

New Developments in Education 2017

It has been a busy opening to 2017 with several new developments announced. ACCS welcomes the announcement of the grant scheme for ICT infrastructure, the new allocation model for teaching resources for special educational needs, the DEIS review and the publication of the Action Plan for Education 2017. The industrial relations landscape remains challenging following the rejection by ASTI members of the latest offer to resolve the current impasse.

Grant Scheme for ICT Infrastructure - 2016-2017 School Year

The first Circular of 2017 addressed funding for ICT Infrastructure in schools as part of the implementation of the Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020.

The funding detailed was for the school year 2016/17 while stating a clear intention to have annual funding for the life of the Strategy. Funding in year 1 totalled €30m. The intention is that funding will increase to €50m p.a. in later years of the Strategy. The grant rates and stipulations of the scheme are detailed in Department of Education and Skills CL 01/2017 and ACCS Info Bulletin 01/17. When taken over the life of the Digital Strategy, the funding is considerable and very welcome.

On the 8th February 2017 ACCS hosted an in-service titled, "Making Effective use of ICT Infrastructure Grant", in the Mullingar Park Hotel. The in-service, aimed at school leaders and ICT co-ordinators, was attended by 90 delegates. The purpose of the day was to provide the opportunity to engage with Ms. Deirdre Redmond, ACCS ICT Schools Advisor, and Mr. Tom Lonergan, PDST Technology in Education. The focus was on the supports available, the current trends in ICT in education and planning the effective use of the ICT Infrastructure Grant

to maximise its impact on teaching and learning in schools.

Ms. Deirdre Redmond is currently involved in auditing ICT infrastructure in schools and providing guidance on the best areas for ICT infrastructure investment based on the vision of the school. As part of her presentation she looked at the outcomes and the common findings from audits to date. By the end of this school year Deirdre hopes to have engaged in audits with over 50 of our schools.

A new and more equitable way of Allocating Teaching Resources for Special Needs

On 18th January 2017 Minister for Education and Skills, Mr. Richard Bruton T.D., announced a new more equitable way of allocating additional teaching resources for students with special educational needs, which will come into place in September 2017.

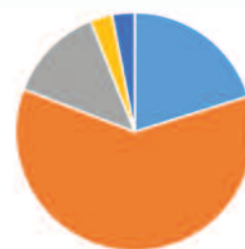
The new model will mean:

- Students will no longer have to wait to access extra teaching as a diagnosis is no longer necessary; long waiting lists exist for a diagnosis.
- Students won't have to be "labelled" with a disability just to receive extra teaching support.
- Parents will no longer have to pay large sums of money for a private diagnosis to bypass waiting lists.
- Schools will be able to support students as soon as difficulties begin to emerge as they won't have to wait for an individual diagnosis and application for resources.
- Schools will have less paperwork and administration without the need for individual applications for resources to the NCSE - of which there were an average of 17,000 a year.

The new allocation model will be based on a needs profile of the school. The following table shows how this profile is developed. Initially the Complex Needs element is the allocation received currently from NCSE for students in the low incidence category. Post Primary Standardised Tests are being initially replaced by performance in English and



Ms. Eileen Salmon, General Secretary ACCS



■ Baseline [20%] ■ Complex Needs [60%]
■ Standardised Tests [13%] ■ Social Context [4%] ■ Gender [3%]

Mathematics at Junior Cycle level.

In a press release welcoming the new Model Ms. Antoinette Nic Gearailt, President ACCS, stated:

"The Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS) welcomes the announcement today of the New Model for the Allocation of support to students with Special Educational Needs. ACCS trusts that it will represent a more equitable system, ensuring that the allocation to each school will be reflective of the school's commitment to supporting students with special educational needs. The baseline allocation to all schools reinforces the position that every school has the capacity to provide

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support to students with special educational needs. We trust that the model will also result in a less cumbersome application process. The new model marks a step forward in the provision of special education support; however we recognise that further work will be necessary in this initial period to embed the model in the most equitable and effective way."

Seventy nine new schools to be added to DEIS Programme

The DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) Plan 2017, was published by Minister for Education & Skills, Mr. Richard Bruton T.D., on Monday 13th February 2017.

