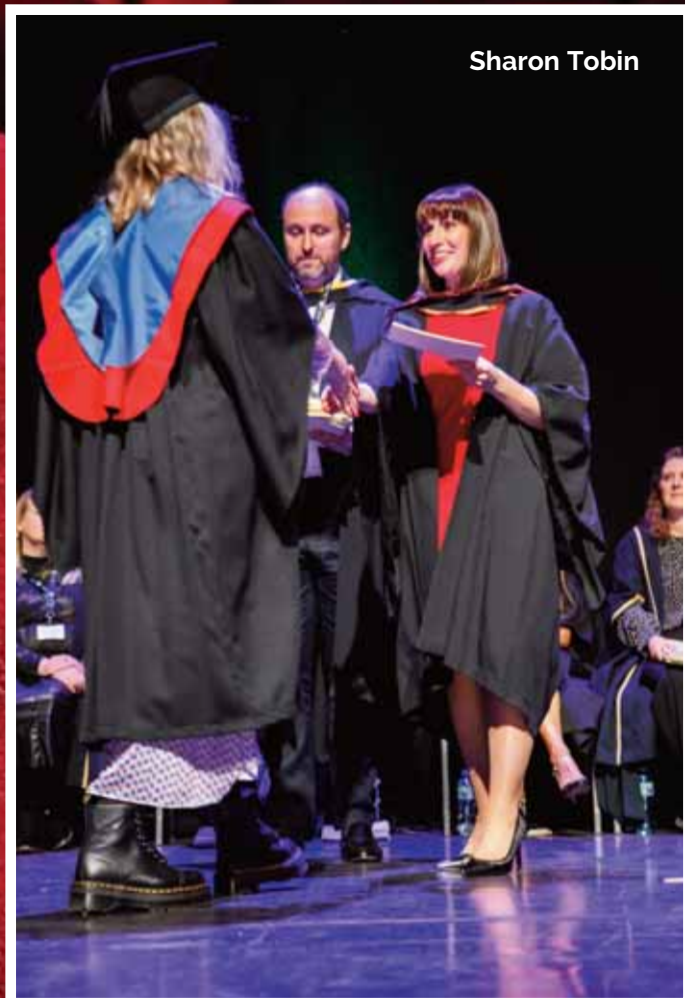


Industries. He is based in Los Angeles in close proximity to many other Ballyfermot graduates. With them and others, he has had a long and successful career working on many successful productions.

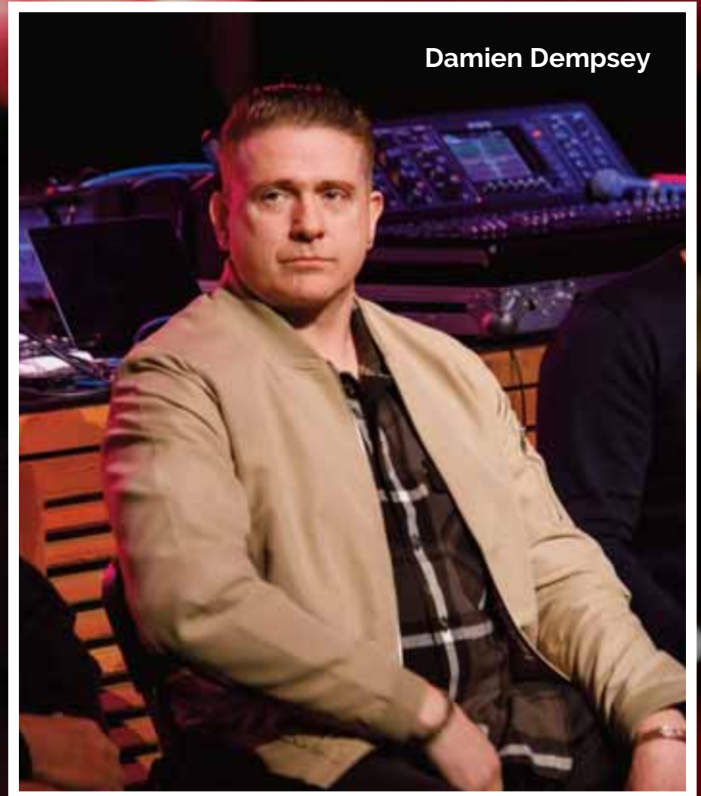
"Our LA Family was made up of ten people who lived in the neighbourhood, from the same class I graduated from. We have kids in the same schools, on the same sports teams. The key here is that all members of the team respect and support each other in working towards completing a production. The team behind you, who supports your vision, clears the way for the leader to be creative"

Richard Baneham

To be successful, Richie developed loyal working friendships, resembling, I suggest, the working relationship that Principals and Deputy Principals need to have with their own staff.



