



Hope for Recovery

AMCSS/JMB



34TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Reports 2021

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Contents

General Secretary's Report	01
Data Protection Report	40
Education Report	43
FSSU Report	58
HR/IR & Legal Services Report	61
School Management Advisory Report	66
School Buildings Projects Advisory Report	72
Schools Procurement Unit (SPU) Report	76
Vetting Report	85
JMB Training & Events Report	89
Communications Report	96



General Secretary's Report

Diversity

Respect

Justice



General Secretary's Report

JMB/AMCSS 34th Annual Conference 2021

That we were unable to hold our Annual Conference last April /May was a disappointment to us all, but at that time our hope was that we would be able to reconvene in Killarney this year. To be in a similar position this year is, of course, again frustrating, but our remote conference, abridged though it is, at least gives us a chance to reengage and connect as the AMCSS/JMB community....and next year at this time we do hope to be enjoying each other's company and looking out on the hills and lakes of Killarney.

Leaving Certificate 2020

As we moved into May last year, the hope was still that we might be able to hold a written Leaving Certificate, albeit at a later date in the summer and on the back of a two-week period prior to the exams when teachers would be back in school instructing their pupils. Unfortunately, this became impossible and the medical advice propelled us into a situation whereby we constructed a model of Calculated Grades to allow our Sixth Year students a means of concluding their second-level engagement and advancing to the next chapter of their lives.

On Friday May 8, 2020, after intense engagement with all of the education partners, including JMB, Minister McHugh issued a statement that, in order to achieve the fairest possible outcomes in the prevailing circumstances, he was offering a system of Calculated Grades to students, a grade that could be provided to students following the combination of school information about a student's expected performance in an examination and national data available in relation to the performance of students in examinations over a period of time.

The process of arriving at a Calculated Grade was to apply to:

- Established Leaving Certificate – subjects
- Leaving Certificate Applied – subjects and vocational specialisms
- Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme – Link Modules

A calculated grade would come from the combination of two data sets:

- A school-based estimation of an overall percentage mark and ranking to be awarded to a student in a particular subject
- Data available from the State Examinations Commission – this includes data on past performance of students in each school and nationally

The combination of these data sets, through a process of national standardization, would determine the grade to be awarded to each student in each subject, thereby resulting in a Calculated Grade.



There were two main phases in the process of arriving at a Calculated Grade:

- A school-based phase
- A national standardisation phase

The role of the school was to provide marks and rankings that reflected:

- An estimation of the percentage mark in each subject that each candidate was likely to have achieved if they had sat the Leaving Certificate examination in 2020 under normal conditions
- A class ranking for each student in each subject – i.e. a list of all the candidates for a particular subject in a class in the order of their estimated level of achievement

In providing the above estimated marks and rankings, there would be four main school-based steps:

- The teacher's estimation of student marks and rankings
- School alignment of marks for a subject through a subject alignment group comprising teachers who were teaching the subject to Leaving Certificate students during the year
- Oversight of the alignment process by the school principal
- Transmission of the marks and rankings for national standardisation

Each of these steps was set out in detail in the booklet *A Guide to Calculated Grades for Leaving Certificate Students 2020*.

The earlier arrangement (communicated in March 2020) that full marks would be awarded in respect of the orals and music performance tests was predicated on the written examinations proceeding in the summer. As those examinations could not proceed, that arrangement did not apply.

In addition to the Calculated Grades process, provision was also made for a three-stage Appeals Process involving:

- A series of checks that data were correctly entered at school level and correctly transferred to the DES
- A review that the data were correctly received and processed by the DES
- If a candidate remained dissatisfied after notification of the outcome of the above two stages, verification of the DES processes by independent appeal scrutineers

In the spirit of fairness to all Leaving Certificate students, the option of sitting the Leaving Certificate examinations when it became feasible to hold them remained open to all students.

It was also announced that classes for Leaving Certificate classes would conclude on May 2020 as arrangements for the Calculated Grades process commenced.

On May 25, 2020 JMB held a Zoom briefing on all issues relating to the Calculated Grades process, which had more than eight hundred school personnel connecting with us online.

