

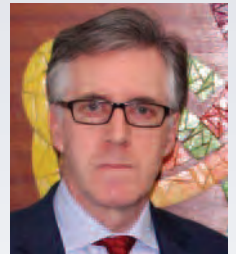
ACCS Press Release – 27th March, 2020

Following its meeting on the 26th March 2020, the Executive of the Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools, ACCS, wish to be associated with the remarks of the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills when acknowledging and thanking principals and teachers “for the huge work that you have undertaken to provide continuity of learning for students through online platforms, email and other resources, particularly where access to digital resources is more limited”.

At this time of school closure, the ACCS Executive calls on mobile providers to provide unlimited data for students and teachers. Many students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, do not have access to devices and are accessing materials from schools through their mobile phones. The provision of access to free and unlimited data would be very beneficial to students and learners at this time. This would remove a burden from many parents who are already under pressure due to their changed circumstances. It would also go some way to ‘levelling the playing field’ for many children.

In normal times schools contribute to the everyday fabric, routine and order of our society. In these extraordinary times schools and their teachers can continue to offer that routine, purpose and social connection by doing their very best to support the continuance of the education programme for the pupils in all year groups. Ireland places an enormous premium on the education and training of its young people. These young people deserve to see that service maintained and have a sense of purpose. Although we are in a period of great unease and uncertainty our young people need our continued commitment to them. They need to

be assured that teaching and learning will continue and that the State Examinations will proceed including as many elements as possible. We have witnessed examples of great character and resolve throughout our country. We acknowledge the obstacles, the anxieties and frustrations but we encourage all our schools, teachers and students to rise to this great challenge.



We acknowledge all the support given by schools to date in the donation, and in some instances production, of Personal Protective Equipment. If your school still has personal protective equipment (PPE) that is not required at present, this can be offered to the Office of Government Procurement (OGP), which is coordinating all offers of this nature so that equipment can be deployed across emergency services if required. This can be done here www.gov.ie/covidsupplies. Schools can also engage directly with local services. Any positive contribution that can be made by schools to help in the current crisis is very welcome.

ACCS also reminds students and their families of the absolute need to practise social and physical distancing, and to minimise physical contact with each other, to help avoid the spread of Covid-19. It is important that students avoid meeting up and, in all circumstances, adhere to HSE guidelines. At the same time, we ask students to remain connected to their school and engage in appropriate communication with extended family and friends through social media.

Mr. Paul Fiorentini, President of the Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools, ACCS.

Artwork inspired by our new times...

In challenging times, art can provide a respite from reality. Many great artists who, under different circumstances, found themselves isolated, taking distance from the world provided fertile ground for creative discovery.



We are in the midst of a global national emergency – a pandemic of which none of us has seen before.



During these days of social distancing, delving into your own creativity whether it's creative writing, music or the visual arts can be a great way to articulate your feelings. Sharing your creative work can have the power to inspire others, helping them to find their own creative voices.

Gazing through the brilliantly expressive drawings and paintings by our school's art students inspire delight and humour, proving that sometimes good comes through adversity. These are unusual times, but they are also times you are unlikely to forget.

Use these moments to tap into your creativity!

Liz Lawne (Art Teacher, Portumna Community School)

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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Looking after your Mental Health During COVID-19

The coronavirus continues to dominate conversations both in workplaces and our wider world. With such an overwhelming amount of information being presented, dissected and discussed, it's natural for us to feel a sense of unease or anxiety. At this time, it's just as important to consider our mental health and wellbeing as it is our physical health.

With that in mind, please see below advice given by the **World Health Organisation** on mental health and coping during COVID-19.

For all:

- Avoid watching, reading or listening to news that causes you to feel anxious or distressed; seek information mainly to take practical steps.
- Seek information updates at specific times during the day, once or twice. The sudden and near-constant stream of news reports can cause anyone to feel worried. Get the facts.
- Protect yourself and be supportive to others. Assisting others in their time of need can benefit the person receiving support as well as the helper.



For those taking care of older adults:

- Older adults, especially in isolation and those with cognitive decline may become more anxious, angry, stressed, agitated, and withdrawn. Provide practical and emotional support through informal networks (families) and health professionals.
- Share simple facts about what is going on and give clear, understandable information about how to reduce risks. Repeat the information whenever necessary. Instructions need to be communicated in a clear, concise, respectful and patient way. Engage their family and other support networks in providing information and helping them practice prevention measures (e.g. handwashing etc.)

For those in isolation:

- Stay connected and maintain your social networks. Even in situations of isolations, try as much as possible to keep your personal daily routines. If health authorities have recommended limiting your physical social contact, you can stay connected via e-mail, social media, video conference and telephone.
- During times of stress, pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in healthy activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly, keep regular sleep routines and eat healthy food.
- Keep things in perspective. Public health agencies and experts in all countries are working to ensure the availability of the best care to those affected.
- A near-constant stream of news reports can cause anyone to feel anxious or distressed. Seek information updates and practical guidance at specific times during the day from health professionals and avoid listening to or following rumours that make you feel uncomfortable.



For the full article, visit:

www.cnn.com/2020/03/10/who-gives-advice-on-handling-mental-health-toll-caused-by-coronavirus.html

www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf?sfvrsn=6d3578af_2

TEN TOP TIPS:

Working remotely



1 SET UP A DESIGNATED WORKSPACE

Separate space for yourself to work in, somewhere you can focus on tasks without being distracted and set up with everything you need for a normal working day.

2 MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ALL THE TECH YOU NEED

This includes a reliable internet connection, required hardware and software, access to your company network, any files and importantly, knowledge of how to get IT support.

3 GET DRESSED

Changing into working clothes will help you mentally switch onto productive work mode. It will also help you distinguish between 'homeworking' and 'home life'.

4 WRITE A DAILY TO-DO LIST

Set out a list of realistic, achievable tasks to keep you focused.

5 KNOW WHEN TO STEP AWAY FROM YOUR DESK

Be clear about when your working day begins and ends and take breaks to refresh. It's easy to let yourself be 'always on' when your home and office are the same place.

6 STAY IN CONVERSATION

Contribute regularly to team chats/group emails so you don't drop off the radar. Ask about what people are working on and share what's on your plate.

7 FOSTER RELATIONSHIPS

Make time for non-work chats as you would in the workplace and use video calling to maintain face-to-face contact.

8 BE CLEAR IN YOUR COMMUNICATION

Speaking in person gives you visual and audio cues that help you communicate. Conversing remotely removes a lot of that extra information so make your communications extra clear and concise.

9 ASK FOR SUPPORT WHEN NEEDED

Speak out when you need assistance, further training or support. Your manager, colleagues and you are part of a team and should be supporting each other, even remotely.

10 MAKE REMOTE WORKING WORK FOR YOU

Change where you sit, put on music, whatever helps you work. And enjoy the perks - no commute or uncomfortable shoes, and all your home comforts!

For more information and resources visit
cipd.co.uk/coronavirus

CIPD

Report on the NAPD – Symposium

“The FET College of the Future – What Does it Look Like?”

For the past 20 years, the NAPD-FET Committee has been a powerful advocate for Further Education. ACCS schools are represented on the NAPD-FET Committee by Catherine O’Sullivan, Director of the ACCS/JMB Further Education Support Unit and Tom Lowry, Principal, Moate Community School, Co. Westmeath.

The annual Symposium has been an important forum for exploration and discussion, by specialists and the partners, of the key issues that surround this vibrant element of Irish Education.

The last seven years have seen a rapid increase in the momentum for change and NAPD-FET has been a proud contributor to the process, offering, in particular, the expertise and experience of seasoned practitioners – the principals and deputies of the further education schools and colleges.

This year’s Symposium focused on the FET College of the Future. William Beausang, Head of the Tertiary Education Division at the Department of Education and Skills presented the perspective of the Department of Education and Skills while Andrew Brownlee, CEO SOLAS elaborated on the SOLAS position. Dr Pdraig Walshe presented QQI’s viewpoint.

Colm McEvoy, CEO of Kerry ETB delivered a presentation on the innovative Kerry College initiative. Catherine O’Sullivan delivered a presentation on the perspective of FET

provision in the Voluntary Secondary / Community Comprehensive schools.

Andrew Brownlee, CEO of SOLAS stated that the further education sector is becoming an important route for entry into higher education. Mr Brownlee said learner feedback has been generally positive, employment and progression outcomes are strong, and employers are highly satisfied with the quality of FET graduates.

However, he said the sector has to change to ensure that it can meet the future needs of the economy and society. This, he said, will include simplifying its structures and learning pathways, facilitating easier access and building a more powerful identity within communities and potential learners.

The aim, he said, is to ensure a greater share of school-leavers choose further education or an apprenticeship as their first destination and will have the option of transferring seamlessly to higher education.

“We want to send out the message that FET is for everyone. It is available in every community in Ireland, and offers every individual, regardless of any previous level of education, a pathway to take them as far as they want to go,” he said.

The second FET strategy, soon to be launched by SOLAS, proposes an exciting vision for the future for FET in Ireland. The strategy sets out a range of priorities across three pillars- building skills, creating pathways and fostering inclusion – this strategy sets to build



provision around a distinct, diverse and vibrant community-based FET college of the future, which will serve as a “beacon of learning in and for the community”.