Sharon Tobin



Damien Dempsey

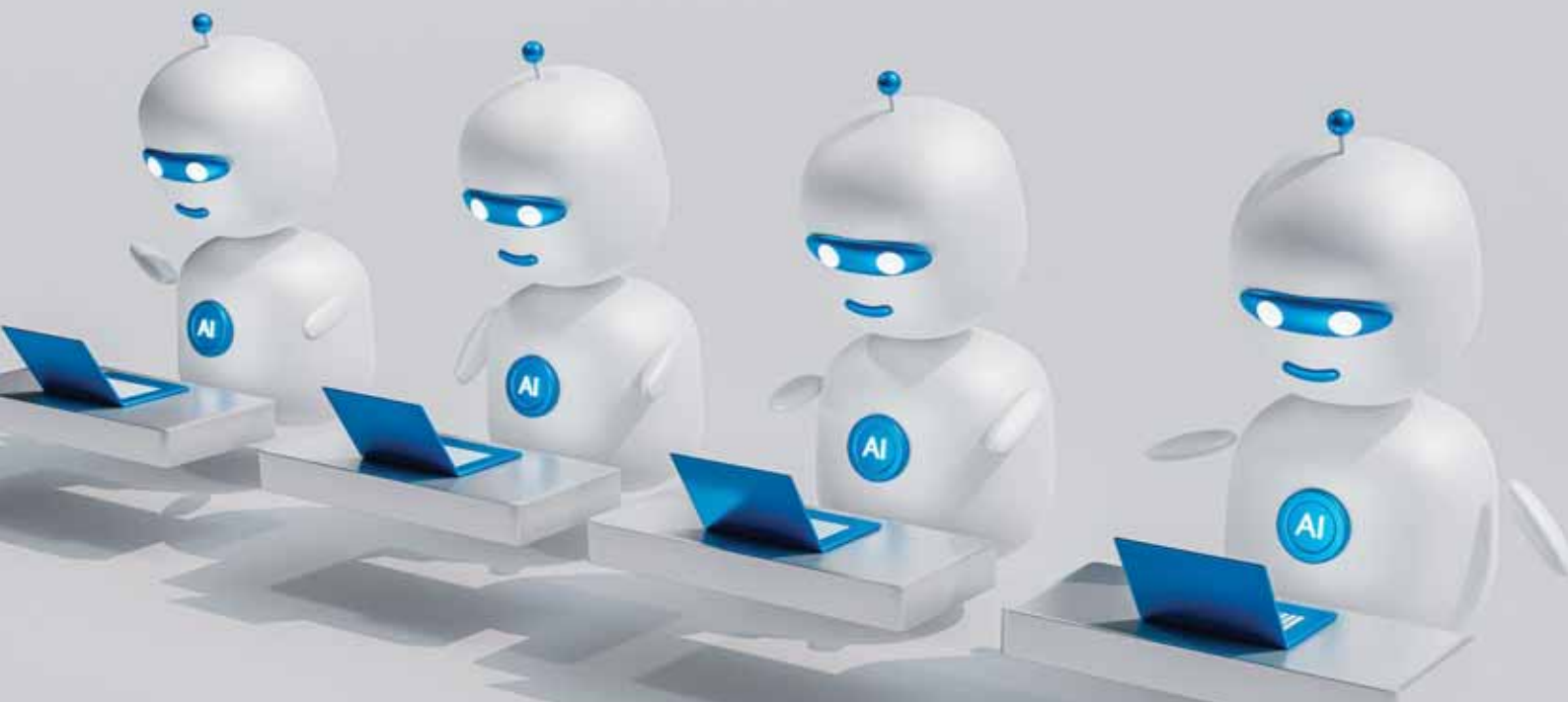
Richard has never forgotten his Irish roots and particularly where he is from – Tallaght in Dublin – and where he went to school and where he learned his trade. He attended Old Bawn Community School in Tallaght before moving to BCFE. He now works with many BCFE graduates who have established well-recognised companies both here in Ireland and abroad such as *Jam Media*, *Brown Bag*, *Cartoon Saloon* and *Kavaleer*. Critically, Richie says that while they professionally compete against each other, they do so respectfully, assisting and encouraging fellow Ballyfermot graduates to gain the success that he has achieved.

We in Ballyfermot College are very proud of Richard's achievements. Richard Baneham is but one in a very long list of Ballyfermot graduates to achieve national and international success. There is a long list of other well-known alumni, of whom we are also very proud.



Cecilia Munro is Principal of Ballyfermot College of Further Education. Previously she was Principal of Dún Laoghaire Further Education Institute.





