

NAPD

National Association of Professional Development  
Coaches for Schools  
Training and Supporting School Leaders - *Asghabháil do chéile*

January 2018

# Leader

BULLETIN



*St. Aloysius' College, Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork  
- putting the finishing touches to their  
amazing Creative Engagement Project 2017  
- The Secret Garden.*

# CARE, CALM AND CURE

The January Bulletin is late. By way of explanation, Derek West offers this narrative of life in the Orthopaedic Ward. It touches on the bedlam of the A&E crisis, which monopolised headlines at the start of the year, but truly it is a hymn of praise to a branch of public service that, in light of budgetary constraint, administration and organisational bungling, manages to provide a professional and humane service (he's talking about the nurses, the doctors, the caterers, the cleaners, everyone he came in contact with). This is not strictly relevant to educational leadership, but it does capture some of the compassionate and competent traits that serve as well in the school as in the hospital.

It all starts before Christmas [December 16] – coming up to 74. I decided to step my cycling up a notch or two, by purchasing an electric bike. I'm cautious on the bike. I'd purchased a wing mirror and a high-viz vest to keep me highly visible. I check for pot-holes and Luas tracks.

Then... Coming up Pearse Street, to turn into Tara, taking the bend with caution and aplomb, I lost it. The bike just went from under me, I landed hard on my right knee, in an abrupt, sudden shock. I was on the ground, there was a bus now close behind me, there were kind bystanders grabbing me and the bike and pulling me to the pavement.

At that stage I was more dazed and shocked than hurt, although I could see a focus of pain right on the knee. Confusion abating, thanks all round, offers of tea declined, I walked away, mounted my slightly-dented steed and went home. Inspection of the knee showed a round red bruise, almost rosy. No flesh broken, jeans intact.

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Two weeks pass. We're in Donegal. My wife decides enthusiastically on a supper party for Monday, January 1. I join in, without alcohol [just not in the mood], and find myself dragging my heels through the evening, feeling 'off', as with an impending flu, and increasingly aching in the right leg. The last half-hour before the guests leave is agony. I seem to be smiling and grimacing alternately, wishing them to hell, but keeping up an aching bonhomie. As soon as the front door closes on the last departing guest I flee to bed, wallowing in increasing misery, and sleep.



So, Tuesday, 2 January became Action Day!

Hobble into the Medical Centre in Ardara and am very quickly referred to Letterkenny University Hospital. I limp towards A&E, a scene out of Hieronymus Bosch. There's a big hall of formal, uncomfortable chairs, full of suffering people. But people are helpful and friendly – they hoosh up and move around so that my wife and I have adjoining seats. She does the 'business' at the reception hatch and I doze in a mixture of fatigue and self-pity. Time passes. Tick, tock. Tick, tock. Various hospital 'people' come and go, perhaps talking of Michelangelo, but more likely calling out random names into the ether for 'Triage'. After God knows how long, the call for 'Derek West!' comes.

We are ushered into the inner sanctum of A&E, which is quite like the outer sanctum, except it has rooms, and curtained-off bays, and some kind of control centre. A kind Indian doctor offers to take my bloods and says he's just off to find a space. He's just gone for about 45 minutes. In the end he takes my bloods in the corridor, amidst the other sufferers, many far worse off than me. Then after an interval, a nurse comes along and takes my details [Date of birth? Any allergies? And, once, Religion?] and my blood pressure. The statistics are recorded faithfully in a folder that is going to become the non-fiction account of my stay. I am a bit delirious; my wife is stoical, at times impatient.

Twelve hours pass in this manner. The human traffic is ceaseless in movement and variety, the ebb and flow of people on business, people intent on giving the impression of being on business, people with noses in the air, people clutching slips of paper and walking about, people calling out names 'Yes? No?' And always

the hurt and the hurting, placidly sitting there awaiting their fates.

Towards the end of this phase I'm X-rayed for the second time, this time the knee. Someone's taking the knee and the spreading infection seriously. Just short of midnight I'm placed on a bed – yes! A bed, not a trolley – and wheeled upstairs into a ward in Floor 3, Orthopaedic.

So, while somewhere in the distance, remote from my gentle delirium, the media are howling about an A&E crisis, I have slipped into the TLC of a super care-team and remain so for the next fortnight.