The Plan sets out a vision for future intervention in the critical area of social inclusion in education policy. Targets are identified including:

- Further improve literacy and numeracy
- Improve school completion rates
- Improve progression to further and higher education

The overall aim of the DEIS Plan 2017 is to build on the experiences of existing DEIS schools to inform effective ways in which the education system can help to break down cycles of disadvantage through improved identification of schools and calibrating supports to assist those pupils most at risk gain real and lasting benefits from their education.

The Minister recognised that, "we are lucky in Ireland to have such a dedicated and committed teaching profession. Our teachers and school leaders will continue to play a pivotal role in helping children to achieve their potential. We have to support our teachers and school leaders, through up-skilling, mentoring and coaching, so they can plan, deploy and to support".

The Minister also ensured that, "further engagement with education partners and other stakeholders is ongoing to ensure successful delivery of the goals contained in DEIS Plan 2017".

Among 13 post primary schools identified for additional resources were two community schools, St. Mark's Community School, Tallaght and Mountmellick Community School, Co. Laois.



The Government published the Action Plan for Education 2017 on 6th of February 2017. Led by Minister Richard

Bruton, the aim of the Plan is to make Ireland's education and training system the best in Europe within a decade.

Education is central to all our ambitions as a nation. It supports the development of a strong growing economy while sustaining a fair and compassionate society.

Among headline actions announced as part of the 2017 Plan are:

- **Wellbeing:** Every school will be required to have dedicated guidance counselling time available for students; Implement Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme; DES will appoint an additional 10 NEPS psychologists and establish a Wellbeing Steering Committee to develop a policy statement and identify gaps in existing services.
- **Technology in education:** Implementation of Computer Science leaving cert subject brought forward 12 months to September 2018; development of computational thinking and coding through new maths curriculum at primary; new advisory group led by industry and experts to develop new plans for greater use of technology in education.
- **Disadvantage:** The DES to shortly publish a Plan for future supports to tackle educational disadvantage, building on existing DEIS supports, with new schools being phased into DEIS from next September; develop a School Excellence Fund and commence pilot, initially in DEIS schools.
- **Skills:** Develop 13 new apprenticeships and 2 new traineeships in 2017; review work experience at post primary; develop innovative responses to address skills shortages in ICT languages and biopharma; hold quarterly meetings between education and enterprise.
- **Research:** New initiatives to attract world-leading researchers to Ireland, particularly in the context of Brexit.
- **Costs:** Publish a strong circular with an emphasis on reducing costs to parents, including school uniform costs.
- **After school care provision:** Publish guidelines for the use of school buildings out of hours, following engagement with property owners and school authorities (e.g. to provide afterschool care provision for school

age children to offer more options and flexibility to parents).

- **Languages:** New Foreign Languages Strategy to outline new languages options and ambitious targets; consideration to be given to greater use of "CLIL", or teaching of mainstream subjects through second and third languages, as a means of teaching Irish and other languages in a more effective way at primary and secondary level.
- **Gaeltacht:** Implement the Gaeltacht Education Strategy, and publish arrangements for Gaeltacht school recognition process.
- **Infrastructure:** Complete 46 large-scale building projects; provide 6,000 additional permanent post primary places in 2017.
- **Special Educational Needs:** Introduce the new model for allocation of teachers in mainstream schools to support children with SEN; establish a new Inclusion Support Service; complete a comprehensive assessment of the Special Needs Assistants (SNA) scheme.
- **Third level:** New higher education funding model (RGAM) to be in place for the 2018 budget; publish policy review to design and implement a multi-annual funding model involving increased Exchequer and employer contributions from 2018; finalise drafting of Higher Education Reform Bill.

The ASTI Ballot

ACCS is disappointed with the outcome of the ASTI Ballot. The result means that the current directives to ASTI members, which include directives not to engage in Croke Park hours and Junior Cycle Reform among others, remain in force. The directives are having a negative impact on planning in schools. ACCS wishes to see all students having access to all elements of the new Junior Cycle Framework and teachers having access to valuable CPD. It is regrettable that ASTI members will also be precluded from accessing the promotional posts of responsibility that will be available to schools in September 2017. These posts signal the commencement of restoration of middle management posts as part of an agreed distributed leadership model announced in Budget 2017.



ACCS Convention 2017

We look forward to meeting you at the ACCS Convention 2017 in the Malton Hotel Killarney from Thursday March 23rd to Saturday March 25th.

The Centre for School Leadership, CSL

As the Centre for School Leadership (CSL) reaches the half way mark of the current pilot, the team welcomes this opportunity to update ACCS's school leaders with the progress of its work. We started our work in September 2015 and we are only now beginning to see the fruits of our labour!