Harnessing the Power of Chat GPT

An Innovative Tool for Teachers and Students

Ann Marcus Quinn

Since March 2023 there has rarely been a week where AI in general and specifically Chat GPT have not been discussed in the media. People working at all levels across the Education sector have also been focussing their attention on the impact of this “new” technology. Chat GPT, an advanced language model, is capable of engaging in dynamic conversations and completing many academic classroom tasks in a fraction of the time that a human would need.

The technology is here. Now lecturers and teachers need to assess how they can harness the power of this technology to unlock opportunities to enhance learning experiences, foster creativity, and encourage critical thinking.

For some students, Chat GPT may capture and maintain their attention more than the traditional lesson. When I was visiting schools (more than 15 years ago) to carry out classroom-based research as part of my own PhD I observed students using interactive poetry lessons on the school PCs. The use of the PC was still a novelty for many, and as the content was loaded on to a CD ROM, the task did not require an internet connection.

Some teachers told me that the students who would usually be disruptive were more engaged with the task at hand when they used the PC. Chat GPT could serve as a powerful tool to enhance engagement by creating interactive and personalised learning experiences. Teachers can use Chat GPT to generate real-time discussions,

quizzes and debates, providing students with the opportunity to actively participate and explore different perspectives. By fostering a collaborative and interactive environment, we as educators, can encourage deeper understanding and retention of knowledge.

LEARNING SUPPORT

When language translation tools such as Google Translate launched back in the early 2000s, language learners quickly took advantage of the tools to access a quick translation of text. Students using the tool to complete translation homework quickly learned that the output was rarely without errors. However, such tools certainly sped up the process and helped students to create an early draft. For the best part of the last decade, I have been encouraging the third level students I teach to use online supports such as Grammarly to help them to identify issues with their writing. Grammarly offers both a free and a premium service checking for errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation and clarity in English language texts. Students who regularly used a service such as Grammarly learned from their mistakes and the quality of their writing improved.

The mechanics of language are tricky for some students to master and if Chat GPT can provide personalised assistance to students outside of regular classroom hours it will be a valuable assistant for both teachers and students. This technology can also enable stronger students to ask questions, seek clarification and receive immediate feedback, which can promote a greater sense of autonomy and self-directed learning.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND PROJECT WORK

Research and project work now play a crucial role in the Junior Cycle and Chat GPT can potentially serve as a research companion for some more isolated students who may be unable to meet with classmates outside of the regular school day. Chat GPT can assist students in gathering information, exploring diverse sources, and organising their findings. Leveraging Chat GPT's capabilities can enable students to access a vast range of knowledge, both from academic databases and the internet and can help them to achieve a well-rounded understanding of a topic. A student who is unsure of where to even begin a task can ask Chat GPT for suggestions on how to structure a project and this AI jumpstart can be the difference in a student actually engaging with a project or choosing not to complete the work.

CONCLUSION

Incorporating Chat GPT into classrooms can revolutionise the learning experience for both teachers and students. By leveraging the power of this innovative technology, educators can create engaging and personalised learning

environments, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and effective communication skills.

While technology is not a replacement for human interaction, Chat GPT can serve as a valuable tool to complement traditional teaching methods, enrich educational experiences and prepare students for the challenges of the future. By embracing the possibilities offered by Chat GPT, we as educators can empower students to really think about the task at hand and become active participants in an increasingly interconnected world.



Ann Marcus-Quinn is Course Director for the MA Technical Communication and E-Learning. She is based in the School of English, Irish, and Communication at the University of Limerick.

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Louise Crowley & Celine Griffin

SECOND-LEVEL BYSTANDER INTERVENTION PILOT PROGRAMME

The UCC Bystander Intervention programme was awarded funding from the Irish Research Council New Foundations to create a bespoke programme for secondary school Senior Cycle students. The 2022 second level pilot programme content is modelled on the UCC Bystander Intervention programme but amended to ensure that the language and content is age appropriate, and that the fictional scenarios reflect the lived reality of the second-level audience.



SCAN ME

The programme was launched in March 2022. Staff from 50 schools nationally undertook training from March to November 2022. Online training was delivered to 170 teachers in groups of 10-12, at 3 hours per training sessions. The appetite for the training and the hugely positive experience reported by the participating schools demonstrates the potential for an all-of-society reach for bystander intervention training.

Our impact data indicates a very real capacity for cultural change with an awakening of capacity, both individually and collectively, to recognise and challenge unacceptable behaviour and to demand a better, more respectful experience for all.

The second level pilot programme has also shone a light on the very challenging and prevalent experiences of young people in Irish society and the urgent need for consistent and evidence-based education to support their better understanding and capacity for proactive responses.

The overarching aim of the pilot programme is to educate and empower participating students, to identify and demand a new normal of respect, fuelled by a recognition of their own capacity to be agents for change, ensuring a safer and more respectful society for them and their peers.