Gradually my life of healing takes some shape and order. A lot of the early days pass in a kind of haze – different visitors to the bedside with different tasks – Blood Pressure, Temperature, Pills, Anti-biotics. Checks that I still know my name and date of birth [and don't be flippant about it]. I get a lot of quality dozes in between all these visits. I think Day 1 in A&E, and the preceding days of decline had exhausted me, so I was grateful for all opportunities to drift away.

The nights are long, because they are interrupted for IV treatment – four times a day, 10 sachets of anti-biotics, pumped via cannulas through my arm, which is now like a pin cushion. All this for falling off a bike! I keep being reassured by the medics that the infection was 'very serious' but I'm still amazed at the time and attention it has commanded.

Five days into my stay, I get a late-slot in the theatre, a pleasant anaesthetic and an incisive procedure on the damaged swollen knee. I wake up back at base. The staff are lovely. Almost all the nurses are from Co. Donegal; all

but one or two, female. Pretty of face, chirpy of manner and totally competent. Each time the door opens, it seems to be a different face. They've got to know my name over the days; I struggle to remember theirs'. Doesn't help that they don't wear name tags. They work long hours and, as I chatted to some of them, I realised how tough that can be. One nurse is pregnant and she has two small children at home. She is constantly trying to juggle the demands of her erratic work hours, the shopping and the ironing, bedtime stories for the two-year-old and the four-year-old, the ever-spreading debris of plastic toys, and dovetailing all those activities with her husband's work as a farmer.

When I ask another nurse how she likes her job, she comes straight out with 'I hate it.' She'd done and MA and is contemplating a Doctorate, but still is sadly, adamantly unhappy about her work. I'd love to have talked further with her, but she was gone out of my room, out of my life, and never returned.

Another girl feels that the gap between management/admin. is too wide. 'They don't listen to us'. She is frustrated by being suddenly shifted from one ward to another, sometimes in the middle of dealing with a patient. While criticism of HSE is muted, no-one has a positive thing to say about it. Simon Harris had swept through A&E here, on a good day, and hadn't been back since. Doesn't sound if he enjoys any higher rating than his predecessors in Health.

You can expect patients to be grumpy. A number I shared with on Wednesday were in pain, if not agony. Their views were bound to be coloured by their acute discomfort, but there was a general mood of grouching. The mutterings were about politicians out for themselves, and all that kind of thing. The beds and trolleys crisis was a 'disgrace'. But what I found,

overwhelmingly after I passed through the needle eye onto a bed and into a ward, was that the service was superb. We only have to read of the current travails of the NHS in the UK, or think of the work of Médecins Sans Frontières, in the world's trouble spots, or to talk – as I did – to a young medic from Cape Town about conditions in public health in South Africa, to realise that we are doing remarkably well. Mind you, I've had nothing to do with elective surgery – mine was the emergency case that got through.

The real crisis here, as far as I could see, is the almost total absence of Irish medics in this regional hospital. My main contact was with a Mexican surgeon, a lovely man and a skilled one. I was attended to by an Egyptian consultant and doctors from Pakistan, India, South Africa and elsewhere. That certainly created a cosmopolitan atmosphere. They were all highly competent and fluent English speakers. It was fascinating to get glimpses of their varied backgrounds and their reactions to living in Ireland and in Letterkenny. They were generally very positive about the acceptance and the friendliness they have encountered. With our school leavers scabbling for places in medicine, with high-end departments in universities across the country and the high reputation of RCSI, surely we should be able to field a strong local team, build resource and continuity across our medical service?

OoooOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOoooo

This morning (January 17), the medics, including the consultant swept in, pronounced my imminent release, changed the dress, shook my hand and swept out.

Hurrah! I'm a free man! Now I can start to work on the Bulletin!