William Beausang, Assistant Secretary at the Department of Education and head of the tertiary division, said FET will have a key role to play in meeting skills needs of the country, especially in areas such as lifelong learning and upskilling.

He also said the education system after second level was too “tiered” and that it was important to ensure the further and higher education systems are more closely integrated.

GDPR – Retention of Records

From talking to many Principals and Deputies, and from visits to schools, the Data Protection Advisor is well aware of the difficulty schools have with legacy data. In some cases schools have files going back decades and have been unsure of what to do with them. The biggest difficulty seems to have been finding the time to tackle the mountain of documents.

While this is obviously an unprecedented time for schools, and there is much to be done in just finding your way through these times, it may also be an opportunity to turn to that mountain of files and start to make some inroads on them.

ACCS recently rolled out an update to the Data Retention Schedule which relates to the length of time for which you should retain the personal data you hold in your school. This schedule gives

guidance to schools on what they need to keep and for how long, indeed and what they don’t need to keep.

If you are fortunate enough to have your legacy data stored by year, then you can easily identify and shred the contents of boxes of files relating to years which have fallen outside of the retention periods indicated on the schedule. This is a good place to start and should significantly impact the amount of data you are holding.

Data not stored by year may require a more microscopic review to single out what now falls outside the retention period and what does not. This will require time, and that may well be something you find you have more of over the coming weeks.

While you do have certain exemptions available to you, e.g. retention of personal data for historical or archival

purposes or for scientific interest, you will find that the vast majority of personal data from outside the retention periods can be shredded.

Note that state examination results can all be shredded and any requests for results can be directed to the State Exams Commission.

One of the principles of the GDPR is that of “Storage Limitation” – “personal data must not be stored for longer than is necessary.” Therefore, over-holding data would be considered a data breach and a breach of the principles of the GDPR.

ACCS would strongly advise schools to put in place good practices around the retention of personal data in compliance with the Data Retention Schedule.

Hilary Treacy, ACCS Data Protection Advisor, is available to take calls and emails. Contact Hilary on Htreacy@accs.ie or 083 347 4562.

The 38th ACCS Annual Convention March 2020

Promoting Quality in Education



Paul Fiorentini, President, ACCS opens ACCS Convention in Killarney.



The 38th ACCS Annual Convention took place in Killarney, in the Great Southern Hotel on 4th, 5th and 6th March and was attended by 182 delegates representing 86 schools. The Convention represents an opportunity for ACCS to conduct its necessary business as an organisation while also affording delegates an opportunity to reflect upon and discuss current issues relevant to our schools and the wider education landscape. ACCS President, Paul Fiorentini opened Convention extending a warm welcome to all delegates.



John Irwin, General Secretary presents his report to Convention.

Following the business of Convention, the ACCS President then invited John Irwin, General Secretary, ACCS to present his report of the activities of ACCS during the past year as outlined in the Convention Handbook and framed in the current strategic plan. The plan, which concludes in 2020, identifies the following priorities:

1. Shaping the Future by Influencing & Managing Change

Within this priority area, the General Secretary highlighted the comprehensive CPD Programme which continues to be relevant and practical, being particularly cognisant of new developments in

education and the requirement for Boards of Management to meet their ever-expanding governance obligations. The latest programmes to be offered to schools during 2019/2020 includes the training programme for the Middle Leadership Team, the series of one day events promoting Student Voice in schools and classrooms and the Dignity At Work seminars.

ACCS works closely in collaboration with the other Education Partners including the DES, PACCS, the School Chaplains' Association, the other Management Bodies and the Teacher Unions. These are among the many organisations and agencies that ACCS engages with on an ongoing basis. Two issues have received a lot of focus and attention over the last year, teacher supply and provision for students with special education needs.

Mr Irwin noted that the role of the Patron is significant and valued in Community and Comprehensive Schools as the founders of schools and those who establish the characteristic spirit and founding intention of schools. The Association of Joint Patrons of Community and Comprehensive Schools, (AJP), has evolved from the National Trustee Forum. Its Constitution states the following:

The main object for which the body is established is to address the concerns of Patrons / Trustees and to promote best operational practice in the exercise of Patronage / Trusteeship in Community and Comprehensive Schools. In furtherance exclusively of the foregoing main object the body shall have the following subsidiary objects:

- (a) *To develop coherence in the exercise of joint patronage, or where relevant single patronage, of Community and Comprehensive Schools in Ireland.*
- (b) *To provide a means by which Joint Patrons can be consulted and supported at national level.*

(c) *To enable the views of Joint Patrons to be articulated and communicated to the Department of Education and Skills and other relevant agencies.*

ACCS continues to embrace technology and is currently redeveloping its website to ensure that it is fit for purpose and has the capacity to be as interactive as possible and to host online learning and other resources.

Catherine O'Sullivan, Director of ACCS/JMB Further Education Support Unit, joined the team in September 2019. The funding for this position was achieved through a joint ACCS/JMB application to SOLAS. Since taking up her position Catherine has engaged with each of our further education providers to give guidance and support. This guidance also includes opportunities to extend provision where an identified need has been established. In this regard we welcome the announcement that Cabinteely Community School will provide 40 places in further education from next September.

2. Continue to embed & develop Governance Structures in Community & Comprehensive Schools

Within this priority area the General Secretary acknowledged that in all facets of Irish life governance within organisations has attained a greater level of attention and importance. In the sphere of education this is particularly true where there appears to be a never-ending list of demands placed on schools through legislation and procedures. As part of the ACCS ongoing training and guidance to Boards of Management matters relating to governance appears on a regular basis. The governance section at this Convention focussed on the commencement of additional sections of The Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 announced on 1 February 2020.

Other training events for Boards of Management during the year included guidance and in-service on Child Protection Procedures, Data Protection and GDPR, Dignity At Work, Financial Support and Governance (FSSU) and Garda Vetting.

3. Managing the Evolution of ACCS and Promoting the Community and Comprehensive Sector

Supporting Existing Schools

The General Secretary reminded delegates that the primary focus of ACCS is its support of the Boards of Management and school management teams of existing schools. During the course of 2019/2020 all 96 schools have engaged directly with ACCS through in-service, telephone conversations, emails and correspondence.

ACCS is constantly looking to improve the service to schools and this year we were delighted to welcome to the team Catherine O'Sullivan, Director of ACCS/JMB Further Education Support Unit, and Elaine Mooney, Vetting Administrator. The role of Jim Twohig, ACCS Buildings Advisor, has also been enhanced on the request of the Department of Education and Skills. These services are in addition to those already provided including human resource management, data protection and school leadership and management advice. We communicate with schools on a regular basis through information bulletins and newsletters including articles relevant to the most recent leadership and management issues facing schools.

Working Collectively

The evidence of the power of collaboration between the management bodies is very much seen in the emergence of new middle leadership and management structures in schools. The provision of additional deputy principal posts at API and APII level and the emergence of a distributive leadership model in schools is a direct result of collaboration and working together. In a similar vein both ACCS and the ETBI have sought a reversal of cuts imposed during the financial downturn in relation to secretarial and caretaking support in schools. ACCS acknowledges the Department's commitment to continue alleviating these cuts.

The question of the sustainability of leadership teams in schools has been raised and ACCS looks forward to working with NAPD and the other management bodies in progressing this issue. In addition, ACCS engages in a myriad of consultations with Department bodies on an ongoing basis including

The Teaching Council, SEC and the NCCA.

Patronage of New Schools

The General Secretary spent a considerable amount of time on this area noting that ACCS, has significant concerns regarding the operation of the process to identify the Patrons of new post primary schools. The process excludes the Community School model. This is at complete odds with the stated aims of the process to promote diversity and meet the patronage preferences of parents. ACCS concerns have been previously expressed in a submission to the Department of Education and Skills, 'Awarding of Patronage for New Schools 2017/18 from a Community School Perspective'. The announcement of the patronage of 6 new post primary schools by Minister McHugh on 17th December 2019 further confirms ACCS in its view of the shortcomings of the process.

ACCS believes that the continued exclusion of the community or comprehensive school model as an option open to parents needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency if true diversity and parental choice are to form a part of the selection criteria for patronage of new schools. This is consistent with Action 51 of the Department's Action Plan to "make progress towards increasing the diversity of school type in order to offer parents more choice".

Mr Irwin highlighted the ACCS prebudget submission 2019 priorities as outlined below:

Priority 1

The need for the ending of the moratorium and the funding of appropriate clerical/administrative and caretaking support for schools.

Priority 2

The Need to Enhance Leadership and Management Supports in DEIS schools.

Priority 3

Co-ordinated response to the challenges that school inclusion brings.