The six workshops are:

1. What is a Bystander?
2. Consent and Healthy Relationships
3. Social Norms and Sexual Harassment
4. Online Harassment and Image Based Abuse
5. Being an Active Bystander
6. Reflection

STUDENTS REFLECTION OF THE PROGRAMME

The final module of the programme invited students to creatively express their greatest learning from the programme through artwork, poetry, collage etc. The following artwork was created by students in Christian Brothers School, Cork, visually highlighting their key learnings from their engagement with the programme.

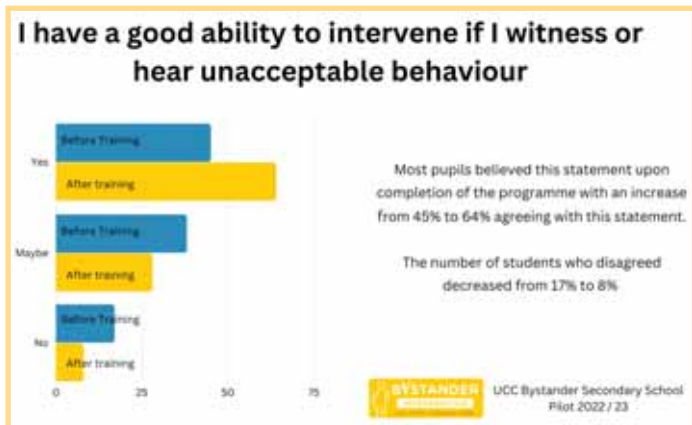


RESEARCH DATA

Qualitative data from the participating students, determining their pre- and post programme understanding, allowed the Bystander Team to assess the nature and impact of the programme on the students' capacity and willingness to participate as pro-social bystanders.



The overarching aim of the pilot programme is to educate and empower participating students, to identify and demand a new normal of respect, fuelled by a recognition of their own capacity to be agents for change, ensuring a safer and more respectful society for them and their peers.



Students were asked to use one word to describe how they felt upon completion of the programme:



FOCUS GROUPS

School staff who delivered the programme participated in focus groups and provided very positive feedback overall. They are acutely aware of the issues and harms young people are experiencing and were very enthusiastic about delivering the programme. They found the course content and materials to be age appropriate and interactive for students, enabling rich discussion and peer learning through group work. Staff found the training and support materials provided to them as facilitators, to be very valuable.

SOME STAFF COMMENTS

"Enjoyed spontaneous feedback from students – enriched the discussion"

"Proactive, engaging and practical"

"User friendly – easy to navigate by teachers and students"

"Rewarding experience, students engaged well with content"

"Students engaged best with practical tasks – walking debate/discussion"

"Amazing resources, ready to use and well organised"

"More staff want to be trained to deliver content"

"Students found the content excellent"

"Students are disappointed to miss out on training if they have to attend a match"

"The content is long overdue"

"Students were not aware that consent is reversible"

"We are doing young people a disservice if graduating from school without it"

THE FUTURE OF THE BYSTANDER INTERVENTION SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAMME

As educators we are encouraged by the positive learning and teaching experience of participating schools. We are actively seeking funding to support the delivery of this programme in 2023-24, for both existing participating schools and those that wish to commence the training. There is more demand than capacity to deliver the training and so, for now, we are maintaining a waiting list.

Queries can be directed to: bystander@ucc.ie

Professor Louise Crowley,
Director UCC Bystander Intervention Programme

Céline Griffin,
Manager UCC Bystander Intervention Programme

Louise Crowley is a Professor in Family Law at the School of Law, UCC. In 2016 Louise developed the Bystander Intervention initiative at UCC which seeks to enhance awareness of the dangers of the normalisation of sexual misconduct and to empower staff and students to actively challenge this behaviour.



Céline Griffin is the Bystander Programme Manager. She has played a key role in a range of projects to extend the reach of the programme, including adapting it to a workplace setting, creating the RSVP (Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention) module for first year UCC students, as well as co-developing delivery of bespoke training of teachers to support the roll out of the secondary school Pilot Programme.



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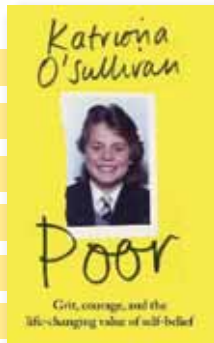
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The Leader Review

Book Title:	Poor
Author:	Katriona O'Sullivan
Date:	May 2023
ISBN:	978-1844886210
Publisher:	Sandycove
Reviewer:	Paul Mooney



Unless you've been hiding on a desert island since the beginning of the year, you've probably heard about the book *Poor* by Dr Katriona O'Sullivan. Even if you already know the outline story or read a dozen reviews, get your hands directly on this book. The combination of authenticity and the pace of the storytelling makes this a superb read.