# SWEET VICTORY

*Overall winner: Simon Meehan, a TY student at Coláiste Choilm, Ballincollig, Co. Cork, flanked by Shay Walsh (CEO, BT Ireland) and Minister Richard Bruton, at the Award Ceremony at the BT Young Scientist, 2018. His project title: Investigation of the antimicrobial effects of both aerial and root parts of selected plants against Staphylococcus aureus.*

*Congratulations, too, to Syngé Street SS, which won the NAPD Award for the "Best Overall School in the Republic of Ireland.*



# TEACHER SUPPLY AND SHORTAGES

The NAPD Executive has decided to set up a working group on the question of teacher supply and shortages, an issue that has been rumbling with increasing volume since Cathnia Ó Muircheartaigh raised it in his Presidential address at Killarney last October. Since the last executive meeting, NAPD has been invited to make a written submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills. This confidential submission will be circulated to executive members before the January overnight meeting and hopefully will be made available to the broader NAPD membership in due course.

Vice-President, Kieran Golden, reported to the Executive on a recent meeting with UCC Education Department – UCC offers all students a module to upskill as Gaeilge but there is a poor uptake and the numbers applying for the Professional Master of Education (PME) this year are very low.

It was pointed out that there was a surplus of teachers in Northern Ireland and a mechanism should be sought to speed up difficulties with registration.



Teachers who were retired, and who let the Teaching Council number lapse, should be able to re-activate their old number without an overly long process. Colleges should look at possible 4-year B.Ed. courses instead of the 2-year PME, the cost of which is putting off applicants

**FOLLOW DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS STORY IN  
*Leader Quarterly* NEXT ISSUE – MARCH 2018**

# Other items from December Executive Meeting

## MANAGEMENT BODIES URGED TO STAND FIRM

There was discussion regarding an attempt that from some ASTI schools that Junior Cycle SLAR (Subject Learning and Assessment Review) meetings take place in school time. It was pointed out that up to 8 hours professional time had accrued to teachers and that NAPD should emphasise to the Management Bodies that they should stand firm on this issue.

## UPDATE ON WELLBEING FOR TEACHERS AND LEARNERS SYMPOSIUM

A further meeting to review and plan a way forward will take place towards the end of term.

## REGIONAL MEETINGS RAISE SOME KEY ISSUES; GOOD GUEST SPEAKERS IDENTIFIED

A number of regions have had meetings post conference. Issues raised included the holding of a seminar for aspiring school leaders, team teaching, child protection, PDST training and concern as to how

well was the school leader's voice being represented.

Finn O'Murchú, Karen Belshaw, John Loneragan, Sgt Mike Smith and Niamh Digan were mentioned as speakers who contributed to successful meetings.

## UPDATE ON JCT ROLL OUT OF SUPPORTS

The C & C and the Voluntary Sector schools will be contacted regarding in-service days and cluster meetings. The JCT reports that it is operating as quickly as possible to in-service teachers. Immediate support may be needed because many staff don't have a clue about CBAs or Assessment tasks.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING AND LEGAL INDEMNITY

The December meeting noted that a sub-committee will review feedback and formulate a draft Strategic Plan for NAPD, to be considered at the January overnight meeting.

Work has been ongoing on the establishment of a Legal Indemnity

scheme for school leaders and members of the Executive have met with the proposed underwriters for the scheme.

## REPORT ON MEETING WITH MINISTER BRUTON RE CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT

The Minister met with Dermot Carney, Kay O'Brien Senator Marie Louise O'Donnell and Clive Byrne to discuss Creative Engagement. He is broadly supportive but is clear that an increase in funding must be part of a competitive process. The Arts and Culture Committee will take stock and make further recommendations.

## ICP COUNCIL MEETING KILLARNEY AUGUST 2018

A planning meeting involving an NAPD/IPPN sub-committee met to plan for the event and to design an agenda. Speakers have been contacted and discussions will take place with the President of ICP on the margins of the IPPN conference late in January.

# FEAR & THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX

Trump Collaborator Urges us to Counteract Presidential Negativity with 'the best in us'



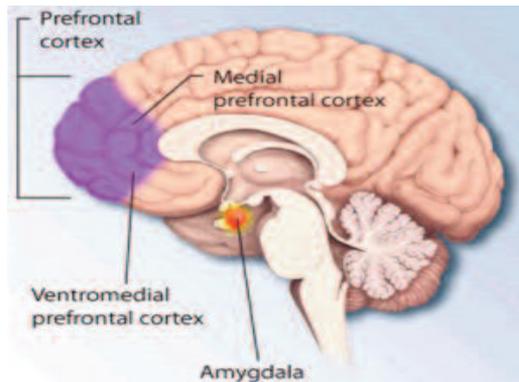
The new tabloid *Guardian* had an interesting piece [18 January] by Tony Schwartz, author, with D. Trump, of *The Art of the Deal*. He's obviously revised his views of his colleague a lot since that collaboration and now talks of the fear that rules the US and drives its president, too.