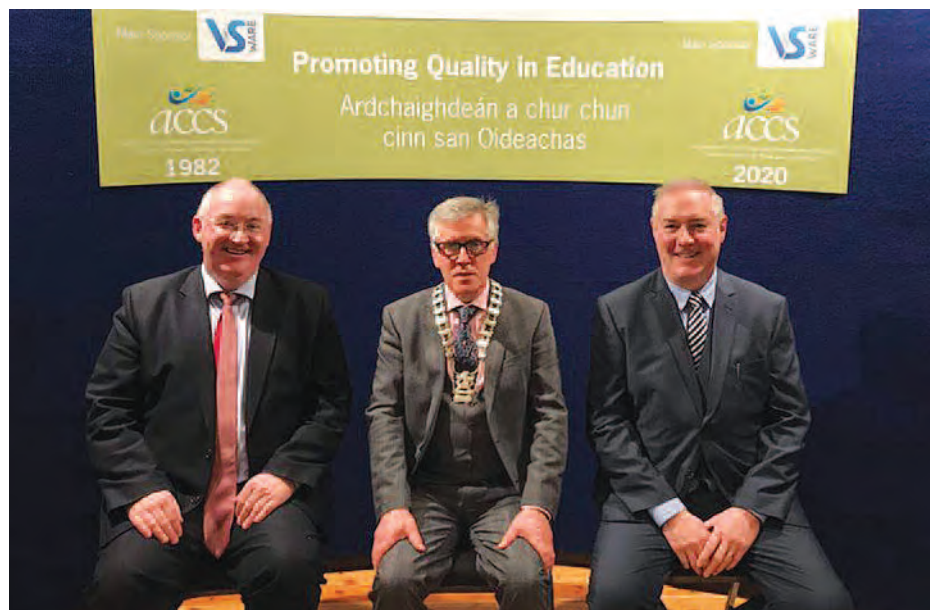
In his conclusion, the General Secretary reminded the delegates that, "Community and Comprehensive Schools are affording opportunities for all the students within the community to engage in a comprehensive, multi-denominational, inclusive, vibrant liberal education. This tradition, established across Ireland with 50 years of experience, is valued by the communities the schools serve. Community schools are uniquely placed to meet the evolving needs and context of communities. It is incumbent on us all present to promote this model of education for the benefit of the communities we serve."

He offered his appreciation to the staff who support and assist the work in Head Office and to all who work with dedication and friendship both in the office and in the background.

The General Secretary's report was followed by the Honorary Treasurer's Report presented by Paul Thornton. This detailed report presented the audited accounts to delegates indicating the healthy financial position of the Association. The session concluded with the Human Resources Manager's report presented by Anne Marie Dillon.

Election of President 2020/2021

Paul Fiorentini (Carndonagh Community School) was the sole nominee for the office of ACCS President for 2020/2021. His appointment was unanimously adopted on the proposal of Liam Harkin and seconded by James Duignan.



James Duignan, Vice President ACCS, Paul Fiorentini, President ACCS and Mr. Liam Harkin, Carndonagh C.S.

ACCS Executive 2020/21**Munster: (3)**

Denis Ring
Fergal McCarthy
Noel O'Sullivan

Dublin: (3)

Pat Mc Kenna (Hon Secretary)
Brenda Kelly
Antoinette Nic Gearailt

Connaught: (2)

Adrian Jackson
Tomás Ó Nídh

Comprehensive Schools: (2)

Craig Petrie
David Leahy

Ulster: (2)

Maeve Sweeney
Patrick Mc Vicar

Leinster: (3)

Mary Jackson
Phil Bowe
Denis Magner

Co: Opted: Paul Thornton
(Hon Treasurer)

Co: Opted: James Duignan
(Vice President)

Leading, Learning and Collaborating for Quality

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector, Department of Education and Skills.

Chairperson: Mary Jackson, ACCS Executive

Dr. Hislop expressed his thanks for the invitation to address Convention. He noted the Convention Theme: Promoting Quality in Education. He emphasised in his address the importance of Collaborative Practice in the promotion of Quality in Education. He described the work of the DES Inspectorate in promoting such collaboration in schools.

The promotion of collaborative practice is the ultimate objective of School Self Evaluation (SSE). He emphasised the actions of the Inspectorate in encouraging and assisting schools in SSE and in the development and implementation of School Plans for continued improvement. He particularly



Dr. Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector, Department of Education and Skills delivers presentation on Leading, Learning and Collaborating for Quality.

emphasised that School Self Evaluation or DES Inspections should not be viewed as a criticism of the work of teachers but as a contribution towards continued development.

Other reports presented at Convention 2020 on the work and activities of ACCS during 2019/2020 included:

- The ACCS CPD Programme
- The ACCS Constitution and Convention Sub Committee
- The ACCS Education Sub Committee
- The ACCS ICT Subcommittee
- The ACCS In-school Management Task Group and Conference
- The ACCS Special Education Needs Sub Committee
- The NCCA Report
- The Teachers' Conciliation Council (C&C)
- The ACCS Schools Building Projects
- The ACCS Data Protection
- The ACCS/JMB Further Education Support Unit

Reports from the FSSU and the State Claims Agency were also noted at Convention 2020.

ACCS Convention Motions

1. "That ACCS Executive would negotiate with the DES to have a promotion pathway for our school secretaries and

that there would be a major review of their salaries."

2. "That ACCS would ask the Department of Education and Skills to place a moratorium on all business associated with Section 29 Appeals for the month of July in order to facilitate an appropriate uninterrupted holiday period for Principals."
St. Colmcille's Community School, Knocklyon.

Executive Motions

1. "As a matter of urgency, the ACCS Executive identifies the reason(s) why Community or Comprehensive Schools have not been established under the two most recent patronage processes."
2. "That ACCS prioritises the establishment of new Community and Comprehensive Schools through engagement with Patrons, the Department of Education and Skills and other relevant stakeholders and identifies means of promoting the Community and Comprehensive School as a vibrant model for Irish Education."

All four motions were carried unanimously.



Anne Marie Dillon, Human Resources Manager.



Delegates participating in the business of Convention.



Tony Nolan, Chairperson, School Chaplains' Association, addresses delegates.



John Irwin, General Secretary, Áine O'Sullivan, Assistant General Secretary, Professor Mel Ainscow, Emeritus Professor of Education, University of Manchester, Paul Fiorentini, President and Paul Thornton.

Chaplain for All

Presented by Tony Nolan,
Chairperson, School Chaplains'
Association

Chairperson: Brenda Kelly

Mr. Nolan, Chaplain in Cashel Community School, described the role of the school Chaplain as a firm supporter of the characteristic spirit of the school. He/she has a fundamental duty in the conduct of worship events and maintaining contact with the local parish. In addition, the role extends to all members of the school community – management, parents, students and staff in the maintenance of an appropriate environment which is fully in line with the school ethos. In the case of multidominational Community and Comprehensive schools this duty extends to all members of the school community regardless of religious background.

Mr. Nolan emphasised the role of the Chaplain in all aspects of school life – dealing with issues of vulnerability and wellbeing of students and staff.

The School Chaplains' Association is a source of advice and guidance for its members and has produced a Handbook outlining the duties and responsibilities of the Chaplain. Mr. Nolan gave notice of an Association conference in the coming October.

Collaboration for Success

Presented by Professor Mel Ainscow,
Emeritus Professor of Education,
University of Manchester.

In his address Professor Ainscow outlined the outcome of research aimed at the development of excellent and equitable education systems to meet the joint needs of children from disadvantage and advantaged backgrounds.

He addressed three interlinked sets of factors which impact on the learning of pupils.

Firstly, he emphasised the need to develop a sense of collaboration between staff members in the sharing of experience and the preparation of lessons.

Secondly, he suggested the need for local schools to interact with each other and to share knowledge and experience.

Thirdly, he emphasised the importance of interaction with the wider community – employers, community groups, universities and public services.

He summed up his presentation by suggesting three strategic questions to be addressed by schools:

- Does your school provide opportunities for staff to share their expertise?
- Does your school collaborate with other schools in exploring ways of promoting the learning of all pupils?
- Is your school active in involving the wider community in supporting its work.

Commencement of Further Sections of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018

Speakers: John Irwin (General Secretary ACCS) and Hilary Treacy (Data Protection Advisor ACCS)

Mr. Irwin outlined the essential requirements of the Act together with supporting documentation. Schools are obliged to review their admission policies immediately for submission and approval by the Board of Management and the School Patron(s). In the case of multidominational Community and Comprehensive Schools attention was drawn to DES CL 13/2018 which sets out the necessary arrangement for religious instruction and worship in multidominational schools.

The revised admission policies may only be published in September 2020 for enrolments in the school year 2021/22.

Ms. Treacy outlined essential regulations arising from the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) regarding the collection and retention of student data. She referred members to DES CL 40/2019 in which such regulations are set down.



John Irwin, General Secretary and Hilary Treacy, Data Protection Advisor ACCS, address delegates during the open forum.

Open Forum - Current Issues

Panel:

John Irwin, General Secretary ACCS
Áine O'Sullivan, Assistant General Secretary ACCS
Anne Marie Dillon, Human Resource Manager ACCS

Chairperson: Paul Fiorentini, Uachtarán ACCS.

The open forum discussed the recently published Circular Letter regarding the conduct of SLAR meetings in the light of ASTI instructions to its members and its possible effect on teacher applications.

Mr. Irwin outlined four possible options for consideration by school staff in the conduct of essential SLAR meetings both within and outside of tuition time. It was noted that the DES required notice of school decisions by the end of March 2020. In the event that staff should reject all four options the final decision will rest with the Board of Management.

Presidential Address by Paul Fiorentini, President ACCS

Sean Ó Foghlú, Secretary General, DES, together with senior members of Department of Education and Skills staff attended the Presidential address. All were welcomed by the Chairperson, James Duignan, Vice President ACCS.

Mr. Fiorentini welcomed all delegates and guests to Convention and expressed his appreciation to all for their support and engagement with the Association.

