

ACCS offers its congratulations to recently appointed Principals and Deputy Principals and its thanks and best wishes to those retiring or moving to pastures new.

### Retired/Departing Principals and Deputy Principals

<b>Ballyhaunis C.S.</b> Deputy Principal: Ms. Concepta Moran	<b>Pobalscoil Chloich</b> <b>Cheannfhaola</b> Deputy Principal: Ms. Noirín Fitzgerald
<b>Cashel C.S.</b> Principal: Mr. Eddie Morrissey	<b>Pobalscoil Ghaoth Dobhair</b> Principal: Mr. Noel Ó Gallchóir
<b>Donahies C.S.</b> Principal: Ms. Antoinette Nic Gearailt	<b>Pobalscoil Íosa</b> Deputy Principal: Mr. Tony O'Rourke
<b>Holy Child C.S.</b> Principal: Ms. Eileen Morris	<b>Pobalscoil Rosmini</b> Deputy Principal: Ms. Bernadette Bourke
<b>Loreto C.S.</b> Principal: Mr. Andrew Kelly	(moving to another school)
<b>Mayfield C.S.</b> Principal: Mr. Tony Walsh	<b>Tallaght C.S.</b> Principal: Mr. Austin Naughton
<b>Mountrath C.S.</b> Principal: Mr. Martin Gleeson	
<b>Mount Temple Comprehensive School</b> Principal: Mr. Liam Wegimont (Leave)	

### Newly Appointed Principals and Deputy Principals

<b>Ballyhaunis C.S.</b> Deputy Principal: Ms. Majella Morrison	<b>Holy Child C.S.</b> Principal: Mr. Liam Walsh Deputy Principal: Ms. Laura Casey	<b>Pobalscoil Chloich</b> <b>Cheannfhaola</b> Deputy Principal: Ms. Donna McFadden
<b>Ballymakenny College</b> Deputy Principal: Ms. Caroline Toole	<b>Loreto C.S.</b> Principal: Ms. Margaret O'Connor	<b>Pobalscoil Ghaoth Dobhair</b> Principal: Mr. Séamus Ó Briain Deputy Principal: Mr. Nigel Ó Fearraigh
<b>Cashel C.S.</b> Principal: Mr. John Gallagher	<b>Mayfield C.S.</b> Principal: Mr. Kieran Golden Deputy Principal: TBA	<b>Pobalscoil Íosa</b> Deputy Principal: TBA
<b>Celbridge C.S.</b> Principal: Mr. Gerard O'Leary	<b>Mountrath C.S.</b> Principal: Ms. Siobhán McCarthy Deputy Principal: Ms. Monica White	<b>Pobalscoil Rosmini</b> Deputy Principal: Ms. Gretta Judge
<b>Crescent College Comprehensive</b> Principal: Ms. Karin Fleming Deputy Principal: Ms. Sinéad Mulcahy	<b>Mount Temple Comprehensive</b> Acting Principal: Ms. Helen Gormley Acting Deputy Principal: Ms. Mary Byrne	<b>Tallaght C.S.</b> Principal: Ms. Teresa Hennessy Deputy Principal: Mr. Mick Glynn
<b>Donahies C.S.</b> Principal: Mr. Peter Keohane Deputy Principal: TBA		

# ACCS Newsletter Nuachtiris

Cumann na Scoileanna Pobail is Cuimsitheacha Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools

No. 1 2015/2016

IN THIS ISSUE

- Welcome to the 2015/2016 School Year
- Excellence in School Practice
- ACCS Continuous Professional Development Programme Calendar 2015/2016
- Address by PACCS President, Mr. Dave Fitzpatrick
- ACCS Convention 2016
- ACCS Education Conference 2015: Building Confident Cultures in our Schools
- News and Events
- Retired/Departing Principals and Deputy Principals
- Newly Appointed Principals and Deputy Principals

## Welcome to the 2015/2016 School Year

On behalf of all at ACCS I would like to wish members of our school communities the very best for the 2015/16 school year. While the educational climate of 2014/15 remained challenging the first green shoots of potential reform and recovery are evident as we enter a new academic year with some optimism and renewed hope and energy. ACCS is committed to ensuring that management in schools are resourced to meet the challenges and new opportunities that may evolve with the introduction of the new Junior Cycle.

We are encouraged by the Minister's recent commitment to resourcing the new Junior Cycle. On July 14th Minister O'Sullivan recognised "the high-quality leadership that we have in our schools will be vital in making this reform happen and ensuring better outcomes for learners". She continued, "I will be engaging with the management bodies for schools and with representatives of school leaders immediately, to ensure that, as implementation rolls out and by September 2017, school managements have the supports necessary to coordinate the Junior Cycle at whole-school level, to promote the development of new approaches to learning and teaching and to embed classroom-based assessment successfully".

We look forward to an improving landscape around management posts in our schools to support the onerous responsibilities of senior management and to ensure the needs of students are being met in a coordinated and planned way.