On January 27th 2017, Minister Bruton officially announced that a free, confidential, one to one coaching service for all Principals in Ireland had commenced. CSL recognises that a school's leader's job is demanding and challenging and that coaching can help Principals achieve their goals, face those challenges and demands, and provide time and space for Principals to reflect. Coaching is a well-established leadership development service in industry and business, but this is the first time Irish school leaders will experience it for themselves. Already the phones are hopping in the offices of the coaching companies and over 150 Principals have engaged with the service in the past 3 weeks. To access the service, Principals can go to the website at www.cslireland.ie and check out the 40 coaches in the 6 different regions around the country. They can then browse their biographies and choose the coach that appeals to them. There are 400 places available and each participant will be entitled to up to 7 sessions with a professional coach, along with a chemistry check. CSL is very

conscious that currently this service is not available for Deputy Principals. The current budget for coaching in the pilot phase of CSL did not permit the inclusion of Deputies but CSL will continue to seek extra funding so that the coaching service can be extended to all senior school leaders into the future.

Our mentoring work continues this year and by the end of May we will have trained 417 mentors. We are very grateful to the eight fully trained mentors in the Community and Comprehensive sector and the further eight Principals who are training with us this year. Feedback from the training has been very positive and the generosity, camaraderie and enthusiasm of the participants has made this initiative a positive and enriching source of professional development. All newly appointed Principals in Ireland will have a trained mentor to assist, support and challenge them in their new and demanding role. We often quote the Wallace foundation at our training sessions: "Good Principals aren't born; they're mentored"

One of the main objectives of the Centre for School Leadership is to build leadership capacity in the system. The new CSL Post Graduate Diploma in School Leadership (PDSL) will commence next September. This is a level 9 programme and it will be available in 6 regions around the country. Táimid ag súil go mbeidh sé ar fáil trí mheán na Gaeilge i réigiúin



amháin sa tír. The tendering process was completed and the successful tenderer is a consortium led by UL in association with UCD and NUIG. The course will be widely advertised in April. Places will be limited to approximately 200 in the first year and it will be run over 18 months. This new course will be part-funded by the Department of Education and Skills and will involve a short period of work placement in a school other than the participant's own, and in a sector outside of the education field. It will have a blended learning approach which will allow participants to work through some of the material from home, thus avoiding too much travel. Please watch our website for updates on the application process.

CSL hopes over the next few years to expand its services and supports to all school leaders.

Máire Ní Bhróithe is the Deputy Director Post-Primary in the Centre for School Leadership. She was a teacher in Coláiste Chiaráin, Leixlip, a former principal of Castlecomer Community School and she is currently the Chairperson of the Board of Management of Ballymakenny College.



Mr. James Duignan, Principal Glenamaddy Community School, at the first training session for mentors to newly appointed Principals.



CSL Personnel, Ms. Máire Ní Bhróithe, Deputy Director Post Primary, Ms. Anna Mai, Deputy Director Primary, and Ms. Mary Nihill, Director CSL.



From December 5th 2016 Carecall will now be known as inspire

Your 24/7 confidential helpline number is:

1800 411 057

Counselling doesn't have to be face-to-face, you can have immediate access to a counsellor via the free phone number, 24/7, 365 days a year

They guarantee to see you within 20 miles of wherever you live or work in the UK & Ireland

They guarantee to get you a face-to-face appointment within 3 days of when you first make contact

You are entitled to counselling sessions for any "life event" at work or in your personal life, which may be troubling you

This Service is 100% confidential

This service is free to you

Whatever's on your mind, contact us free & confidentially 24/7, 365 days a year on your designated Freephone number as this will not change, or email us support@inspirewellbeing.org

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Recent Relevant DES Circular Letters

CL 09/2017	Standardisation of the School Year in respect of Primary & Post-Primary Schools for the years 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20
CL 06/2017	Prescribed Material for the Leaving Certificate English Examination in 2019
CL 05/2017	Teacher Fee Refund Scheme
CL 04/2017	Post-Graduate Certificate/Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development for Teachers working with Students with Special Educational Needs (Autism Spectrum Disorders)
CL 03/2017	Graduate Certificate in the Education of Pupils on the Autism Spectrum (AS) for teachers working with Pupils on the AS in Special Schools, Special Classes or as Resource Teachers in mainstream Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017/2018
CL 02/2017	Combined Post-Graduate Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Involved in Learning Support and Special Educational Needs – 2017/2018
CL 01/2017	GRANT SCHEME FOR ICT INFRASTRUCTURE- 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR
CL 79/2016	REVISED SALARY SCALE FROM 1 JANUARY 2017 FOR POST-1 FEBRUARY 2012 ENTRANT TEACHERS COVERED BY THE LANSDOWNE ROAD AGREEMENT

