

# Press Release

**26th February 2010**

## **Managerial Bodies and School Principals meet in an attempt to avert a crisis in our schools**

The three second level management bodies, ACCS, IVEA and the JMB met the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) this afternoon in an attempt to address the crisis caused by the ongoing erosion of middle management structures in schools. After the meeting, the organisations called on the Department for Education and Science to immediately lift the moratorium on replacing Assistant Principals and Special Duties Posts.

The Management Bodies have asked for an urgent meeting with the Minister of Education and Science and senior Department officials in an attempt to support schools already suffering by the loss of vital middle-management and the likelihood of further losses caused by early retirement in many others in the autumn. Recent surveys by the management bodies and NAPD indicates that over 20% of existing posts have not been filled by the embargo and that a further 20% will be lost by the end of the year. Some schools have lost almost their entire middle management structure.

Ms Mary Mullarkey, President ACCS stated emphatically, “There will be a deterioration in the learning environment for academically able students and erosion of the orderly atmosphere which allows vulnerable Special Education Needs students to be included in mainstream schools. The absence of appropriate support for students will diminish the sense of wellbeing each student has a right to expect and the sense of security each child deserves.” she added

Clive Byrne, Director NAPD, informed the meeting that “Principals and Deputy Principals who in some cases have had to take on the work of up to five Assistant Principals and Special Duties Teachers are finding it virtually impossible to discharge their statutory duties under Education, Employment Equality, Special Needs and Health and Safety legislation ”

“There is genuine concern about the capacity of schools to manage in a way which ensures the welfare and progress of each and every student. The current cohort of young people in our schools deserve the pastoral care and support that typically middle managers such as year heads offer” cautioned Ferdia Kelly, General Secretary, JMB.

“The middle management structures which were developed over many years to meet the developmental needs of students in an increasingly complex society are more necessary than ever today.” maintained Michael Moriarty, General Secretary, IVEA.

“The loss of Assistant Principals has fallen unevenly in schools. Some schools have lost all their Assistant Principals. This means that such schools have no Year Heads at all which means that there is nobody designated to take care of key duties in the school” he added. ( \* See list below of typical duties of a Year Head in a post-primary school today)

Ciaran Flynn General Secretary, ACCS, added, “The administrative needs of schools are now governed by highly complex legislation and no Principal or Deputy Principal can manage without adequate managerial support. Schools can’t operate without a viable middle-management structure and nobody will thank us in years to come if the gains of recent years are squandered by an across the board embargo which takes no account of local needs. The DES needs to tell us what the bottom line is so we can plan for the next school year. Operating in a vacuum just isn’t on”

\* ***Typical Duties Performed by a Year Head in a Post-Primary School***

1. Support students in meeting the demands of moving from childhood to young adulthood in a changing, complex and uncertain world – academically and personally.
2. Set standards of excellence
3. Encourage study plans & homework to a high standard
4. Promote achievement and participation
5. Monitor Attendance & Punctuality
6. Intervene early in disciplinary issues
7. Detect early signs of underperformance and reasons – personal, family etc and work to remedy this
8. Organise Personal Development & Social Skills programmes
9. Liaise with Parents, Class Teachers, Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain, Learning Support Teachers, Resource Teachers, SNAs, Principal and Deputy Principal.
10. Have regular meetings with class tutors and senior management on student welfare.
11. Support students at examination time but particularly at Junior and Leaving Certificate.

**Issued by:**

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**End of Press Release**