In this, our first Newsletter of 2015/16, we take the opportunity to look back at the Education Conference toward the end of last year, while also placing before you our Continuous Professional Development programme for the coming year. Our CPD programme is constantly under review and informed by input from our schools. There are CPD programmes which feature every academic year and, in addition, we are introducing new courses including, 'Conflict Resolution & Handling Difficult Conversations' and 'A Communication Strategy for your School' this year. We have arranged seminars early in 2016 on Health and Safety to be hosted in conjunction with the State Claims Agency. We look forward to meeting you at many of these events and remain committed to providing high quality in-service to management in Community and Comprehensive Schools. Schools are encouraged to book early for these events as in certain instances numbers are strictly capped. We are providing these new CPD programmes on a regional basis to better meet the needs of our schools. We are again pleased to be able to provide many of these opportunities free to schools.

We are pleased to report on the activities of the Parents Associations of Community and Comprehensive Schools, PACCS, with an address by their president, Mr. Dave Fitzpatrick. ACCS will continue to work in close cooperation with PACCS.



Ms. Eileen Salmon,  
General Secretary, ACCS

We take this opportunity to congratulate and acknowledge the service of Principals and Deputy Principals who are retiring this year. Their contribution to their schools and wider communities is, I am sure, greatly appreciated and we wish them every happiness in the next stage of their lives. To the newly appointed Principals and Deputy Principals we say welcome and wish you every success in your key leadership role.

As part of our Newsletter we will also retain certain features such as 'Recently Published Circulars' and 'News and Events from Community and Comprehensive Schools'. We encourage you to visit our website, [www.accs.ie](http://www.accs.ie), regularly where updates and Information Bulletins regarding the implications of relevant circulars are hosted. We also encourage schools to continue to forward news of events in their schools which we publish in Newsletters and on our website. Last year we produced a visual presentation to capture some of the highlights from Community and Comprehensive Schools which was presented at Convention. The feedback was very positive and the material for this presentation comes directly from schools. It is intended to produce a similar presentation for the year ahead.

We begin this CPD programme with the Induction for New Principals and Deputy Principals in August and follow this with Area Information Meetings at the beginning of the school year. We look forward to seeing you there and exploring ways in which we can give further support to schools.

As you embark on another school year please remember that ACCS is always available to support you. Don't hesitate to pick up the phone and call us or send an email if you need some advice.



Visit our website at  
[www.accs.ie](http://www.accs.ie)



This newsletter is a private and confidential document for circulation only to Boards of Management and Principals.  
Please circulate to Board Members.



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## ACCS Area Information Meetings

A series of Area Information Meetings are scheduled for late August and early September. These meetings will provide the opportunity for Board of Management Members, Principals and Deputy Principals to discuss the particular difficulties which arise from current changes in resources and procedures. Participants can advise ACCS of issues which require attention during the course of the year.

## Post of Responsibility Appointments

NEW

### Objectives

From September 2015 the phasing in period for the Revised Promotion Procedures for Appointment to Assistant Principal in Second Level schools will be concluded. All posts will be filled using the New Arrangements outlined in Appendix 1 of CI 42/2010. A recent review of the Appeals Procedure has also concluded. The purpose of this in-service is to update schools on developments and ensure best practice in operating the appointment process.

### Content Includes:

- Reviewing the schedule of posts
- Identifying vacancies
- Advertising Posts
- Composition of the Selection Board
- The Interview Process
- The Appointment Process
- The Appeals Process

### Who should attend?

Principals and Trustee Nominees on Selection Boards.

DATE: 07/09/2015

VENUE: Mullingar Park Hotel, Co. Westmeath

TIME: 2.00 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.

## A Communication Strategy for your School

NEW

### Objectives

This strategy will inform schools as they work towards promoting their school in the local community and further afield.

The workshop is taking place early in this school year to support schools as they commence the process of attracting students for the 2016/2017 school year.

This practical presentation/workshop will be delivered in conjunction with Montague Communications and will include the opportunity for each participant to do at least one media interview and prepare one press release.

This in-service emanated from requests from schools that identified this need during discussions at the ACCS Convention.

### Content Includes:

- Planning your Communications – workshop session
- Preparing press releases and doing media interviews and how to prepare
- Group Preparation - Workshop around key messages for press releases and interviews
- Feature Radio Interviews conducted
- Evaluation and feedback on interviews

### Who should attend?

Principals/Deputy Principals and school personnel involved in managing PR and websites.

DATES/VENUES: 15/09/2015, Dunraven Arms Hotel, Adare, Co. Limerick (Munster region)

17/09/2015, Sligo Park Hotel, Sligo (Connacht and Ulster regions)

21/09/2015, ACCS Head Office, Dublin 12 (Dublin and Leinster regions)

22/09/2015, ACCS Head Office, Dublin 12 (subject to demand)

TIME: 1.30 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.

Note: Early booking is advised as numbers will be strictly limited to 20 per location.

## Accountability and Management of the DES Administrative & Financial Guidelines

### Objectives

Principals carry onerous responsibilities in finance and administration in their schools. They are ably assisted by their Clerical Officers. This in-service supports both Principal and Clerical Officer in understanding the importance of the processes underpinning financial accountability in their school. They will become aware of the pitfalls which should be avoided and how to avoid them.