News and Events in our Schools

Donahies Community School students assist in launch of YSI



"Social Innovation Thinking Differently," was launched with students from Donahies Community School on the 8th February 2017 in Dublin by the Minister of Education and Skills, Richard Bruton.

It gives an overview of the work and achievements of Young Social Innovators to date and plans to provide social innovation programmes to 50% of second-level schools by 2020.

Left to right: Donahies Community School students Chloe Murphy, Stephen Power and Aiesha Wong, Richard Bruton, TD, Minister for Education and Skills, Rachel Collier, CEO, Young Social Innovators and Gerry Mallon, CEO, Ulster Bank Ireland.

Portumna Community School students at the Young Scientist Exhibition



Ruth Murphy, Chief Counsel Business and Public Sector in BT, presents the Technology Junior Group 1st place award to Gavin McGinley and Roy Flaherty, Portumna Community School, County Galway, for their project "Conglaturation"! You have completed an Arcade Cabinet!"

Iain White/Fennell Photography



Students from Portumna Community School, Galway during the President's visit where he officially opened the BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition 2017.

Chris Bellew/Fennell Photography 2017

Ballinteer Community School U19 Ladies Leinster B Champions 2017



This title was won in a very competitive game against Gaelcholaiste Cheatharlach from Carlow. The score was 1-1 at full time and finally decided on penalties at the end of extra time.

Back row from left to right: Kerryn White, Ciara Walsh, Ava McGuire, Katelyn Mooney, Silvia Huelves Garcia, Rebecca Tyrell, Jamie McGrath Dempsey, Caitriona McGearthy

Front row from left to right: Rebecca Jones Williams, Lauren Reilly, Lynn Anderson, Jessica Menton, Karla Colley, Leah Molloy, Eve Colley, Caragh White Kelly.

News and Events in our Schools

Multicultural Day at St. Kilian's Community School

St. Kilian's Community School, Ballywaltrim, Bray hosted its third annual Multicultural Day on Friday 27th January 2017 and, as always, it was a hugely successful and enjoyable event. The day was a celebration of the diversity that exists both within the school community and, in broader terms, in 2017 Irish society.

Multicultural Day is a whole-school event, with teachers, parents and students all planning and working together during the preceding months to ensure the day's success. The Student Council and Parents' Association both play significant roles, with the Home School and Community Liaison Coordinator, Ms. Siobhán Garvey, orchestrating and coordinating everyone's ideas and efforts.

The centrepiece of the day is a major

food fair, with students and their families preparing national dishes and delicacies from both far-flung countries and ones nearer to home. Many students wear traditional dress and face-painting is provided by Transition Year students. The school is decorated with national flags and displays representing the thirty different nationalities of the school's students.

Each year there are presentations and workshops focusing on cultural aspects of various countries. This year, a member of the teaching staff, Ms. Aderonke Arogundade, a native of Nigeria, hosted hugely interesting and entertaining workshops about the marriage customs of the Yoruba people. Her student helpers, wearing traditional dress, gave demonstrations of African drumming and

everyone took part in African games. Other workshops included one on the Japanese kimono, led by parent, Ms. Yumiko Wilde, and a group of her Japanese friends. Students had an opportunity to learn about the different types of kimono and to wear the yukata, a casual summer kimono worn by young women.

There was an international-themed concert in the canteen at lunchtime, which brought proceedings to a close for this year. Multicultural Day has earned a special place in the St. Kilian's C.S. school calendar. It is an extraordinary day in how the celebration of the differences that exist between the thirty nationalities at our school serve only to bring us ever closer as a community.



Ms. Aderonke Arogundade and students of St. Kilian's Community School hosted workshops about the marriage customs of the Yoruba people of Nigeria.



Ms. Yumiko Wilde, parent, and friends led a Japanese kimono workshop during St. Kilian's Community School Multicultural Day.



Food Fair at Multicultural Day in St. Kilian's Community School.