As we moved through the summer, management and staff on our schools engaged with the process and, complex and difficult though it was, managed to conclude it in a manner that allowed the grades to issue in time for progression in a relatively normal manner to third-level education for those students who wished to do so.

On September 1, after controversy in some other countries, newly appointed Minister Foley announced that the use of school-by-school historical data in the standardisation model was being removed. This placed a greater emphasis on the estimated marks provided by schools to individual students. The change was a cause of some concern to many of our schools because



of the manner in which this data was used to support the process of aligning grades at local level. It was felt that many schools were disadvantaged because of this decision, a point made to the Minister and Department officials by JMB.

The results issued on September 7, 2020 and, although there was certainly an element of grade inflation and disquiet in some quarters at the manner in which school historical data had been removed from the process, the students now had the means to progress to the next chapter of their lives. That was notwithstanding the fact that an error was discovered in the process used to standardise data which meant that a significant number of results had to be revised. It had been intended that the students' aggregate class level Junior Cycle results in Irish, English and Maths would be included in the data used by the national standardisation process, together with their best two other subjects. The error had the effect that the students' results in Irish, English and Maths were put together with their weakest two other subjects in the standardisation process.

As had been promised by Minister Foley and in the interests of fairness, on September 25, 2020 the Department announced plans for the holding of written Leaving Certificate examinations between November 16 and December 11, 2020, as outlined in Circular Letter S45/20 issued by the State Examinations Commission. This invariably put pressure on schools already dealing with a raft of issues attendant on school reopening, in that examinations were scheduled for evenings and weekends. JMB was involved in negotiating a support package to assist school management in overseeing the process, but that these examinations proceeded in as seamless a manner as they did is testament to the hard work and commitment that is always exhibited by our school leaders.

When the results of these examinations issued earlier this year it meant that the saga of State Examinations 2020 had concluded. As it transpired, the saga of State Examinations 2021 was only beginning.

Reopening our schools – government support

With our schools closed from March 13, 2020, the summer saw intense engagement between the Department of Education and the education partners to determine if we could, and then how we could, reopen our schools in as safe a manner as possible for the new academic year.

In July 2020, recently appointed Minister Foley announced a €376 million package to assist schools in the non-fee-charging sector in the re-opening of schools. This entailed:

- An additional 1,080 teaching posts at post-primary level at a cost of €53 million, to include the following measures:
 - 120 guidance posts provided to support student wellbeing
 - An initial allocation of over 600 posts to be made available to post-primary schools
 - Remaining posts used to support those post-primary schools experiencing particular difficulties to reopen fully and adhere to physical distancing and class sizes.
- Additional funding, estimated at €84.7 million, so that schools could employ replacement teaching staff, SNA and administrative staff. This would occur where staff members who are identified in line with HSE guidance as at 'very high risk' of Covid-19 are advised to cocoon.
- An estimated additional cost of €40m to provide post-primary schools with additional



supervision of students. This would be a key control measure to support schools to minimise interaction of students from different classes, in line with public health advice.

- An additional €52 million for schools to put in place enhanced cleaning and hygiene measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools. This was being provided on a per-pupil basis and was intended to allow an additional four to six hours cleaning per day in schools.
- A €75 million capital allocation to support schools to prepare their buildings and classrooms for reopening, including an uplift for schools with SEN pupils.
- €4.2 million to enable schools to employ an aide to implement the logistical changes needed in schools – moving furniture, changing classroom layouts, set up hand sanitising stations, signage etc.
- €3.8m to provide release time for each school to have a lead worker representative, whose role is to support the school to manage the risk of COVID-19 infections.

Circular 0046/20 outlined the detail of how this package of measures would work and in tandem with the *Covid-19 Response Plan for Safe and Sustainable Re-opening of Post Primary Schools*, which issued shortly afterwards, schools started to engage in the unprecedented and complex process of making arrangements to re-open in the midst of the ongoing pandemic.

It was a source of great frustration to JMB that the fee-charging school sector was not comprehended automatically in the return to school support measures and we made strong representations to Department personnel and to the Minister to this effect. The Department outlined that fee-charging schools could apply for the supports and that applications would be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Following

representations from JMB, the Department did immediately cede that the extra Guidance allocation would automatically apply to all schools, and following further dialogue indicated that the cleaning and PPE grants would be given to all schools that requested it. Some fee-charging schools did get further assistance on a case-by-case basis, but JMB contended that the differentiation made between the different sectors in the first instance was unnecessary and placed an unwelcome burden on a particular segment of schools at a time when we were all collectively engaged in dealing with the raft of issues that re-opening presented.