We will clarify aspects of the guidelines as they impact on school administrators.

We are currently engaged in a review of the guidelines with the DES.

### Content Includes:

- Board of Management Responsibilities
- Financial Returns/Audits
- Allocations: Funding & Staffing
- School Internal Controls
- Procurement
- Purchasing, Tendering, Quotations etc.
- Asset Management
- Receipts, Payments & Banking Arrangements
- Adult Education
- Record Keeping
- Use of School Facilities by Outside School Agencies
- Compiling a Risk Register

### Who should attend?

Newly appointed Principals and their Clerical Officers.

DATE: 23/09/2015

VENUE: ACCS Head Office, Dublin 12

TIME: 1.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.

## Data Protection Workshops

Presented by Millett & Matthews Solicitors

ACCS has worked closely with the other school management bodies to put together a Data Protection Guidelines website which gives helpful advice and tailored templates for schools. Millett & Matthews have worked with the management bodies and the Data Protection Commissioner's Office on the project.

Note: This is a repeat of the workshops given last year which received very positive feedback.

### Objectives

This workshop is designed to give an overview of the website materials, and give some practical advice to schools on the most common data protection issues that arise.

### Content Includes:

- Description of Data Protection and why it applies to schools
- An overview of the website materials
- Organising relevant policies in the school
- Data Access Requests: what they are and how to deal with them
- Safe storage and retention periods for different information
- Common scenarios that face schools regarding Data

### Who should attend?

Principals, Deputy Principals, Boards of Management Members, Administrative Personnel with responsibility for data processing who did not attend in 2014.

DATES/LOCATIONS: 30/09/2015, Athlone

01/10/2015, Dublin

07/10/2015, Cork

TIME: 2.00 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.

Note: Venues to be advised.

## Conflict Resolution & Handling Difficult Conversations

NEW

### Objectives

This course is intended for all those who have a responsibility for managing teams in the workplace. The aim is to introduce participants to the skills, attitudes and knowledge that will enable them to engage more productively in managing day-to-day conflict in the workplace environment. This course also provides participants with information on how their own verbal and non-verbal communication styles can have the power to calm a situation. The training will develop key skills and confidence that can be used to manage difficult conversations.

We conducted a pilot of this workshop in June 2015 with eleven of our school leaders and the feedback was totally positive. Presented by Mr. John Foster, Psychotherapist and Lecturer in Therapeutic Counselling, participants in the pilot were very taken by the balance reached between the theoretical basis and practical applications of the material presented.

"I loved it, got time to reflect and learn from the past and plan for a few situations in the future!"

### Content Includes:

- De-escalating stressful situations
- Managing aggressive individuals
- Building personal resilience

- Promoting positive workplace relations
- Building trust and rapport
- Empathy and active listening
- Conflict management action plan

### Who should attend?

Principals and Deputy Principals.

DATES/VENUES: 13/10/2015, Dunraven Arms Hotel, Adare, Co. Limerick, (Munster region)

14/10/2015, Sligo Park Hotel, Sligo (Connacht and Ulster regions)

10/11/2015, ACCS Head Office, Dublin 12 (Dublin region)

11/11/2015, Mount Wolseley Hotel, Tullow, Co. Carlow, (Leinster region)

TIME: 10.00 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.

Note: Numbers strictly limited to the first 15 participants booked per location.

## Essential Education Law Day

### Objectives

In partnership with Mason Hayes and Curran (MHC), and its team of leading lawyers in the education sector, the ACCS is hosting a one day seminar on legal matters that impact daily on schools.

### Content Includes:

- Admissions Policy
- Custody and Guardianship Disputes
- Pupil Disciplinary Procedures
- Section 29 Appeals
- Anti-Bullying Procedures
- Cyber-Bullying
- Teachers: Disciplinary and Competency Procedures
- Charitable Status, implications for schools
- Managing staff relations
- School Ethos, the implications of the Employment (Equality) Amendment Bill

### Who should attend?

Principals, Deputy Principals, Chairpersons and Secretaries of Boards of Management.

DATE: 04/11/2015

VENUE: Clarion Hotel Dublin, Liffey Valley, Dublin 22

TIME: 10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.



## EXCELLENCE IN SCHOOL PRACTICE cont'd

### Teacher Allocation and Redeployment

#### Objectives

This in-service is being held soon after allocations have been distributed to schools by the DES. The intention is that schools will be alerted to any changes emanating from the Budget and will be updated on any DES changes to allocations. We will discuss how schools can use their allocation to best effect and how curricular concessions should be sought. Some of our school Principals are very experienced in seeking curricular concessions and best practice in this regard will be shared. Redeployment will also be discussed, in particular the implications of the Ward Report.

#### Content Includes:

- Current issues affecting Allocation
- Initial Allocation/Final Allocation
- Curriculum Check List/Audit
- Curricular Concessions Best Practice
- Appeals Board
- Redeployment

#### Who should attend?

Principals, Deputy Principals, Chairpersons of Boards of Management.

DATE:	10/02/2016
VENUE:	Mullingar Park Hotel, Co. Westmeath
TIME:	10.00 a.m. - 2.00 p.m. followed by lunch.