The 'arc' of this true-life tale is akin to a modern-day Charles Dickens novel. Katriona, the 2nd eldest of 5 children, grew up in the English Midlands. Her parents had a lifelong struggle with heroin and other addictions. As a result, every possible misery was inflicted on the kids (hunger, going to school in rags, rape by a family friend, a litany of depravities). The story looked inter-generational when, at 15, Katriona herself became pregnant - had a son - and moved into a 'squat' with other people living on the margins of society.

Then, almost magically, the path began to divert upwards. Miraculously and against all odds, she ended up completing an undergraduate degree and subsequently a PhD in Trinity College Dublin. Katriona now lectures in Maynooth University. Paddy Power would have offered 1,000 to 1 against this result. So, what happened? What catalyst changed a trajectory that looked almost certain to end in prison or premature death?

When wrestling with complex issues, we so often want to find 'Ladybird' answers. The 'system' (education, social security, medical) had failed this family. Alternatively, the power of individual potential explains this Everest climb. The book avoids offering simplistic solutions. It's neither about systems failure nor hero worship. What emerges is a complex interplay of factors - empathic teachers focused on potential, system successes in terms of family support, burning personal ambition and so on. This 'interplay' of factors makes for absolutely compelling reading.

In addition to the baseline story, the book is littered with memorable lines. Speaking about her father (who was Irish)

she said: "There was not going to be a eureka moment, not for Tony. He would free-fall into this fire until the end".

She recalled that "the horizon on Hillfields was broken in places by high-rise flats, like tombstones against the skyline" and later on that "with every cuddle Katie (her best friend) got, it was like I lost another. Katie had a real mum and I didn't. Mine was broken".

The directness of the language captures Katriona's internal struggle to make sense of what happened to her, versus the core human need to feel valued and loved by our parents. Many of us who have swam close to addiction, either directly ourselves or in our families, will understand that the 'drug' (including alcohol) dominates and everything else becomes secondary. Katriona's story, while unique and horrible, will be understood by many.

Those looking for simple lessons learned will be disappointed. *Poor* highlights the complexity of interrelated societal forces. And that's a good thing. But, beyond any sociological musings, this magical book shines a beacon on human potential. Intelligence is equally distributed across all classes.

We see the impact of brilliant teachers and mentors, with their power to change lives. Beyond designer labels, we find kids and adults from all walks of life who have the potential to become anything they want to be. Some overcome almost insurmountable odds to reach their goals.

By making the 'almost-impossible' possible, this book is a tale to be savoured. A modern-day epic struggle written in no-nonsense, engaging style. Buy this book for yourself. Buy it for your kids. Buy it for your friends.

It's a story that needs to be heard. It's a story that will make us all reflect - of what we have already have rather than what's missing in our lives.

Paul Mooney is a former President of the National College of Ireland. For 25 plus years, he has been helping leaders to address personal and professional challenges, along with supporting organisations to resolve problems and develop capability. He began his working life as a butcher in Dublin. Then moved into production management and subsequently held a number of HR roles in Ireland and Asia. For the last number of years, he has specialised in Organisation and Management Development.





A New Model For Teaching Nature

Patrick Kirwan

We have designed an education system that neglects to meaningfully teach our students about nature. We need nature for air quality, the water cycle and food security – it is the basis of our economy. Something so fundamental to life should be the central tenet of our education system, but it isn't.



It's time for radical transformational change. Last academic year we installed an outdoor classroom on site and I got to realise my dream to replicate an Environmental Leadership Development Programme, that I had developed in London, in Árdcoil na Mara in Waterford.

The programme involves training of a small group (15) of TY students who would deliver nature engagement workshops to Wellbeing classes. Groups of students are paired with a TY student leader and they are taught how to deconstruct and upcycle pallets into bird boxes, bug hotels and bug doors, make twine from phragmites, sow seeds, pot on seedlings and a host of other things. The student leaders also teach them about biodiversity, how climate and biodiversity are interlinked and the actions we can take to help.

A survey of 303 students showed that nearly 90% wanted more time in the outdoor classroom. One felt that *"the outdoor*

classroom is needed to understand biodiversity". Another noted that it *"helps me concentrate a lot more and helps me feel better while learning"*. Students were effusive about the TY leaders, *"listening to them is better than listening to the teacher"*!

The TYs have numerous opportunities each week throughout the school year, to practice their leadership skills and accumulate evidence of how they are working towards meeting 10 leadership competencies. It was a transformative experience with a tremendous impact on their confidence, knowledge, attitudes, and practices.

Seeing is believing! This coming academic year we'll be offering place-based training with a CPD day on climate and a day on biodiversity.

School leaders and teachers interested in attending a training day, can register their interest with patrickkirwan@ardscoilnamara.ie.