He presented a comprehensive review of the many issues which have engaged ACCS and its member schools during the course of the past year.

In particular he referred to:

- The continued development of Middle Management skills and the CPD programme dedicated to its advancement.
- The implementation of the new Junior Cycle programme and the launch of the Senior Cycle reform.
- The provision of necessary professional time for teachers to engage in the advancement of teaching and learning.
- The issue of teacher supply particularly in the Dublin area.
- The current issue of Covid-19 and its implications for schools.
- The importance of "Wellbeing" for pupils in our schools and meeting the emotional needs of pupils.
- "So, what is ahead of us in 2020?"
 - The promotion of **Student Voice** in the continued development of our schools
 - The impact of a **Parent and Student Charter** on schools and further obligations will be placed on school management



John Irwin, General Secretary, Deirdre Shanley, Assistant Secretary, Paul Fiorentini, President, Áine O'Sullivan, Assistant General Secretary and James Duignan, Vice President.

- **The School Admission Act** and its implications for schools in the provision of inclusive education for all.
- The continued development of **Special Educational Needs** provision in schools. ACCS has proposed the allocation of a dedicated Special Education Needs/Inclusion Coordinator to DEIS schools.

In conclusion, Mr. Fiorentini expressed his appreciation of the work of the Management team in ACCS head office. He particularly welcomed the recruitment of Hillary Treacy (GDPR Advisor), Catherine O'Sullivan (Director of ACCS/JMB Further Education Support Unit) and Elaine Mooney (Vetting Administrator). He expressed his appreciation also to the many voluntary contributors to the work of ACCS committees.

He thanked members for his appointment as President for the past 2 years and for his reappointment for the coming year.

Address by the Secretary General, Department of Education and Skills, An tUas. Seán Ó Foghlú

The Secretary General, DES, thanked the President for his comprehensive address and for the opportunity to address the many matters of concern to ACCS.

He initially referred to the current Covid-19 issue and its possible influence on school activities. He acknowledged the anxiety arising from the issue and emphasised the need for schools to follow the advice of the Health Service Executive in their decision-making regarding school closures and/or the cancellation of school activities.

He outlined the DES actions on a series of relevant issues:

- The continuing ending of the moratorium on school caretaking and Secretarial posts.

- The establishment and the continued work of the Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU).
- The continued implementation of the DEIS Plan and its contribution to educational equity.
- The implementation of the new model of SNA allocation to schools and the continued development of Special Educational Needs provision.
- He recognised the continued challenge of teacher supply while acknowledging the success of the Turas Abhaile initiative in meeting a proportion of the needs.
- He noted the development of Leadership and Management skills in schools and the enhanced degree of collaboration by school staff. This has been supported in ACCS by the development of its highly successful Middle Leaders Training programme and he acknowledged ACCS' role in this work.
- He noted the continued development of the Curriculum for Junior Cycle and the initiation of the corresponding development and review at Senior Cycle. He drew particular attention to the reintroduction of History as a core Junior Cycle subject.
- The continued support for Scoileanna Lán Gaeilge remains a policy of the DES.
- He noted the Further Education Strategy for Post Primary Schools.
- The admission to Schools Act which will require all schools to review their admission policies during the coming year in order to ensure full compliance with the Act.

An tUasal Ó Foghlú again thanked ACCS for the opportunity to address Convention and wished the Association success in its continued development.

Mental Health and Wellbeing & the Importance of Emotional Resilience a Whole School Approach

**Presented by Dr. Harry Barry, Best Selling Author and GP.
Chairperson: Dermot Healy**

Dr. Barry presented a comprehensive analysis of mental health issues among young people and the necessary contribution of schools to the development of Emotional Resilience in meeting their needs. He noted that the emotional development of young people is only fully complete at age 25/30. He outlined a spectrum of mental health issues ranging through simple Feelings of Distress to Toxic Distress, Anxiety, Depression, Acute Anxiety and Depression.

He presented an extensive series of actions which might be taken by school management to meet their needs. In his presentation of these actions he involved his audience of management personnel in a sometimes amusing but revealing demonstration of the proposed exercises.



John Irwin, General Secretary, Dermot Healy, Principal, Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine, Paul Fiorentini, President, Dr. Harry Barry, Áine O'Sullivan, Assistant General Secretary and James Duignan, Vice President.

Concluding remarks

Paul Fiorentini President ACCS thanked all members for their participation and

assured them of the continued support of the ACCS Executive and Staff.

Convention Banquet



The annual Convention Banquet took place on the evening of Thursday 5th March attended by all delegates and guests representing Educational organisations throughout Ireland.

Convention Banquet

The Banquet was preceded by an exciting and excellent musical recital by students of Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine. Congratulations and sincere thanks are due to the Principal, Staff and students for an enjoyable performance.



Presentations were made on behalf of ACCS to:

- **Marie Griffin** for her contribution to CEIST and ATCS and her previous roles in education including City of Dublin ETB.
- **Paul Rowe** on his retirement from Educate Together and his contribution to Irish Education.
- **Sr. Marie Celine Clegg** for her contribution to ACCS as a former President and her contribution to the National Trustee Forum and subsequently the Association of Joint Patrons of Community and Comprehensive Schools.
- **Martin Hanevy** on his retirement following a tremendous career in the Department of Education and Skills.



Marie Griffin and Paul Fiorentini, President ACCS.



Paul Rowe and Paul Fiorentini, President ACCS.



Sr. Marie Celine Clegg and Paul Fiorentini, President ACCS.



Martin Hanevy and Paul Fiorentini, President ACCS.

Convention 2020 – Sponsors



Philip Rodgers, VSware and Declan Quinn, Principal, Dunmore Community School.



Brendan Carroll, PCI, James Duignan, Vice-President ACCS and John Irwin, General Secretary ACCS.

ACCS wishes to express its gratitude to the Great Southern Hotel management and staff for their wonderful support and efficient management of the Convention event. ACCS also wishes to acknowledge and express its appreciation to Conference 2020 VSware (Main Sponsor) and PCI (Co-Sponsor) and to all the Exhibitors for their ongoing support and participation at ACCS Convention 2020.

All presentations are available to download from the ACCS website www.accs.ie.

Recent Relevant DES Circular Letters

Circular No.	Summary
CL 27/20	COVID-19: Temporary assignment arrangements for certain staff in the education and training sector
CL 24/20	Coronavirus (COVID-19) Delay Phase Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised primary and post primary schools
CL 17/20	Guidance on the Junior Cycle Subject Learning and Assessment Review Process
CL 16/20	Framework for Junior Cycle - History in Schools from September 2020 onwards
CL 15/20	Approved Allocation of Teaching Posts 2020/21 school year in Education and Training Boards
CL 14/20	Staffing arrangements in Community & Comprehensive schools for the 2020/21 school year
CL 13/20	Staffing arrangements in Voluntary Secondary Schools for the 2020/21 school year
CL 16/20	Framework for Junior Cycle - History in Schools from September 2020 onwards
CL 11/20	Post-Primary Schools in Gaeltacht Language-Planning Areas Participating in the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme
CL 09/20	Graduate Certificate in the Education of Pupils with Autism Spectrum (AS) for teachers working with Pupils on the AS in Special Schools, Special Classes or as Special Education Teachers in mainstream Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2020/2021
CL 08/20	Post-Graduate Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development for Special Education Teachers, 2020/2021
CL 07/20	Commencement of certain Sections of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018
CL 06/20	Diversification of Foreign Languages Provision in the Curriculum
CL 05/20	Standardisation of the School Year in respect of Primary & Post-Primary Schools for the years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23
CL 04/20	Work Stoppage by TUI Member Teachers - 4 February 2020
CL 03/20	Teacher Fee Refund Scheme 2019
CL 02/20	Prescribed Material for Leaving Certificate English Examination in 2022
CL 01/20	Revisions to the Leaving Certificate Arabic interim syllabus and the introduction of a revised specification for Leaving Certificate Classical Studies
CL 75/19	Revision of Pay Rates in 2020 for Grant Funded School Secretaries, Caretakers and Cleaners employed by the Boards of Management of Voluntary Secondary Schools in the Free Education Scheme and associated increases in Grant funding for same
CL 73/19	Revision of Teacher Salaries with effect from 1 January 2020
CL 72/19	Revised Rates and Thresholds of the Additional Superannuation Contribution with Effect from 1 January 2020
CL 71/19	Copyright and other Intellectual Property Law Provisions Act 2019 - Matters for Commencement regarding Education
CL 67/19	Revision of Salaries of School Secretaries and School Maintenance Staff in Community and Comprehensive Schools with effect from 1 January 2020
CL 66/19	Revision of Salaries for Clerical Officer and Caretakers employed in National Schools under the 1978/79 Scheme and for Clerical Officers employed in Post Primary Schools under the 1978 Scheme with effect from 1 January 2020
CL 65/19	Revision of Salaries for Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) with Effect from 1 January 2020

News and Events in our Schools

Bishopstown Community School

This term has already proven to be a busy one here in Bishopstown Community School, Cork with a cast of fifty students currently involved in our annual school musical performance. The students have taken audiences back to the *Summer Lovin'* year of 1958 for their production of **'Grease the musical'**. Students from across all non-exam years are involved with the cast, in stage production, costumes, stage management, set design and make up to create such a professional show. Songs such as 'Grease Lightning', 'Hopelessly Devoted' and 'Look at me, I'm Sandra Dee' had audience members on their feet, singing along with the 'T' Birds and 'Pink Ladies'.