### State Claims Agency Seminars 2016

NEW

#### Introduction

The State Claims Agency (SCA) manage personal injury and third party property damage risks on behalf of Community and Comprehensive Schools. The SCA's mandate is to provide a risk management advisory and claims management service to Community and Comprehensive Schools.

#### Objectives

This seminar and workshop is designed to re-engage with Community and Comprehensive Schools on health and safety risk management matters, demonstrate effective risk management strategies, sharing learning in accordance with statutory requirements and best practice standards.

#### Content

- What is State Indemnity – the self-insurance model?
- What to do when an accident occurs?
- Work experience programmes
- Trends analysis and closed claim analysis
- Have your say: People provide topics which you would like covered or questions you wish to raise for reply at these seminars

#### Who should attend?

Principals, Deputy Principals and School Safety Representatives.

DATES/VENUES:	21/01/2016, Red Cow Moran Hotel, Naas Road, Dublin 22 27/01/2016, Dunraven Arms Hotel, Adare, Co. Limerick 28/01/2016, Sligo Park Hotel, Sligo
TIME:	10.30 a.m. – 3.30 p.m.

### Competency Based Recruitment and Selection

NEW

#### Objectives

This one day training programme will give participants a deep and practical insight into a competency based approach to the appointment of a Principal and/or Deputy Principal. Over the past year ACCS has collaborated with the ETBI on the development of a competency based approach to the recruitment and selection of a Principal and/or Deputy Principal. The development of this approach is in line with best practice in human resource management and current thinking in respect of recruitment and selection.

ACCS is recommending that members of Selection Committees are trained in this approach. This training will equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable them to make the best possible hiring decisions.

#### Content Includes:

- Competency based recruitment and how we can apply it to shortlisting, interview and evaluation
- An overview of the Competency Based Recruitment and Selection Process Manual and how it can help at each stage of the process
- Shortlisting
- The Interview – overview, structure and roles using a competency driven model
- Questioning, listening and note-taking
- Evaluating the evidence
- Equality and employment legislation relevant to the recruitment and selection process

#### Who should attend?

Selection Committee Members.

DATES/VENUES:	06/04/2016, Sheraton Hotel, Athlone, Co. Westmeath 13/04/2016, Clarion Hotel Dublin, Liffey Valley, Dublin 22
TIME:	9.30 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.

Note: Early booking is advised as numbers will be limited to 25 per location. However, in the event that venues are oversubscribed, the training may be offered again at a later date.

### The Role and Function of a Board of Management

#### Objectives

Board Members will have the opportunity to gain an insight into their responsibilities as Members of a Board of Management of a Community or Comprehensive School. The emphasis is on the heightening of awareness necessary to facilitate transparency, accountability, understanding and wisdom on how schools function and operate. Participants will be encouraged to raise practical issues for discussion and clarification.

#### Content Includes:

- Deed of Trust/Deed of Indenture
- Characteristics of a Community/Comprehensive School
- Roles of Chairperson, Secretary and Member
- The Board of Management as an Employer
- School's Policies and Practices
- Pastoral Care and Behaviour
- Accounting Procedures
- Curriculum Planning
- Current Issues
- School Evaluations: School Self Evaluation and Whole School Evaluation

Note: The in-service can take place in an individual school with an individual Board or a small group of local schools can have this in-service together.

### Clerical Officer/School Secretary In-Service

#### Objectives

The work of the Clerical Officer/School Secretary continues to be very responsible. Following on from our Clerical Officer in-services last year, we will provide an in-service that is practically based and will give both new and experienced Clerical Officers an opportunity to discuss their concerns and to share best practice.

Following consultation we will provide in-service based on needs as outlined by Clerical Officers.

#### Who should attend?

Clerical Officers and School Secretaries.

DATES/VENUES:	26/01/2016, Dunraven Arms Hotel, Adare, Co. Limerick 03/02/2016, Mullingar Park Hotel, Co. Westmeath
TIME:	10.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m. followed by lunch.

### Further Education and Planning Seminar

#### Objectives

To assist Further Education Provider schools with programme development, business system management and other related QQI/SOLAS developments for the current and next school year. These seminars are hosted in conjunction with the JMB following the formation of the Joint Further Education Representative Group (JFERG).

#### Content Includes:

- Input from FESS and other relevant agencies
- Peer sharing of ideas, information and best practice
- Informing policy on provider relations with QQI, SOLAS and the ETBs
- Answering questions and problem solving

#### Who should attend?

School Principals, Chairpersons and Further Education Coordinators.

Note: The date, time and venue for this event has yet to be confirmed.

### National Trustee Forum Conference 2016

Further details to be communicated in due course.

### Booking Arrangements

Notice of arrangements will be sent to schools with appropriate enrolment forms prior to each course by email. Electronic booking forms are available on the ACCS website at [www.accs.ie](http://www.accs.ie).