Schwartz sees a huge negative side to this fear that Trump has exacerbated 'between his supporters and detractors, the rich and the poor, Democrats and Republicans, but also between the best and the worst in each of us.'

He wants us to guard against the primitive response of

the 'fight-or-flight' mode. He quotes the neurological aspects of this, echoing the theme of the ICP Cape Town Conference [reported extensively in the last *Leader Quarterly*):

"In the face of fear, it is a physiological fact that our most primitive and selfish instincts emerge. Control of our behaviour shifts from the prefrontal cortex to the emotionally driven amygdala – or "fear central". As we move into fight-or-flight mode, we become more self-centred, and our vision narrows to the perceived threat, which in the modern world is less to our survival than to our sense of value and worthiness. We lose the capacity for empathy, rationality, proportionality and attention to the longer-term consequences of our actions."



To counteract this, Schwartz asserts the human potential for good and for 'making a difference'. That phrase has echoed often through educational ideology – but it will do us no harm [a] to be aware of the negative impact of fear on our behaviour and [b] the value of keeping our ideals before us at all times. "Whatever happens," he concludes, "may the worst of Trump inspire the best in us. We, together, can do it."

# PLC COURSES: THE “LOW-STATUS OPTION”?

## ESRI Study highly critical of current PLC provision.

Students see post-Leaving Cert (PLC) courses as a low-status option for school-leavers who do not get enough points to go to college, according to the ESRI study, published on 9 January. While PLC courses boost employment prospects and access to higher education, the report says they have not moved with the times to meet a dramatic shift in the kind of jobs available.

The study found that participants in PLC programmes were disproportionately female, from less-educated backgrounds, are more likely to be older and have children. PLC learners had lower-than-average qualifications.

On a positive level it found that PLC learners were 16 per cent more likely to be in employment and 27 per cent more likely to have progressed to higher education after completing their courses than those who left education after the Leaving Cert.

However, it found the sector generally appeared to be “poorly connected” to the requirements of the labour market. “The types of PLC courses offered have not changed markedly over time even though there has been a dramatic shift in the kinds of jobs available in the Irish labour market,” the report found.

In addition, decisions around course provision tended to be heavily driven by student demand, with less weight given to employer requirements, government objectives or national forecasting.

Professor Seamus McGuinness, an author of the report, said that while there were positive outcomes for those who

completed PLC courses, more could be done to ensure they respond to ongoing changes in the labour market. “It is also important to challenge the idea that PLC courses are ‘second-best’ compared to higher education.”

The study says engagement with employers at a local level is crucial, especially for smaller PLCs. It also found not all learner felt prepared for the world of work. Over a fifth reported not having taken part in a work experience placement during the course of their studies. Almost a third felt their learning did not contribute to their employability, and a quarter considered that they did not acquire job-related knowledge and skills.

NAPD, called for the immediate establishment by Solas of the PLC improvement advisory committee, (although the stakeholders to be represented on that along with the Department of Education have yet to be decided).

NAPD supports the need for closer alignment with the needs of employers, but Director, Clive Byrne, said this will need significantly increased investment and more flexibility on teaching contracts and funding structures that are currently based on those used in second-level schools.

Minister for Education, Richard Bruton, said the report confirmed the positive role played by PLC provision. “However, it does show some areas for improvement. Given the pace of change in the labour market and the increasing demand for new skills, we need to continuously adapt, change and make improvements based on evidence.



# COMMENT

*Cecilia Munro is principal of Dun Laoghaire FE Institute and chairperson of the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals' (NAPD) Further Education and Training Committee. This article first appeared in *The Irish Independent*. This revised version is published by kind permission of the author.*

## Our PLC sector has a bright future but structural flaws must be addressed

Ireland's schools and colleges of further education and training play an essential role. In my day-to-day position, I see first-hand the positive impact they have, not only on young students, but on older students investing in new skills or returning to their careers.