Continuing on the success of previous years our second and third-year students have participated in our **UCC Plus Scheme**.

The program provides tutoring and assistance to students with homework and study through their voluntary mentors. Our second-year students recently completed their block and were honoured to receive UCC Plus Academic Achievement awards for their dedication to their studies in the areas of English, Irish, Maths and French.

Our fifth-year students have just completed their **IBM UK and Ireland, Business in the Community Initiative** where they were given expert advice on preparing their CV and practice interviews. This initiative helps greatly in creating opportunities for our students and in building student character.

We look forward to the remainder of the year and continuing to build on the success of these initiatives.



Cast of Grease The Musical in Bishopstown Community School.



Cast of Grease performing their hit show at Bishopstown Community School.



2nd year students of Bishopstown Community School who received awards for academic achievement through UCC Plus.



5th year students Bishopstown Community School who completed their Business int he Community initiative with IBM.

News and Events in our Schools

Gallen Community School, Ferbane Offaly GAA Awards for Ten Past and Present Students



Gallen CS students past and present were to the fore in being worthy recipients of the 2019 Offaly GAA Awards. In total, nine former students and one present student, Kate Kenny are rightfully recognised for their talent, dedication and consistent excellence.

Cian Johnson, Offaly Senior Footballer of the Year, was an integral part of the Ferbane Team that won the Dowling Cup for the first time in 25 years. Cian's marksmanship, particularly his 2-3 in the county final and his totals of 0-6 and 0-5 in the quarter and semi-finals signalled his ascent to the top of the scoring tree in Offaly Senior Football. Cian was an important part of the Gallen CS team that won the 2016 All Ireland Senior Colleges B title in Croke Park scoring 1-4 in the final and scooping the man of the match award. It is hoped that Cian can go on to represent Offaly with distinction at Senior Inter County level.

Ronan Hynes, recipient of Intermediate Footballer of the Year, is a key component of Shannonbridge's engine room as the West Offaly side won the Intermediate title for the first time since 1991. At the time of going to press, Ronan's Shannonbridge side were preparing themselves for a Leinster Junior Semi-final against the Wexford Champions. Ronan starred at centre half back on the All Ireland winning Gallen CS team of 2016.

Callum Boland, Junior Footballer of the Year is a Doon native and played GAA and rugby for Gallen CS. This multi-talented sportsman plays rugby for the Buccaneers Senior team in the AIL and he also starred in the Junior Football final against Edenderry getting forward to score a vital goal.

Kevin Nugent, Junior Hurler of the Year, is a pacy athletic player whose versatility is shown by the fact he played in the inside forward line for Belmont Junior Hurlers and wing back for Ferbane Senior Footballers. In the Junior Hurling semi-final Kevin's goals helped Belmont into the final. In the Junior Hurling Final his goal in the second half against Kilcormac - Killoughey, helped to turn the tide of victory Belmont's way. Kevin capped a memorable year with a Senior Football Championship medal.

Kate Kenny is a sportswoman of rare class. Her scoring feats for both Naomh Ciaran ladies' football on their march to the All-Ireland Intermediate final and for St Rynagh's camogie team on their progression to an All-Ireland semi-final are the stuff of legend. Kate's scoring totals of 1-10, 1-8 and 3-5 in a Leinster football final, All Ireland football semi-final and Leinster Camogie Final respectively are noteworthy. Indeed, her roving role which often sees her alternate between midfield and full forward for Naomh Ciaran makes her scoring prowess in Ladies Football all the more praiseworthy. Kate was an integral part of the Gallen CS Ladies Team who won the All Ireland Ladies Football title in 2016.

Scór is a GAA competition that combines all the colour and rivalry of Gaelic Games with the social/fun element of Ireland's traditional past-times. The competition was established by the GAA in 1969 with the aim of promoting Ireland's traditional pastimes and culture while offering club members the chance to meet up, have fun and represent their club during the winter months while Football and Hurling had ceased.

There are eight events/disciplines in Scór that cover all aspects of Irish culture: Figure/Céilí Dancing, Solo Singing, Ballad Group, Recitation/Scéalaíocht, Léiriú Stáitse/Stage Presentation, Instrumental Music, Set Dancing and Table Quiz. The competition is divided into two age levels, Scór na nÓg, for young people under 17 & Scór Sinsir, for those over 17.

Avril Spain, Zoe Rooney, Valene Greer, Niamh Delaney and Sara Kenny deserve commendable mention as members of the Ferbane Ballad Group who won the All Ireland Scór Sinsir in Castlebar in April of this year. These girls are no strangers to All Ireland glory having won two All Ireland Scór na nÓg titles when under the tutelage of Ms. Deborah Reynolds in Gallen Community School.

Gallen Community School is justifiably proud of all these worthy award winners whose sporting and cultural prowess is being rightfully recognised.

News and Events in our Schools

Spotlight on... Millstreet Community School

Known for providing a thorough and caring educational experience, Millstreet Community School is a hive of activity, with a huge variety of extra-curricular activities running throughout the year. Each week sees a number of guest speakers, school trips, games and projects, including B.T. Young Scientists, Green and Amber Flags, Fundraising, Awareness Raising campaigns, Drama and helping local voluntary groups. These involve students in a wide range of activities, in T.Y. and across all year groups.

The school has a fine academic record and L.C. 2019 student,

Cian Lenihen was awarded a Quercus Award from U.C.C. in recognition of his outstanding Leaving Certificate Examination results. Holistic learning outside the classroom and wellbeing are also high priorities and all groups have visited outdoor pursuits centres, developing relationships and recharging students for the challenges of school. Classes have also had days of reflection, developing interpersonal and decision-making skills, and helping to prepare for their journey through school and life. Trips to Dublin and Belfast, local businesses and cultural visits to galleries and museums are a regular part of school life.



Global Café: T.Y. GCE group with Sinead Morgan of Concern, preparing for the Global Café on Gender Equality for Leaving Certs and staff.

The school has been developing Global Citizenship Education (GCE) as a core element of the school for many years and the GCE class in T.Y. has enabled students to take action on a number of global justice issues. This year the issues have included waste and the fashion industry, deforestation, discrimination and gender equality. To highlight the gender issue, the class ran a Global Café for Leaving Cert students and staff, with focused discussions on the topic, followed by a display of the ideas raised. They also engaged in peer education with younger pupils with the aim, not only of raising awareness about the issues, but also empowering the student body to take action to bring about change. The group co-ordinated the annual 'Language and Culture Night', celebrating cultural diversity in the school community. GCE events are run in tandem with cross-curricular education across the school curriculum.



3rd years get away from the books and get stuck in at Eclipse Centre, Kenmare.



Camogie: Millstreet Community School's Camogie County Champions.

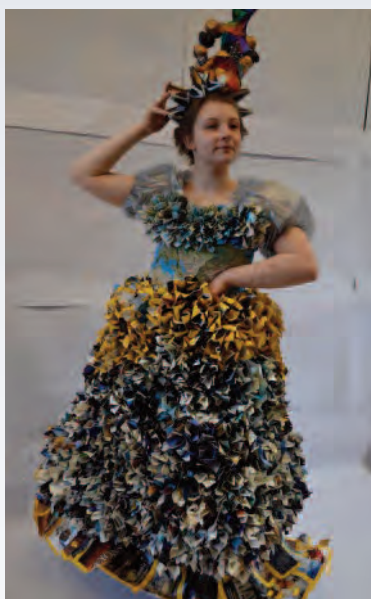
Rebel County schools embrace sport and Millstreet Community School is no exception. Camogie, Football and Hurling, along with Soccer and Athletics are offered at all levels. December saw the Intermediate Camogie team bring home the county title, adding to All Ireland success for 5th Year, Darragh Cashman on the Cork under 20's and staff member, Eileen Lyons winning All Ireland junior club football victory with her club. A visit to the school quickly reveals Art to be at the heart of school life and

News and Events in our Schools

Spotlight on... Millstreet Community School *continued*



Impi: Junk Kouture outfit 'Impi', (zulu for war) a robotic warrior.



Junk Kouture design 'Queen of the Fish', focused on ocean waste.



Senior Art students at the National Museum, Dublin.

The school has been developing Global Citizenship Education (GCE) as a core element of the school for many years and the GCE class in T.Y. has enabled students to take action on a number of global justice issues. This year the issues have included waste and the fashion industry, deforestation,

discrimination and gender equality. To highlight the gender issue, the class ran a Global Café for Leaving Cert students and staff, with focused discussions on the topic, followed by a display of the ideas raised. They also engaged in peer education with younger pupils with the aim, not only of raising awareness



Leaving Certs relaxing at their Reflection Day in Killarney National Park.



MCS Students reaction to Cork County Council Road Safety demonstration, with Fire Brigade and Gardaí.



First Year Home Economics class working on ethical fashion, recycling waste tee-shirts into tote bags.



3rd years costumes for Fancy dress day at MCS.

News and Events in our Schools

Newpark Comprehensive School Senior Girls' Hockey 2019/2020



Lauren Moore, Zoe Watterson, Milly Lynch (Left to right).