Patrick Kirwan teaches in Ardscoil na Mara, Waterford.

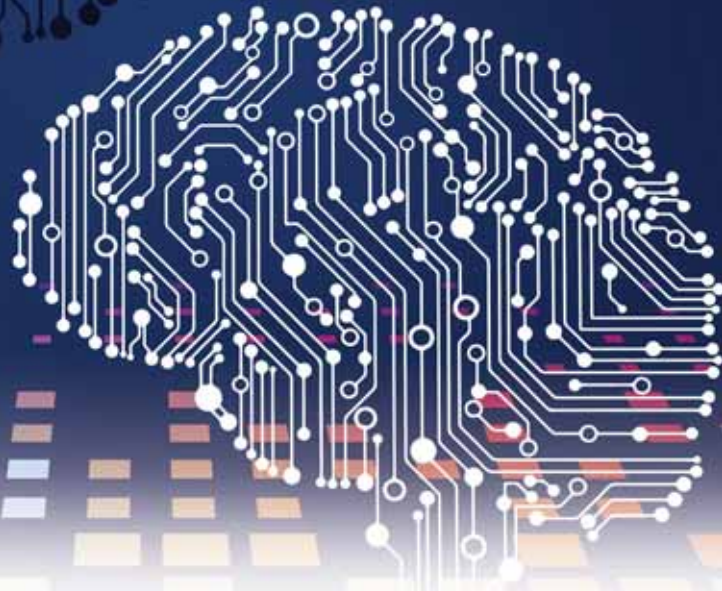
He founded The Irish Schools Sustainability Network (ISSN) to provide a forum for teachers and students to work in partnership to accelerate climate and ecological action.

You can follow Patrick on twitter [@growgardeners](https://twitter.com/growgardeners) or catch up with the ISSN [@IrishSchSusty](https://twitter.com/IrishSchSusty) or visit their website www.issn.ie.



Artificial Intelligence is coming our way, bringing big changes to all our lives. For certain, it will impact our schools. What might it look like in practice?

We asked Michael Jackson from the Olive Group, an Irish based international-leader, to explain how AI will change student classroom learning and, specifically, how flat text books and other learning materials will be revolutionised by AI.



AI IN EDUCATION: AIDING INSTRUCTION AND EASING CONCERNS

In an era inundated with information, misinformation, and apprehension about Artificial Intelligence (AI), society finds itself at the cusp of an Industrial Revolution, prompting the need to address AI's potential impacts. As we navigate this transformative education landscape, a dual responsibility emerges—to harness AI's potential for aiding learning, while ensuring a secure environment for its utilisation.

AI has the power to revolutionise education, and its potential impact spans numerous dimensions. Central to this is adapting to the consumption habits of the digital generation, who are accustomed to engaging with high-quality interactive content on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat. Traditional education models, often reliant on static textbooks, frequently fall short of effectively engaging students.

However, this time offers a remarkable opportunity to leverage AI to transform stagnant content into dynamic, interactive motion videos. Operating through an AI engine, existing educational content undergoes in-depth analysis where the AI engine selects pertinent templates, visuals, images, icons, and video clips from extensive repositories. These components are created into chosen templates, yielding high-quality, interactive motion videos enriched with dynamic workbooks.

UNLEASHING EDUCATIONAL DIVERSITY AND ACCESS

The ambit of AI's contribution expands beyond engagement—it democratises access to educational resources. An AI content tool streamlines the content creation process, facilitating schools' access to a plethora of materials available. This affords educational institutions the flexibility to select the most relevant and optimal content by subject, enabling tailor-made education that caters to individual student needs.

Furthermore, the transition to digital resources serves to reduce the reliance on physical materials, thereby trimming costs and fostering environmentally friendly practices. This pivot towards digital platforms also enables schools to retain control over the content that students can access, ensuring a secure, managed, and protected learning environment.

By establishing a secure and controlled content platform, the potential hazards associated with unverified content present on less secure online platforms are effectively eliminated.

IN PRACTICE WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR OUR SCHOOLS?

In the context of daily school operations, this holds several implications. Schools will gain more options, students will experience improved engagement and textbook authors will have broader creative possibilities.

Schools will be able to access content from various publishers, ensuring the best quality across subjects. This could even allow schools to choose specific chapters when needed. The decision-making power will rest with schools, driven by content quality.

Students will interact with high-quality content through an advanced interactive platform, tailored to their preferred consumption habits (Tik-Tok, Instagram etc).

For textbook authors, the availability of extensive interactive content repositories provides a platform for creating dynamic materials that were once only available to large production companies.

A pivotal decision approaches. Should we continue with the traditional approach to student interaction? Or should we embrace AI's potential to enrich learning experiences, with attendant personal and career benefits and keep our students competitive in the global employment market?