ACCS Continuous Professional Development Programme Calendar 2015/2016

Date and Location	Programme Title	Participants
10/08/15 - 2.30 p.m. – 6.30 p.m. 11/08/15 - 9.30 a.m. – 3.30 p.m. Mullingar Park Hotel, Co. Westmeath.	Induction of New Principals & Deputy Principals in Community & Comprehensive Schools.	All recently appointed Principals/Deputy Principals for an introduction to the sector.
31/08/15 Gallagher’s Hotel, Letterkenny, Donegal. 02/09/15 ACCS Head Office, Dublin 12. 03/09/15 ACCS Head Office, Dublin 12. 09/09/15 Woodlands House Hotel, Adare, Co. Limerick. 10/09/15 Clayton Hotel, Galway.	ACCS Area Information Meetings. Ulster: 5.00 p.m. - 7.00 p.m. Dublin: 4.30 p.m. – 6.30 p.m. Leinster: 4.30 p.m. – 6.30 p.m. Munster: 4.30 p.m. – 7.00 p.m. Connacht: 5.00 p.m. – 7.00 p.m.	Principals/Deputy Principals/Secretaries Boards of Management plus 2 Members of the Board of Management.
07/09/15 Mullingar Park Hotel, Co. Westmeath.	Post of Responsibility Appointments. 2.00 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.	<b>NEW</b> Principals and Trustee Nominees on Selection Boards.
15/09/15 Dunraven Arms Hotel, Adare, Co. Limerick. 17/09/15 Sligo Park Hotel, Sligo. 21/09/15 ACCS Head Office, Dublin 12. 22/09/15 ACCS Head Office, Dublin 12. (subject to demand)	A Communication Strategy for your School. 1.30 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.	<b>NEW</b> Principals/Deputy Principals and school personnel involved in managing PR and websites.
23/09/15 ACCS Head Office, Dublin 12.	Accountability & Management of the DES Administrative & Financial Guidelines. 1.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.	Newly appointed Principals with their Clerical Officers.
30/09/15 Athlone. 01/10/15 Dublin. 07/10/15 Cork. Note: Venues to be advised.	Data Protection Workshops Presented by Millett & Matthews, Solicitors. 2.00 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.	Principals/Deputy Principals BOM Members/Administrative Personnel with responsibility for data processing who did not attend in 2014.
13/10/15 Dunraven Arms Hotel, Adare, Co. Limerick. 14/10/15 Sligo Park Hotel, Sligo. 10/11/15 ACCS Head Office, Dublin 12. 11/11/15 Mount Wolseley Hotel, Tullow, Co. Carlow. Note: (Max 15 participants per venue)	Conflict Resolution & Handling Difficult Conversations. 10.00 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.	<b>NEW</b> Principals and Deputy Principals.
04/11/15 Clarion Hotel Dublin, Liffey Valley, Dublin 22.	Essential Education Law Day. In partnership with Mason Hayes and Curran. 10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.	Principals/Deputy Principals/Chairpersons & Secretaries of Boards of Management.
26/11/15 & Lyrath Estate Hotel, Dublin Road, 27/11/15 Co. Kilkenny.	In-School Management Conference. Buffet Lunch from 12.30 p.m. 2.00 p.m. - 7.00 p.m. 9.15 a.m. - 1.30 p.m.	Principals & Deputy Principals of Community & Comprehensive Schools (Documentation to follow).
21/01/16 Red Cow Moran Hotel, Naas Road, Dublin 22. 27/01/16 Dunraven Arms Hotel, Adare, Co. Limerick. 28/01/16 Sligo Park Hotel, Sligo.	State Claims Agency Seminars. 10.30 a.m. – 3.30 p.m.	<b>NEW</b> Principals, Deputy Principals, School Safety Representatives.
26/01/16 Dunraven Arms Hotel, Adare, Co. Limerick. 03/02/16 Mullingar Park Hotel, Co. Westmeath.	Clerical Officer/School Secretary In-Service. 10.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m. followed by lunch.	Clerical Officers/School Secretaries.
10/02/16 Mullingar Park Hotel, Co. Westmeath.	Teacher Allocation and Redeployment 10.00 a.m. - 2.00 p.m. followed by lunch.	Principals, Deputy Principals, Chairpersons of Boards of Management.
03/03/16 - 05/03/16 Slieve Russell Golf and Country Club, Ballyconnell, Co. Cavan.	ACCS 2016 Convention.	Principals plus 2 Members of the Board of Management.
06/04/16 Sheraton Hotel, Athlone, Co. Westmeath. 13/04/16 Clarion Hotel Dublin, Liffey Valley, Dublin 22. Note: (Max. 25 participants per venue)	Competency Based Recruitment and Selection. 9.30 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.	<b>NEW</b> Selection Committee Members.
20/04/16 Mullingar Park Hotel, Co. Westmeath.	Education Conference. 9.30 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.	Principals/Deputy Principals, School Personnel & Members of Boards of Management.



Address by PACCS President, Mr. Dave Fitzpatrick



Mr. Dave Fitzpatrick



I first became aware of PACCS, Parents Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools over five years ago. My youngest daughter enrolled in Coolmine Community School and I joined their Parents Association. During this time I was involved in many facets of the Parents Association. I was a PACCS representative and also a member of the PACCS Executive. I was elected as a Parent Nominee to the Board of Management. I am a Director on the National Parents Council Post Primary (NPCPP) and was elected as President of PACCS earlier this year.