Nearly 80pc of the 33,000 students who enrol in a post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) course every year progress to employment, further or higher education.

Recent reports by ESRI and SOLAS, confirm the positive role played by PLC provision. They also identify key challenges for policy development, including responding to changing labour market conditions, developing closer links with employers, enhancing guidance, extra training for staff and providing access to the PLC programme on a more even geographical spread.

For these recommendations to translate into meaningful change, they will require capital investment and operational change. Two areas of reform must be prioritised. The first is the imbalance in geographic access to PLC courses for students. The second is greater flexibility within the PLC funding and operational model.

The uneven geographical spread has to be tackled head-on. It manifests itself through a lack of access to further

education (FE) in some areas and, arguably, oversupply in others. It means that prospective FE students in some of Ireland's fastest growing towns and urban areas are not serviced by any FE college. In addition, the report also highlights that Clare, Donegal, Kerry, Leitrim, Monaghan and Wexford need additional PLC places.

Much of the reason for this lies in the way these colleges developed, often as add-ons to secondary schools, but without any strategic vision for the wider needs of an area and its future population growth. Bringing FE facilities to underserved and growing areas must now be a focus.

Equally, the sector needs to move quickly to embrace online and distance learning education and training. The current post-primary level funding, operational and teacher allocation models do not allow for students to undertake either a blended learning or online PLC course (colleges receive funding based on physical attendance rather than course registrations), so our existing funding model cannot support these types of learning. In addition, this model requires all teachers on the PLC programme to be Teaching Council-registered, which poses a problem in employing industry current or specialist staff.

The global economy has changed dramatically, and STEM skills have become even more important. Ireland is an

international hub for technology and internet companies, and is growing in prominence as a leader in financial technology or 'fintech'. In order to educate and train students to be fintech job-ready, current teaching staff need to have access to training courses. Currently a system exists under Paragraph 2.5 of circular 52/2013 where by non-qualified teachers i.e. industry practitioners can be employed as tutors within our schools and colleges. These industry practitioners contribute added value to PLC courses and bring current industry perspectives and up to date knowledge to our courses. This mechanism needs to be utilised more.

We must acknowledge that the post-primary and PLC sectors are not the same, and that regulations need to be amended to allow industry experts to pass on their knowledge and be paid for their time. The NAPD has urged the Department of Education and SOLAS to fast track the establishment of a joint 'Improvement Advisory Committee' to create a development plan for the sector. A key objective must be agreement on the investment needed to implement change. Without it, reforms will be undermined from the outset.

The world beyond our classrooms is changing quickly. The further education sector must not be left behind.

## NAPD-FET EVENT

Tuesday 30 January The Midlands Hotel, Portlaoise 10:00 am-3:00pm.

The purpose of this workshop is to commence the conversation of reform and change in relation to the PLC Programme following the recent publication of the ESRI Evaluation of PLC Programme Provision and the SOLAS Response to the Findings of the Evaluation of the National Post Leaving Certificate (PLC), published on 9 January.

**10.00-10.30am Registration (Tea/Coffee)**

**10.30-11.00am**

**Session 1: Cecilia Munro (DFEi, Chair of NAPD-FET)**

- NAPD Overview of membership services
- NAPD-FET Overview of committees activities

**11.00am-12.30pm**

**Session 2: Session to be chaired by Pat Maunsell (LCFE)**

- Centre for School Leadership ([www.csl.ie](http://www.csl.ie)) mentoring and coaching service - Mary Nihill
- Building an Education Brand and Learning Community using Social Media – Cara McDermott, Cavan Institute

**12.30pm-1.15pm Light Lunch Tea/Coffee**

**1.15pm-3.00pm**

**Session 3: Session to be chaired by Markita Mulvey (CIFE)**

- SOLAS – Overview of PLC Programme – Bryan Fields, SOLAS ([www.solas.ie](http://www.solas.ie))
- SOLAS – Promoting the PLC Programme – Nikki Gallagher, SOLAS ([www.solas.ie](http://www.solas.ie))
- Q&A hosted by Rory O'Sullivan (Killester CFE)

**3.00pm**

**Final Reflections – workshop close**

For registration details contact  
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## Managing Tight Meetings

Everybody has attended awful meetings. They start late and finish later. They meander in all directions. Attendees slouch, sigh and doodle. Teachers try, unobtrusively, to correct homework. And the meeting drags on.