The Newpark golden era and their rise to hockey success.

Newpark Comprehensive Senior Girls' Hockey team has had an incredibly successful 2019/2020 season. The team predominantly made up of fourth and fifth years, some sixth years and one third year student is captained by Jess Whelan and coached by past pupil, Avoca coach and Irish U23 International, Anna Richardson. The team also has three members of the current Irish U18 hockey squad, Lauren Moore, Milly Lynch and Zoe Watterson.

The highlight of the season for the whole school community came when the team reached the final of the Leinster Premier School's Cup in UCD against Loreto, Beaufort. It was an incredible occasion that saw UCD covered in Newpark colours and the stand jammed with supporters from across the Newpark community. This momentous occasion was heightened by the fact that the last Newpark team to reach the cup final was in 1992 when they also did the double and won both the cup and the league.

A change to the usual final's day saw the match take place on a Sunday this year. This was in a hope to open it up to the wider hockey community as well as live streaming it. The turnout was incredible, and no one could mistake that Newpark were playing in

the final. The chants and roars of "ooh, aah, Erika" were so loud as the Newpark keeper cleared everything that came her way until the final stroke. Erika had not conceded a single goal in four rounds of the cup, which included two penalty shoot-outs in the quarter and semi-finals, an incredible feat for any keeper. It was a fantastic performance by a very strong squad, that was strengthened up the middle by Milly Lynch and Lauren Moore.

Unfortunately, luck went against them and a short corner and subsequently a penalty stroke was awarded against them to leave the final score of 0-1.

The team played Beaufort again a few weeks later in the semi-finals of the Claudia Tierney Cup and beat them 3-1 at home. They now take on Wesley in the final in Three Rock Rovers on Friday 13th March. This match was postponed due to the Covid -19 situation at time of printing.



News and Events in our Schools

Moyne Community School Junior Cycle Perfect Score

When the results of this year's Junior Cycle were announced there was great excitement in Moyne Community School as Avril Cosgrove achieved a remarkable nine A grades and two Distinctions – a perfect score!

The school marked her achievement at the annual Academic Achievement Awards in December 2019 by presenting her with the Fr. McGee Award which is presented to the student who achieves the highest marks in the Junior Certificate.

Fr. Phil McGee was the first Principal of this school and was instrumental in Moyne Community School becoming the school it is today. This year is extra special as the winner achieved the equivalent of 11 A grades, a feat achieved by only a small number of students in the whole country.



Avril Cosgrove and School Principal, Des Cullen.

The Gemma McGee Memorial Bursary Award



Left to right: Gemma's mother Rosaleen, Ayo Alaba, Gemma's father John, Kali Connell and Eleanor Rabbitte, Joe Kelly from TECK.

In December 2012 Gemma McGee accepted an Academic Achievement Award in Moyne CS. After her Leaving Cert, Gemma went to Trinity College to study Science and eventually went on to specialise in Geology. She was an excellent student and her future success came as no surprise to anyone who had taught her or had been a classmate of hers. However, it was not without its challenges and Gemma struggled with the cost of college having no option but to work part time while she studied. After college Gemma fulfilled her dream of working as a geologist when she got a job with TECK, a Canadian mining company.

Tragically, this fit and healthy young 24-year-old woman contracted the A strain of meningitis and passed away within a couple of days of becoming ill. The tragedy is that this strain of meningitis is preventable through vaccination but while the UK provides this vaccine to children, here in Ireland the HSE do not administer it.

In 2019 Gemma's parents, Rosaleen and John returned to our

awards ceremony once again in December 2019. They were joined by Gemma's three brothers, John, Darren and Niall. Also present was Joe Kelly from TECK, the company where Gemma worked as well as Eilish, Maura and Rosarii, three members of the Gemma McGee Memorial Bursary fundraising committee.

The family supported by TECK and a local fundraising committee have raised over €15,000 towards the Gemma McGee Memorial Bursary Award. Every year, three students from the Leaving Cert class of Moyne Community School will be awarded a bursary of €1000 each towards the cost of going to college. This bursary is presented in memory of Gemma, her dedication to study, her determination to overcome obstacles and her celebration of an all too short life.

The award winners of the Gemma McGee Memorial Bursary 2019 are Ayo Alaba, Kali Connell and Eleanor Rabbitte.

News and Events in our Schools

Scoil Phobail Sliabh Luachra, Rathmore, Co Kerry



The **Senior Boys football team**, on the back of a very strong performance at B football in 2018/19 were playing at A level for 2019/20 and participated for the 2nd time in the school's history in the Corn Ui Mhuiri competition – reaching the semi-final of this Munster campaign. The boys were trained by Mr Brosnan (Teacher), Dave McCarthy, William O'Connor & Darragh Rahilly who gave freely of their time and expertise to get the boys to the semi-final stage of the competition, and brought the game to extra time losing out to the eventual winners Tralee CBS. Well done to the boys and their coaches!

The **U19 Boys Basketball team** reached the All Ireland A League Final in February this year. The boys were trained by Cormac Collins and Mike McGillicuddy and this team had previously won the Minor, Junior & U16 All Ireland A Leagues. The boys had an exciting journey through the league and the school is very proud of their fantastic achievement in reaching



the All Ireland Final which was played in the National Basketball Arena Tallaght on February 24th against St Malachy's College Belfast who won the final.

The school has been very lucky to have the local community involved in school training at all levels of school football and basketball with the local clubs and their trainers very invested in training our school teams to the highest standard. We have girls' and boys' teams at all age groups in both football and basketball which are supported by the sports co-ordinating teachers within the school.

5th Yr student Liam McSherry represented the school in the **BT Young Scientist Competition** this year – a first for SPSSL. Liam's entry was an investigation into Electroencephalography and how it can help emulate human empathy and emotion in artificial intelligence. Liam's entry was awarded a Special Award from Nokia Bell Labs and the school is very proud of Liam's work in this area. Liam has previously won awards for his public speaking, being placed third in the **Speakeasy Toastmasters Schools' Public Speaking Competition** last year. Liam combines his academic abilities with a passion for hurling.

In February of this year the much-anticipated school trip to Italy took place where 46 students and six teachers enjoyed a week on the ski slopes. The tour was enjoyed by all and included ski lessons each morning followed by trips to view local sights including Verona. Students were delighted with the experience.



OUTLOOK EDUCATION

Liam Scoops a BT Young Scientist Award

A Rathmore student was among those awarded at last week's BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition awards ceremony.

Liam McSherry, a student at Scoil Phobail Sliabh Luachra impressed the judges and took home an award in the Social & Behavioural Sciences category. A total number of 10 projects represented Kerry at the exhibition this year.

Liam outlined his project for the Killarney Outlook:

"My project is a new emotion-recognition system for computers. An emotion recognition system is a system used to figure out someone's emotion based on a particular feature. There have been a few emotion recognition systems developed thus far, e.g. by analysing people's facial features from photos, and many new Emotion recognition systems have

turned to Electroencephalography for ideas. Electroencephalography (EEG) is a test used to measure the electrical activity of the brain. Your brain cells communicate via electrical activity and this can be read by metal disks called electrodes attached to the scalp. My new emotion recognition system uses EEG and shows its correlation with feelings and words. This is done by having participants in an experiment listen to 20 pieces of audio and ask them to rate their feeling on the clip. The audio is then categorised via 42 Neurally Plausible Semantic Features. This means that the audio is broken up into their individual word components and categorised i.e. "The Man went to the Shop", e.g. "Man"- "Person"- "Animate being". This allows me to correlate a person's feeling (based on the valence/arousal emotion model), the frequency of

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the EEG (based on hz) and the word which caused a unique response (based on 42 Neurally Plausible Semantic Features). A model can be developed based on these variables which can be used to train Artificial Intelligence to understand a person's emotional state and empathize with them based on the words they used. I have spoken to a few Neurophysiologists of the Bon

Secours regarding my project along with two professors at UCC and UCD both whom along with the Neurophysiologists support my project as they believe it is of high standard and unique and are helping me get through the ethics department of the hospital so I can begin human trials". Teachers and students at the school are extremely proud of Liam's success.

News and Events in our Schools

Mountmellick Community School

Minister for Education, Joe McHugh acknowledges and congratulates Suaad Aleesh, former student of Mountmellick Community School

Congratulations and well done to Suaad Aleesh, who completed her Post Primary education in Mountmellick Community School.

Suaad was recently awarded:

- The *Professor William Campbell* bursary which is worth €5,000 per annum and
- The Royal College of Surgeons *Aim High* scholarship which is worth €10,500 per annum

Suaad completed her Leaving Certificate in our school in 2019 and is currently studying Medicine in the Royal College of Surgeons, Dublin.

During her time in Mountmellick Community School Suaad not only excelled academically, she also became very involved in our Debating and Public Speaking club.