The experience I gained through my involvement has given me a broad view of Community and Comprehensive Schools and the impact that parents can make.

Successful Parents Associations are the result of interest and teamwork. A prime example of this is demonstrated in Coolmine Community School, where the Parents Association operates a very successful and worthwhile Book Rental Scheme on behalf of school management. With their support this scheme is of great benefit to parents, students and teachers.

Through awareness, success can be achieved. At school level, the Parents Association must raise its profile and maintain a visible presence. A noticeable stand at parent/teacher meetings, school open days, 1st year review nights and other events in the school calendar reinforces this. A parent newsletter and parent page on the school website can be very informative. The Parents Association AGM should be strongly promoted and advertised. Parents should witness the commitments of other parents. Quite simply, parents supporting parents.

While all parents are members of a school’s Parents Association, the Executive members change annually. Experienced parents leave and new parents should be encouraged to join. Making contact and talking to Parents Associations in local feeder schools is an ideal way to recruit new members.

The role of PACCS is to support Parents Associations. Currently there are 95 Community and Comprehensive Schools. We have begun the process of contacting the Parents Association in each school so that parents can be made aware

of the help and support available to them. Therefore establishing up to date contact details is essential.

PACCS also has its part to play on NPCPP, where four parents are Directors. This reinforces the participation of parents as partners in education.

Ms. Eileen Salmon, General Secretary of ACCS, addressed the PACCS AGM on 7th March last, the theme of which was ‘School Life Balance’. She outlined what ACCS wanted for parents. She encouraged parents to play an active role in their children’s education.

As we move towards the new school year, we ask for the continued assistance of school Principals and Management. We, as parents, place great value on your work and efforts. An enthusiastic and committed Parents Association can be a valuable resource within schools.

PACCS recognises the support of ACCS over the years, and welcomes the opportunity of working together in the future.

Recent DES Circulars since our last Newsletter

- 0041/2015 Recruitment of Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) - Supplementary Assignment Arrangements for the 2015/16 school year
- 0040/2015 Cost Limits for Post Primary School Buildings
- 0038/2015 Home Tuition Scheme 2015/2016 - Special Education Component
- 0037/2015 Leaving Certificate Music for the cohort commencing study in August 2015 and presenting for examination in 2017
- 0036/2015 Revised assessment arrangements for the practical coursework for Leaving Certificate Home Economics (Scientific & Social) for the cohort commencing study in August 2015 and presenting for examination in 2017 and thereafter
- 0035/2015 Revision to Assessment Arrangements for Leaving Certificate Art for first examination in 2018
- 0034/2015 Assessment Instruments (including tests and web-based resources) approved for use for guidance and/or learning support in post-primary schools from May 2015 until further notice
- 0032/2015 Use of live animals for scientific, educational or other purposes in schools

ACCS Convention 2016



The 34th ACCS Convention will take place on the 3rd, 4th & 5th March, 2016 in The Slieve Russell Golf & Country Club, Ballyconnell, Co. Cavan.

**Dates to remember**

- 3rd December, 2015 Nominations for Presidency and motions for Convention to be submitted.
- 3rd January, 2016 Draft agenda of business and nominations for Presidency and motions to be issued to Member Boards and Executive Members. Member Boards will be invited to submit amendments to the motions.
- 3rd February, 2016 Latest date for receipt of amendments to the motions.
- 18th February, 2016 A final agenda will be issued to Member Boards.



## School effectiveness and school improvement in the UK-what worked and what failed and why, lessons for Ireland

Professor Anthony Kelly

8

The Education Conference, hosted in the Hodson Bay Hotel on 29th April 2015, opened with a very thought provoking presentation by Professor Anthony Kelly, University of Southampton Education School, on School Effectiveness and School Improvement. Professor Kelly is not only a leading educational researcher but his practice is very much rooted in experience as he himself is a former Principal of Larcy College, Clones. His presentation was based on the most recent research emanating from the UK on school effectiveness and school improvement and focused on the lessons that can be learned for the Irish context.

In his introduction he identified that school improvement is “grounded and practitioner based and makes no attempt at proving causality” while school effectiveness “attempts to explain why and to what extent differences vary from school to school and between countries”. He continued that we know from school improvement that “although the school is the ‘load’ to be moved, better classroom teaching is the ‘lever’ to be pulled” and through school effectiveness we can identify factors found to have an impact in UK schools. These include:

- Having strong purposeful leadership with democratic decision making
- High expectations and intellectually challenging
- A safe and orderly school climate
- Focused teaching
- Evaluating student progress early and often
- The balance of able and less able students attending the school
- Opportunities for students to take responsibility
- The presence of reward systems
- An active parent body

US based research concluded similar findings with the main factors identified in effective schools including:

- Effective schools spend more time on task
- Are more encouraging of independent practice
- Have a low number of interruptions
- Have firm discipline
- Exude a friendly atmosphere
- The head-teacher is a buffer when school is in challenging circumstances

Interestingly, in both the UK and US research, class size and school size are among factors that do not correlate with school effectiveness.