Offering a content platform allows us to manage and control content quality and how students engage, addressing concerns of misinformation and manipulation.

EMBRACING OPPORTUNITY OVER APPREHENSION

It is imperative that we shun apprehension and embrace the remarkable opportunity that AI in education presents.

Use the QR Code to get an overview of how the Olive Group engaged with Microsoft to highlight how the effective use of Digital Technology and AI can be integrated seamlessly into the teaching, learning and assessment practice in every classroom.



For further details, contact **Michael Jackson** at michael.jackson@olivegroup.io

NAPD-R

Early Summer Break in the West



On Monday 15 May some NAPD-R members met up in the Castlecourt Hotel in Westport, Co Mayo, for lunch, followed up by a walking tour of the town provided by a knowledgeable local.

Those of us who knew little or nothing about Westport were fascinated to hear about Westport House, the flattening and rebuilding of Westport around the Octagon, the Brown family, Gráinne Mhaol, the bird boxes, the history of many of the buildings and so much more.

It wasn't all walking. We took a couple of breaks in establishments you would love to spend the evening in, listening to music or having the chat. Later we all met up

for dinner in the Castlecourt Hotel, enjoying ourselves into the small hours.

Thanks to Pauline Moran for organising this visit. So impressed were we, that a number of us promised to return another time for a longer visit.

Mary Friel retired in 2014 as Principal of Margaret Aylward Community College, Dublin.



NAPD-R Annual General Meeting and Golf Outing

Ciarán McCormack

If you are still leading a school, can I wish you all the best in the coming academic year. If you are retired, then the following might be of interest.

The AGM for NAPD-R will take place on Thursday 28 September in the Castleknock Hotel, Dublin. This will be followed by dinner in the Hotel.

A Golf tournament has been organised for the morning of the AGM, which will take place on the course adjacent to the Hotel.

Registration forms for the AGM and Golf, together with NAPD-R membership and subscription forms were sent by email in late July.

If you did not receive these or if you



are newly retired, please email napdretired22@gmail.com.

If you wish to stay overnight, you should make your own reservation.

We look forward to seeing as many retirees as possible at the golf, AGM and dinner.

Ciarán McCormack is Chairperson NAPD-R. He retired as Principal of St Paul's College, Raheny, Dublin in 2014.





The Very Useful Guide



Shay Bannon

NAPD's remit is to support the professional needs of school leaders in a constantly changing and increasingly demanding educational landscape. A key part its brief is to promote the health and welfare of Principals and Deputy Principals. NAPD is the only organisation specifically dedicated to this purpose.

The NAPD Welfare Committee was established in March 2012. Current members are:

Shay Bannon (*Chair*)
Paul Byrne (*outgoing Deputy Director*)
Chris Darby
Deborah Dunne
Kathy Finnegan
Siobhan Foster
Anne Gorby
Kieran Golden
John Gorman
Jimmy Keogh
Ceola McGowan
Rachel O'Connor (*incoming Deputy Director*)
Kathleen O'Donovan Ryan
Sarah Rice
Damhnait Uí Argáin

The President and NAPD Director Paul Crone attend meetings when available.

The Very Useful Guide (VUG) is an essential element of the work of the Committee's work. All guidelines and documents developed are in the member's section of the NAPD website at www.napd.ie and on the NAPD App.

The contents of the VUG are based on the experiences of school leaders who have shared their knowledge and insights, so that the information and advice offered reflects the reality of life at school level. The guidance documents are formatted as PDFs, so that members can download the required pages.

An indexed list of contents makes it easy to locate articles. The VUG is, by its nature, a work in progress and new inserts are added to the website as they are developed.

- You must be a registered member of the NAPD to access the VUGs.
- To access the VUG online, go to www.napd.ie and click on 'Very Useful Guides' on bar at top of screen. You will need your User Name and Password.
- To access the VUG using the NAPD App, download the NAPD App to your phone and click on the *More Section* where the VUGs are located.



The Welfare Committee continues to work to develop appropriate guides and resources. If members have ideas for policies or procedures to be included in the VUG, or if they feel they can contribute to our work in any way, please contact us at welfare@napd.ie.

All VUG documents and policies are written following consultation with members and are accurate at time of issue.* However, some guidance documents may need to be updated to reflect current practice and changes that have occurred over a period of time. We would ask that colleagues inform us of any required changes or shortcomings, so we can make the necessary adjustments – contact us at welfare@napd.ie.

** All the guidance documents on the VUG are advisory and are intended to assist schools in devising their own policies and procedures. School leaders and Boards of Management should also consult DES circulars, national legislation, and relevant guidelines from other authorities/bodies.*



Update on Ireland Principal & Deputy Principal Survey 2023

Deakin University has advised NAPD and IPPN that the draft report will be available in early September 2023, it is planned to have the final report available by the end of September 2023 (following receipt of feedback from both organisations).