Suaad is pictured at a recent ceremony in the Royal College of Surgeons with the Minister for Education, Joe McHugh along with the school Guidance Counsellor, Catherine McCarthy and School Principal, Larry Curtin, who noted that, *'As a school community, we are very pleased to see Suaad continuing the tradition and maintaining the standards of excellent academic achievement in our school.'*

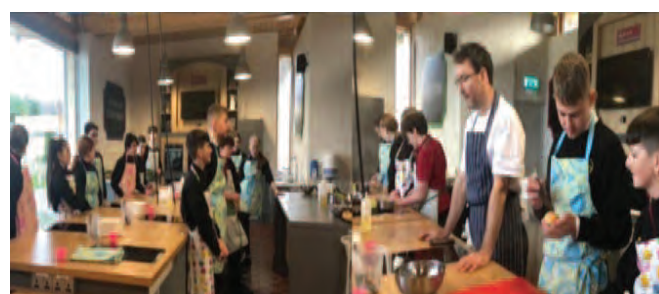
At the ceremony Minister McHugh acknowledged not only this outstanding achievement but also the great recent progress and student accomplishment in Mountmellick Community School.



Catherine McCarthy, Guidance Counsellor, Mountmellick Community School, Joe McHugh, Minister for Education and Skills, Suaad Aleesh and Larry Curtin, Principal, Mountmellick Community School.

Ballinteer Community School

Teen Chef Programme at Airfield



We are very proud of our Junior Cycle Home Economics students who had the pleasure of piloting Airfield's new Teen Chef programme. They learned about food waste and sustainability and put their knowledge into practice by cooking dishes that minimised waste.

Students tested their culinary expertise by roasting a chicken and using it to make chicken pie and chicken soup. Students even finessed their Italian cooking skills by making gnocchi and tomato sauce, and even pizza!

We would like to thank @Airfield for inviting us and of course, the best cook we know, Ms Stokes for organising.

News and Events in our Schools

Rosmini Community School

Transition Year in Rosmini Community School – A Year of Self-Discovery

*'Education is essential to change,
for education creates both new wants and the ability to satisfy them'*
(Henry Steele Commager)

Transition Year is a vibrant, diverse and tailor-made programme that aims to meet both the needs and interests of the students in Rosmini Community School. It is our mission to prepare students for the more independent, self-directed learning of Senior Cycle. In this year of self-discovery, we have introduced a curriculum that enables students to develop a broad skill set and to make informed choices about their future.

Flexible Learning Programme



Transition Year students are given the opportunities to engage in valuable learning experiences outside of the classroom in Rosmini. Based on the information gathered from multiple intelligences testing and student feedback, we have introduced a Flexible Learning Programme. This programme consists of additional work placements, educational programmes, advocacy and volunteering opportunities in areas where students have an invested interest in and a real passion. We aim to provide opportunities on our Flexible Learning Programme that cater for the diverse interest and ability of our Transition Year group. This year, students with an interest in law have participated in STEP IN with A&L Goodbody, PRIME with Arthur Cox and/or Look into Law with the Bar of Ireland. Students whose career aspirations are technology focused were assigned work placements with companies such as DELL, EMC and Learn Signal. Activism training in UNICEF and a weekend residential training with Amnesty International provided several students with the knowledge, understanding and skills to be advocates for social change in our world today.

High Skilled Work Experience



We have partnered with the North-East Inner-City Access Programme (NEIC) and National College of Ireland (NCI) for our Transition Year Work Experience Programme. Our Transition Year students have secured placements in highly skilled companies,

most of which are based in the local area. Students gained valuable experience working in either legal or financial sectors, the civil service or technological firms. We place great value on our Work Experience Programme in Rosmini. Our Transition Year Coordinator conducted site visits to students on their work placements. Through observation of their work practice and feedback from employers, students were assessed based on their professional behaviour and ethical standards, preparation and planning for placement, knowledge of company/organisation, employee communication skills and overall performance on placement. Students were challenged to reflect on the feedback given in these areas to assist them with their own career development and progression. We are very proud of our students' performance on work experience this year. Employers have praised our students for their positive attitude, ability to work well with others, effective use of communication skills, as well as their trustworthiness and reliability.

Intergenerational Outreach

A group of Transition Year students in Rosmini has been busy working on their 'Kindness to the Elderly Counts' project for the Young Social Innovators Programme. Our YSI team has developed a social activities programme for two communities of older people based in the North Dublin area. Pantomimes, art & craft making, Irish dance and storytelling are some of the activities that the students have organised for the residents of Nazareth House nursing home and members of the Trinity



Active Age Retirement Group. Through the peer education workshop delivered to 1st and TY students and an active online campaign, our YSI team are working hard to raise awareness of the risks of social isolation and loneliness in the older demographic. Team members are empowering young people in our school to play an active role in reducing this social isolation and loneliness through their involvement in the Kindness to the Elderly Counts project. With funding of 500 euros secured from their YSI Den pitch and a partnership formed with DCU and Dublin City Council, our Transition Year Young Social Innovators Team are making a real difference in the lives of the more vulnerable members of the local community. We are very proud of their accomplishments.

We have partnered with Jigsaw this year to become One Good

News and Events in our Schools

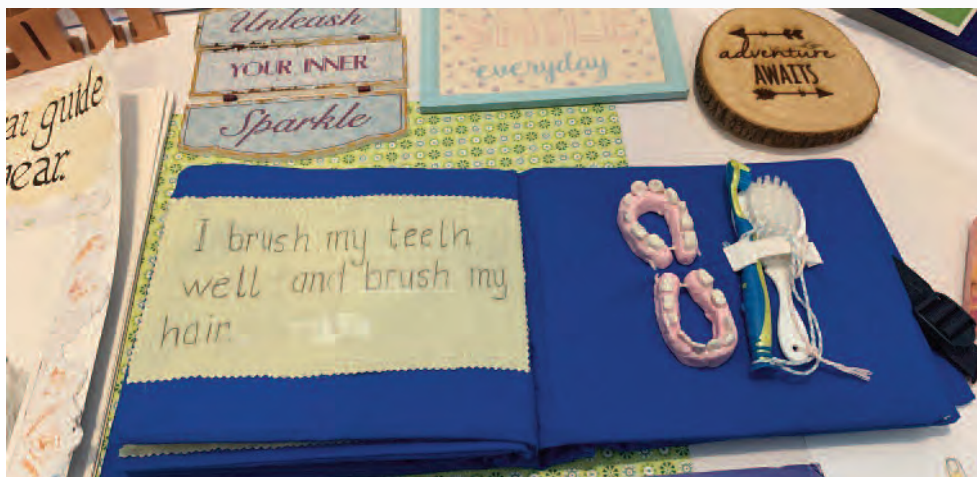
Rosmini Community School *continued*

Supporting Young Peoples' Mental Health

School. This is an initiative that aims to equip staff, students and parents with the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills that are required to support young peoples' mental health. Through this initiative, a group of our Transition Year students trained as peer educators over the course of five sessions with Jigsaw facilitators. These students delivered 'It's Time to Start Talking' presentations in which 1st and 2nd year students were introduced to the fact that every person has mental health which can fluctuate depending on our stress factors and circumstance. Our Transition Year students encouraged their peers to be more aware of causes of stress in their lives. They helped 1st and 2nd year students to identify practical tips to effectively manage their stress and anxiety levels. Most importantly, our TY students raised awareness among their peers of the supports that are available to them if they are unable to cope with poor mental health. Our Peer Education presentations were powerful and very well received by students who actively listened to the educational advice and guidance that our TY students had given them.



Tactile Book for Visually Impaired Students



Four of our Transition Year students created a tactile book for visually impaired children. 'A Day in the Life' gives practical advice to young children on how to be more prepared for school. Under the guidance of their Art teacher, this group of students used fabrics and materials to create a story that children with a visual impairment can fully engage in. The beautiful work created by these students was presented at the JCSP Make a Book Exhibition in Roganstown House Hotel with a Survival Guide created by our 1st and 2nd Year students. Teachers and students from other schools were impressed by the skills utilised by our four TY students in creating a book that is accessible for children with a visual impairment. We are delighted with this book, which will be donated to the ChildVision library.

Design and Presentation Class

The Portfolio is a living record of our students' active participation in the Transition Year Programme in Rosmini. We encourage TY students to record and reflect on all the key learning experiences that they have had throughout the year. A Design and Presentation class has been introduced into our Transition Year curriculum this year. Students work closely with members of the Art department on reviews, evaluations and assignments completed in each of their core subjects and modules. Students are encouraged to take pride in their portfolio, which is reflective of their engagement in the TY Programme. With two rounds of portfolio interviews and reports sent home to parents, students are given feedback on the content, originality, presentation and reflective practice in their work.

This is a snapshot of a programme in Rosmini Community School that encourages students to realise their full potential and to achieve their personal best.

News and Events in our Schools

Portumna Community School

Ease on down the road... The Wiz hits the perfect note!



Wizard of Oz lovers in Portumna rejoiced, as Portumna Community School presented *The Wiz* earlier this year. With soul, catchy dance numbers, cracking one-liners this musical was suitable for all the family. *The Wiz* was created to give a voice to the urban African American and the song styles reflected that with nods to R&B, Gospel, and Jazz.

Essentially, the story line was the same. Dorothy got caught in a tornado, landed on a witch, and was guided towards Oz by well-meaning Munchkins. Along the way she picked up a trio of friends - Scarecrow, Tinman, and Lion. She got to Oz, met the Wizard, killed the other Wicked Witch (Robyn Williams), and went home. The main difference was the music, the vibe, and the snappy dialogue. The Wizard (Kyle-McCole Madden) went to Motown and brought back his best and brightest to breathe new life into Oz.