He does have a criticism of school effectiveness and school improvement and presents the following paradox: *“School effectiveness is good at listing and ranking influencing factors – some are obvious as we have seen – but not good at understanding educative processes, without which practical efforts at improvement become futile. School improvement understands process etc., but cannot generalise them for everyone!”*

From the UK experience he made the following observations:

- Free and Charter School have not worked
- It is a strength of the Irish system that the SEC set and mark exams, change this at your peril as the present Exam Board Oligopoly in England does not work



Ms. Antoinette Nic Gearailt, President ACCS, Professor Anthony Kelly, School of Education University of Southampton, Mr. Paul Fiorentini, Chair of Session

- The act of measurement affects what is being measured. The illusion of data democracy can undermine equity in education
- UK focused on improving head-teachers with the schools as the unit, in Ireland the classroom should be the unit of analysis! Children’s paradigm is the classroom and the curriculum, not the school

Professor Kelly concluded his presentation by asking the question, so what is the latest on what works well? He looked at this under the headings, In School, Among Schools, Out of School and at System Level. Among the key observations were:

### In School

- Mutual peer observation between teachers
- Evidence collected from students about teaching and learning arrangements
- Self-questioning ----- Creativity ----- Action
- Staff collaboration and joint problem solving – senior management must encourage this

### Among Schools

- School to school partnerships are the most powerful means of fostering improvement

### Out of Schools

- Schools need to align in a coherent strategy with the efforts of other local players – partnerships beyond the school

### System Level

- We need a ‘thinking system’ where teachers can translate ‘what works best in general’ to ‘what works well here’
- Critical friendships with other schools
- Policy makers need to shift the discourse away from simplification towards recognising complexity. Education is not simply test and exam results

Professor Kelly’s presentation can be accessed through the ACCS website, [www.accs.ie](http://www.accs.ie), under the CPD Programme tab and click on ACCS Education Conference 2015.

## ICT Possibilities in our Schools

Mr. Ciarán Stewart, Ms. Rachel Hayes, Mr. John McGuinness, Mr. Tom Lonergan



Mr. Paul Thornton, Chair of Session, Ms. Eileen Salmon, General Secretary, ACCS, Ms. Rachel Hayes, John the Baptist Community School, Mr. James Duignan, Chairperson ACCS Education Committee, Mr. Tom Lonergan, PDST Technology in Education, Mr. John McGuinness, Carndonagh Community School, Mr. Ciarán Stewart, Ashbourne Community School, Ms. Antoinette Nic Gearailt, President ACCS

The midmorning session focused on ICT in our schools. The main focus was on the development of a strong wireless network and how this network can be used to the benefit of learners in our schools. We were joined by three teachers from our schools who shared best practice with us and Mr. Tom Lonergan, PDST Technology in Education.

Opening the session Mr. Ciarán Stewart, Deputy Principal Ashbourne Community School, outlined the process of acquiring a fit for purpose wireless network in a school. Following receipt of tenders in Ashbourne they found it difficult to assess who was providing the best and most economical service. They decided that additional expertise was required and additional information was requested from

the three preferred bidders to ensure they got the right product. Usage in educational facilities is potentially much higher than an office environment so the network must be fit for purpose and future protected as much as is feasible. Ciarán also outlined a number of projects they were piloting once the network was in place including, the mobile classroom, the mobile teacher and Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) in Transition Year. Ciarán was followed by Ms. Rachel Hayes, John the Baptist Community School, who introduced the virtual learning environment, VLE, they have established. In a very clear and colourful presentation Rachel not only brought us through how to establish a VLE but also the centrality of this project in promoting collaboration between teachers, subject departments and students.

Mr. John McGuinness, Carndonagh Community School, revisited the use of i-Pads in their school. John described the introduction of i-Pads to Carndonagh Community School at a previous Education Conference. This follow up session gave a very refreshingly honest appraisal of the project to date. While suggesting what he knows now would prompt a different approach if starting out again, his experience greatly informed any school considering embarking on such a project.

This most informative of sessions concluded with Mr. Tom Lonergan, PDST Technology in Education, outlining the role of PDST and the support they provide to schools. In a very detailed presentation he strongly encouraged schools to consider Wi-Fi networks and also migrating services to the Cloud. Links to all the presentations from this section may be accessed through the ACCS website, [www.accs.ie](http://www.accs.ie), following the CPD Programme tab and clicking on Education Conference 2015.

## Re-imagining the Curriculum

Mr. Leo Hogan

The afternoon session at our Annual Education Conference was presented by Mr. Leo Hogan, Principal St. Mary’s Academy, Carlow CBS. His piece, ‘Re-imagining the Curriculum’, detailed the process which led to the introduction of 1 hour class periods in their school. The main driver of this change was the need to develop more active learning strategies in classrooms. It was believed by teachers and students that the traditional 40 minute period was not the best unit of time to fully exploit the potential of these active learning strategies. Leo guided us through the detailed curriculum planning and time allocations to subjects and the workings of the timetable.