Group Mentoring for new Deputy Principals

Máire Ní Bhróithe & Mary Keane



Region 5



Region 7



Region 1

Deputy Principal (DP) Mentoring is organised on a regional basis for DPs appointed in 2023.

WHO ARE THE MENTORS?

Last summer NAPD held training for DP Mentors. Each NAPD region now has 3 trained Group Mentors, all experienced DPs, who mentor new DPs.

WHAT SIZE ARE THE GROUPS?

Groups are varying in size around the country, depending on the number of DPs in the region. Last year Regions 4 and 9 had so many DPs that they decided to break up the group and organise 3 separate groups.

WHERE ARE MEETINGS HELD?

Meetings are usually held in Education Centres and hotels around the country. Sometimes they might be held in a school at the request of a specific group.

While some meetings take place online, most are face to face.

WHAT HAPPENS AT MEETINGS?

Meetings, preceded by lunch, last up to 2 hours. Participants discuss a wide range of issues such as Supervision and Substitution challenges, responding to critical incidents, motivating staff, first encounters with challenging parents, having difficult conversations with colleagues, their own well-being and time management.

Groups engage in discussion about the opportunities and difficulties they are experiencing in their new roles.

HOW OFTEN ARE THESE MEETINGS?

All groups will hold their first meeting before October mid-term. There will be a second meeting before Christmas, followed by two meetings after Christmas – usually one per term.

WHY SHOULD I JOIN A MENTORING GROUP?

Last year the mentors reported that there was an excellent level of engagement among the mentees and

that it really was a positive experience for the mentors and mentees. There was a general feeling that everyone was grateful to leave the busy nature of their school buildings on that day, to take time for themselves in creating a space to talk, to be listened to and to reflect.

Mentees appreciated the opportunity to network with each other. Contacts made in the first year often last throughout DPs' careers.

I WAS APPOINTED IN 2022 AND I NEVER GOT AN OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN A MENTORING GROUP LAST YEAR. CAN I JOIN A MENTORING GROUP NOW?

Yes – all are welcome. If you have not had an opportunity to be a part of group mentoring, please contact us.

HOW CAN I JOIN A MENTORING GROUP?

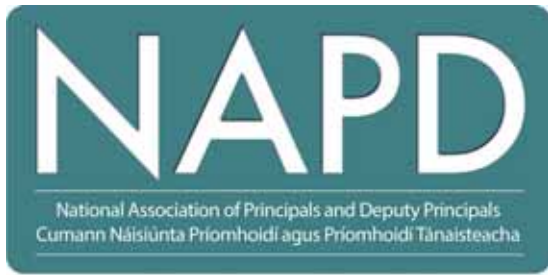
If you are a newly appointed DP and would like to join one of the mentoring groups, email mentoring@napd.ie. We will contact you and place you in a regional group. The mentors will subsequently contact you to invite you to the first meeting.

We wish all newly appointed DPs the very best in their new role and hope that the NAPD mentoring programme will benefit them throughout the 2023/2024 academic year and beyond.

Máire Ní Bhróithe and Mary Keane

are NAPD's Mentoring co-ordinators. Máire is a former Principal of Ratoath College, Co Meath, a former Education & Leadership Director of LMETB and a former National Deputy Director of the CSL. Mary is former Principal of Christ King Secondary School, Cork.





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Email: info@napd.ie
Website: www.napd.ie

Membership Term: September 1st - August 31st

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INFORMATION

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- Please indicate if you are a Newly Appointed Principal/Deputy Principal
YES NO

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MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION/ RENEWAL IS NOW OPEN

BENEFITS OF BEING A MEMBER OF NAPD

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- A leading voice in Irish Education with the Department of Education, IPPN, Management Bodies, SEC, NCSE, NCCA, Teaching Council, Teacher Unions, other Education bodies
- Access to ARAG insurance company which provides Legal Advice and Legal Fees Indemnity
- Key contributing partner with the Centre for School Leadership (CSL) within OIDE
- Mentoring through the NAPD Local Support Service
- Eligibility to attend NAPD Conferences and Regional Branch meetings
- Access to the NAPD website and The Very Useful Guide
- Dedicated specialist Sub-Committees and Working Groups, including Further Education & Training
- Access to Learning & Teaching Workshops
- Access to Arts-in-Education funding through Creative Engagement
- Monthly online Bulletin and Quarterly Leader
- Discounts for NAPD publications
- Pre-retirement advice and membership to NAPD-Retired
- Support by Regional Ambassadors

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Powerscourt Waterfall,
Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow

Photography by Charlie McManus