There is one person at fault for awful meetings and that is the chairperson. Sorry to be so blunt but the chairperson is in charge of the meeting. If the chairperson is not assertive, then the meeting can drift onto the rocks.

If you are given responsibility for chairing a meeting, then chair it. And, yes, you need to be assertive to chair a good meeting (and people want you to be assertive). A nice chairperson will run a long meeting; an assertive chairperson will run a tight meeting.

Begin by inviting the minimum number of people who need to be present – if people don't need to be present, dis-invite them. In the invitation to the

meeting include the agenda, the start and finish times and any documents that people need to read.

How well you are organised before the meeting is a direct indication of how well organised the meeting will be. And attendees know that.

Having done your pre-meeting planning, begin the meeting on time. Do not wait for late-comers – no matter how senior they are. Be assertive. Aristotle is credited with the saying 'well begun is half done'. This is particularly true about meetings.

Begin the meeting with the first item on the agenda – this should be the most important item. Invite ideas – particularly from quiet attendees. The moment a person goes off-track, be assertive and drag them back to the topic "Sorry John for interrupting you, but can you please stick to the item that we are discussing". This is essential.

One simple way to sap the energy of a meeting is to begin with a review of the minutes of the last meeting. Don't do this. Another way to damage a meeting is to have an item called 'any other business' - it is often cynically referred to as 'any other bazooka'. If people wish to have items discussed at your meeting, they should ask you to add their item to the agenda – in that way you keep control of your meeting.

The purpose of a meeting is not to have a grand aul chat as many people seem to believe. The purpose of a meeting is to make decisions. People can go elsewhere for a grand aul chat but not at your meeting. You have decisions to make and you are there to have them made.

Very often, the most troublesome person at the meeting is 'motor mouth'. If your meeting needs to have a motor mouth in attendance, sit that person beside you. In that way you can control her or him.

The length of a good meeting is easy. It is the same length of time as school classes. Yes, 45 minutes is the correct length of a good meeting (better meetings are even shorter). After 45 minutes adults, like children, lose concentration. If a meeting is losing energy, have everybody stand up – you will be surprised at the rapid progress that is made at stand-up meetings.

Ending a meeting on time is evidence that you tightly managed your meeting. Well done you.

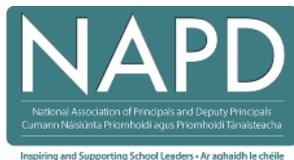
The minutes of the meeting should accurately record decisions made rather than discussions. WWW (Who is to do What by When) is a good reminder of what should be in minutes.

Meetings have a bad reputation and deservedly so. However, people enjoy attending meetings that are well organised, tightly controlled and which make decisions.



Nikki Gallagher (SOLAS) will be one of the speakers at the NAPD-FET event on January 30. She has recently been appointed Chairperson of BeLonGTo.

Visit [Curam.ie](http://Curam.ie) for a range of professional development support for your staff and information on the Year Head Handbook



## DIARY

### December 2017

- 13** Girls in Stem

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- 14** Seminar:  
Higher Education and the Public Interest

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- 15** Student Life summit

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- 18** BAPD Presidents  
IPPN

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- 20** Wellbeing for Teachers and Learners  
SubTeacher.ie with the TES

### January 2018

- 09** PLC Evaluation

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- 10-12** BT Young Scientist

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- 15** Jacinta Kitt

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- 16** SAPUG  
NAPD/IPPN/CSL meeting

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- 17** STEM and I Wish study  
DAS Insurance brokers

- 18** Cycle against Suicide Congress  
CAW review

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- 19** TY meeting

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- 19 & 20** National Executive

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- 22** PDST e-portfolio  
Research to Empower Educational  
Leaders

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- 23** Conference Connections  
Welfare Group

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- 24** CSL Quality Assurance meeting  
Northern Trust

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- 25** Region 2 Westport

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- 25& 26** IPPN Conference

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- 30** FET Conference

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- 31** Wellbeing for Teachers & Learners