Of great interest was the research carried out at the end of year one where teachers, students and parents were surveyed on their perception of the new longer class periods. The



Ms. Eileen Salmon, General Secretary, ACCS, Mr. Leo Hogan, Principal St. Mary’s Academy CBS Carlow, Ms. Áine O’Sullivan, Chair of Session, Mr. John Irwin, Assistant General Secretary, ACCS

responses were overwhelmingly positive. School data was also studied, such as incidents of classroom misbehaviour which had greatly reduced over the year. The active learning strategies were seen as the main reason for this reduction. Leo’s presentation definitely provided a convincing argument to consider re-imagining the curriculum.



Munster Contingent: delegates at the Education Conference Ms. Mary Jones, Ms. Noreen Rafferty and Ms. Claire Knight



## Adela Hunt (6th Year, St. Kilian's Community School) is the 2014 winner of the European Commission Juvenes Translatores competition

Adela Hunt, a 6th Year student at St. Kilian's Community School in Bray, has won the 2014 Juvenes Translatores award for Ireland. Adela is one of the winning 28 students from each EU Member State who travelled to Brussels last week for an award ceremony at the Commission's Charlemagne Building, where they received their awards from European Commission Vice-President Kristalina Georgieva.



Adela Hunt, St. Kilian's Community School Bray with Mr. John Murphy, Principal, after receiving her award.

## Fittest School in Ireland 2015 Boherbue Comprehensive School

An Scoil Chuimsiteach An Bóthar Buí are delighted to have been announced the Aviva Health Schools' Fitness Challenge winners and been awarded the title of 'Ireland's Fittest School 2015'.

The challenge itself was developed to assess fitness levels among Irish students with the aim of improving overall health and fitness in 2015, the initiative began in 2013. Over



Megan Buckley and Declan Buckley pictured with Robbie Henshaw, Irish Rugby Player.

241 schools took part in the challenge involving over 10,000 students.

All students in Boherbue Comprehensive School from 1st-4th year entered the challenge which ran over a ten week period from January to April 2015. There were three phases to the fitness challenge; initial fitness test in January, a six week intervention programme to improve cardiovascular fitness and a repeat fitness test in March.



Winning class with Principal Ms. Mary O Keeffe, PE teacher Ms. Siobhan Dennehy and CEO of Aviva Health Insurance Mr. James Parker.

## Citizen's Passport

Teenage campaigners from Ramsgrange Community School were among students from more than 20 Irish post-primary schools to receive the first ever 'Global and Citizen's Passports' in recognition of their work, at the annual schools conference 'The World We Want' which took place at The Aviva Stadium in Dublin.

Student Sarah Chapman, Ramsgrange Community School, and her teacher Ms. Michelle Ryan accepted their school's 'Citizen's Passport' award from Minister for Development and Trade Mr. Sean Sherlock.



## Make a Book Competition 2015 winners St. Aidan's Community School, Brookfield, Tallaght



St. Aidan's Principal, Sr. Ann, is presented with a copy of St. Aidan's Adventure Treasury.

The students of St. Aidan's Community School compiled a book of short stories, St. Aidan's Adventure Treasury, which won the prestigious Make a Book Competition 2015. The students not only wrote their own stories but also beautifully illustrated the publication.



## Ashton Comprehensive School

Students from Ashton Comprehensive School, Cork exhibit sensory garden design at Bord Bia Bloom.

## F1 in Schools National Champions: Verus Racing, St. Attracta's Community School, Tubbercurry



St. Attracta's F1 in Schools National Champions, Mr. Enda Joyce, Teacher in Charge, Eoin Leonard, Niall O'Donnell, Gerard Hunt and Mr. David McEvoy, Principal.

Team Verus Racing from St. Attracta's Community School, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo, were declared the overall winners of the 2015 F1 in Schools Technology Challenge, powered in Ireland by the Irish Computer Society at the National Finals held in Dublin Castle as part of Tech Week. F1 in Schools is a global competition that challenges secondary school students to design, build and race miniature balsa wood Formula One cars powered by compressed air canisters.

Verus Racing are a group of three fifth year students: Gerard Hunt, Niall O'Donnell and Captain Eoin Leonard from St. Attracta's Community School. The school are very proud of the boys and their teacher, Enda Joyce. It is rewarding to see that their hard work and dedication has paid off.

The team fought off competition from 23 teams from all over Ireland in the finals to claim the National Title and trophy, €2,000 in prize money, and the opportunity to represent Ireland in the 2015 World Championships in Singapore alongside the 2015 Singapore Airlines Grand Prix in September this year.

## 2015 All Ireland Senior Girls Hockey Champions Crescent College Comprehensive

Another chapter was added to the remarkable sporting history of Crescent College Comprehensive SJ when their senior girls captured the 2015 Kate Russell All-Ireland Hockey Championship, the first ever for the school. The euphoria that greeted the final whistle in their last game v Salerno was the culmination of many, many hours of hard work and dedication and resulted in Sean O'Callaghan's long-held dream coming true. This was a remarkable achievement by the girls who have dominated Munster Senior Hockey for the past number of years and nobody can begrudge them their success.