Indeed, the cast was something to celebrate. Fiona Lohan was the sweetly naive Dorothy who perfectly tied up the show in the closing number, "Home." Her friends were even more impressive. Michael Kelly's Lion sounding exactly as you would wish him to. Grace Madden as Tinman in her musical theatre debut. Her aptitude for physical comedy matching her singing, and "Slide Some Oil to Me" was one of the most entertaining numbers of the evening. Not surprisingly, the humble Scarecrow (Stephen Donelan) was the one who stole our hearts. His rousing "You can't win" kicked off the energy of the show and was immediately followed by the song we all know and love, "Ease on Down the Road."

This talent was backed up by an ensemble that exuded the 70s aura in numbers that showcased gorgeous glittering costumes. The musical direction by Emma Brogan needs to be mentioned. It was diverse and thrilling. This show was a visual feast of colour, shine, and movement. The audience were dancing in their seats, howling with laughter, and singing the songs long after the night had ended.

"WOW! - ABSOLUTELY SUPERB... STUNNING PRODUCTION... It's hard to imagine The Wiz being given a more stunning production than Sean Power has directed so masterfully, or a more brilliant cast than the one assembled on the Portumna Community School stage, a huge congratulations to all involved from the amazing stage design to the creative

make up and beautiful costumes this show was top class from start to finish..."

Stagewise Musical Adjudicator, Kori Kilduff

Musical Director: Emma Brogan

Director: Sean Power

Choreography: Meadhbh Lyons

TY Coordinator: Michael Fallon

Patrick Kavanagh Student Poetry Award



Margaret Lohan (2nd Year Head of Year PCS) presenting 2nd year student, Goshia Giza with her certificate for coming 3rd in the Patrick Kavanagh Student Poetry Awards (Junior Category)

A huge congratulations to 2nd Year student, Goshia Giza on coming 3rd place in the Junior Category of the annual Patrick Kavanagh Student Poetry Awards 2019. The Patrick Kavanagh Student Poetry Award is a national award open to second-level students throughout the thirty-two counties of Ireland.

News and Events in our Schools

Portumna Community School *continued*

BT Young Scientist Competition 2020

Second year Portumna Community School students, Senan Harris, Michael Duggan, and Liam O' Sullivan took part in the BT Young Scientist Competition this week. Their entry titled, "A Comparative Study on The Effects Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax Carbo*) Populations Have on The Botanical Composition of Three Islands on Lough Derg" received a lot of attention from the judging panel over the three days. They compared the plant life (botanical composition) on Cormorant inhabited islands to neighbouring uninhabited islands. Over the summer months they carried out soil tests on the three islands and sent them away for chemical analysis. They also completed a quadrat survey to determine what plants were present on each island. They received huge help from Birdwatch Ireland, Professor Dara Fitzpatrick (UCC) and their teacher, Mr. Leo Smith during their project development.

Portumna Community School Transition Year students,

Stephen Donelan, Caoimhe Callan and Sienna Fahey's project titled "To Investigate if teenagers aged 13-17 are falsely identified by adults as having a lack of general knowledge" qualified in the Social and Behavioural Sciences category. They sought to identify if students had a higher level of general knowledge than perceived by the general public. 150 students from age range 13-17 were tested on their general knowledge. A survey was then given to adults ranging from 20 to 70+ and they were asked what they thought the students would score.

The general knowledge results were compared with the results of the adult survey. After the analysis, it was found that the students had a higher level of general knowledge than perceived by the general public. The project disproved a prejudice which the students felt was out there in relation to their generation. A special word of thanks to their teacher, Mr. Enright.



Stephen Donelan, Sienna Fahey and Caoimhe Callan discussing their project titled "To Investigate if teenagers aged 13-17 are falsely identified by adults as having a lack of general knowledge" at the BTYSTE with Micheal Martin TD.



Professor Donal O'Shea lecturer in Endocrinology at UCD and the RCSI interviewing Michael Duggan, Senan Harris and Liam O Sullivan on their project "A Comparative Study on The Effects Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax Carbo*) Populations Have on The Botanical Composition of Three Islands on Lough Derg".



Mr. Enright, Science teacher pictured here with his students, Stephen Donelan, Sienna Fahey and Caoimhe Callan at the BTYSTE 2020.



Portumna Community School students delighted to meet Sean Canney, TD at the BTYSTE. Sean was particularly interested in this project "A Comparative Study on The Effects Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax Carbo*) Populations Have on The Botanical Composition of Three Islands on Lough Derg".



Mr. Smith, Science teacher pictured here with Michael Duggan, Senan Harris, Liam O Sullivan, Stephen Donelan, Sienna Fahey and Caoimhe Callan at the BTYSTE 2020.



1st year students soaking up the atmosphere at the BTYSTE 2020 pictured here with Professor Donal O'Shea, lecturer in Endocrinology at UCD and the RCSI.



Anne Rabbitte, TD pictured here with students Stephen Donelan, Sienna Fahey and Caoimhe Callan at the BTYSTE 2020.

News and Events in our Schools

Portumna Community School *continued*

The Pope John Paul II Awards



The Clonfert Diocese 2nd Annual Pope John II Award ceremony was held in the Meadow Court Hotel, Loughrea on Tuesday 21st January 2020. The seven schools in the diocese were represented and Portumna Community School following their successful participation last year is well on the way to establishing this prestigious and global award as a proud tradition.

The award was created to commemorate the late, and now Saint, Pope John Paul II who was genuinely committed to young people and who had such a devoted belief and confidence in their capacity to accomplish great work throughout their daily lives. Through the Pope John Paul II Award, the students who participated were enabled to take an active part in the life of their Church, community and society. This empowered our students to become more aware of the teaching and role of the Catholic Church in the world whilst concurrently developing their social, emotional and personal self.

Bishop Michael Duignan presented our John Paul II participants with their gold medals on the night and he paid tribute to "their inspired service for others in our community". The gold medal award required the students to undertake twenty weeks community and church involvement. Our students embraced the challenge and throughout that time were involved in their respective parish choirs, delivered the readings at mass, offered the Gifts, visited the elderly people in their local nursing homes, coached underage and school camogie teams, worked in the SVdeP charity shop, led the youth in Foroige in addition to getting involved in school events e.g. Amber flag whole school event, School choir, Carol Service, Liturgical services, some became Cairde members and they all finished the year by helping as stewards for the Darkness into Light Walk in Portumna in May of last year.

It was also a night where Portumna Community School created history. Bishop Duignan presented Leaving Cert student, Therese Keane with the first Papal Cross award in the Diocese of Clonfert. In addition to Therese undertaking 26 weeks of community and church involvement she also had to complete a community

project. The striking and notable installation of the 'Failte' sign as one passes through Tynagh village is testament to this great achievement. Therese spoke on the night and her modest and heartfelt words inspired her peers and the generous applause of the packed room consolidated that the student voice is indeed very powerful and poignant.

The students would not have been able to achieve this award without the help, support and guidance from a number of people. Thank you to the priests of the parishes, Fr. Kitching P.P (Killimor), Fr. Michael Byrnes P.P (Portumna), Fr. Seamus Bohan P.P (Tynagh), Fr. Kieran Danfulani (Abbey), Fr. Joe O'Brien (Abbeyknockmoy) and Fr. Christy O'Byrne R.I.P (Laurencetown) for all their encouragement and guidance.

Thank you to our recently retired Principal, Derry Long for his support and belief in the awards from the start and to our newly appointed Principal, Shane Mc Clean for his support and enthusiasm to continue on our journey. Also, thank you to our Chaplain, Brid Dunne for her continued spiritual guidance and photography to capture moments that matter, to Marie Burke Clonfert Pastoral Director and coordinator of the awards in the diocese for her dedication and expert guidance that encouraged the students every step of the way and to Margaret Lohan who has coordinated the John Paul II awards from the start in PCS. We thank her for her promotion of the awards, her encouragement and guidance for the students that ensures they achieve their awards and for nurturing their personal growth on their journey.

Finally, to our wonderful students for their motivation, modesty, kindness, empathy and diligence in completing their awards. They have made their parishes, community, parents and all the staff of PCS very proud of their outstanding achievement. As the chapter on this year's Pope John Paul II participants comes to an end, we would like to wish the next cohort of participants the very best of luck as they continue this now well established and proud tradition of the Pope John Paul II awards in Portumna Community School.

News and Events in our Schools

St Brendan's Community School 40 Years of Magical Memories

St Brendan's Community School hosted a dual celebration in January 2020 which included the launch of its own publication *Streets of St. Brendan's Community School. '40 Years of Magical Memories'* plus an architectural exhibition based on the school building titled *'Keeping Ireland Modern'* by John McLaughlin Architects in conjunction with Queens University.

This wonderful occasion marking 40 years since the founding of St. Brendan's Community School was launched by Minister for Education and Skills, Joe McHugh T.D. and included many

special guests with musical entertainment from present and past students including our very own Mundy.

The event concluded with the awarding of the St. Brendan's Community School Medal to three members of staff who have been employed in the school since the first day of opening on the 13th January 1980 and marking 40 years of loyal and dedicated service. These medals were awarded to Phyllis Hehir (ancillary staff), Christy Sullivan (caretaker) and finally to our School Principal, Ming Loughnane.



News and Events in our Schools

St Brendan's Community School *continued* 40 Years of Magical Memories