Covid-19 Response Plan for Safe and Sustainable Re-opening of Post Primary Schools

The *Covid-19 Response Plan for Safe and Sustainable Re-opening of Post Primary Schools* that issued from the Department was the product of intense engagement with the education partners during the course of the summer and JMB personnel were heavily involved in trying to ensure that all eventualities were comprehended in the document and that it mapped out in a coherent way exactly what was required of schools and how they would be supported in adopting and implementing the Plan.

The Plan detailed the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Government's '*Return to Work Safely Protocol*' and to prevent the introduction and spread of Covid-19 in the school environment.

Schools had to have a COVID-19 policy statement in place prior to the re-opening of schools. A template of a school COVID-19 policy statement was included as Appendix 1

Once the school name was inserted in this policy statement and it was signed by the chairperson and principal, then the *Covid-19 Response Plan for Safe and Sustainable Re-opening of Post Primary Schools* with the appendix added became the school plan. A board of management meeting to brief members and to approve and sign the COVID-19 Policy Statement was recommended, and once approved by the board, the *Covid-19 Response Plan* was then brought to the attention of the staff, students, parents and others in the school community. Once the Lead Worker Representative(s) (LWR) had been appointed, there was a section in P.11 of the document where the details should be recorded and staff would then be informed of the identity of this person.

- each school was required to appoint and a template letter that school management could use in seeking expressions of interest in the role. Appendix 8 was a Checklist for the Lead Worker Representative (LWR).

- Appendix 4 was a Risk Assessment document that school management had to fill out with reference to risks that specifically relate to Covid 19. This could then be added to the school's Safety Statement.
- Appendix 5 was a Contact Tracing Log that is used to log details of visitors to the school.

Section 5 of the plan dealt with the control measures to be undertaken to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in schools. This included information and advice on maximising the space available throughout the school and a link to a specific document on *a Framework to maintain Physical Distancing in the Classroom*. Section 5 also dealt with the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the school.

Further sections of the plan dealt with:

- Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities
- Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools (Appendix 9)
- Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19 (Appendix 7)
- Staff Duties
- Covid-19 related absence management
- Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

There was a compendium of issues that schools had to engage with:

- Assess the capacity of all possible learning spaces, including Sport Halls, Assembly Halls, Canteen etc. Follow guidance in '*Framework to maintain Physical Distancing in the Classroom in Post Primary Schools*'.



- Match the available learning spaces with class sizes according to timetable and to minimise the movement of class groups.
- Organise any reconfiguration works required using the Minor Works Grant.
- Consider use of available local facilities if additional space is required.
- Decide if there was a need for staggered breaks and lunchtimes and start to review supervision requirements making use of additional allocation.
- Decide if the school needed to employ additional staff to supervise, or if this could be managed using existing staff who could be paid in addition to their contracted obligations under the Supervision and Substitution scheme.
- Decide on use of additional teaching and guidance allocation.
- Order PPE as soon as procurement process was in place.
- Assess if the cleaning routine in school needed to be supplemented by increasing hours of cleaners, or employing additional staff, using the Covid-19 capitation grant of €33 per pupil in mainstream classes and €40 per pupil in special classes.
- Check Section 6 of the document '*Returning to School- Guidance on learning and school programmes*' which outlined a number of key decisions taken to pause elements of curriculum reform, that were due to commence in September 2020. Section 4 of this document detailed changes to the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Examinations 2021.
- Arrange a BOM meeting to brief members and to approve and sign the COVID-19 Policy Statement, *Appendix 1 of COVID-19 Response Plan*
- Appoint a School Re-opening Aide
- Become apprised of the operation of the Minor Works Grant

Return to School

To engage with all that was requested was an extraordinary ask of school communities and, after what was already a curtailed summer break because of the Calculated Grades process, school management set about preparing for re-opening. As had been the situation during the Calculated Grades process, the Zoom platform again proved invaluable for JMB as a means of engaging with our schools and meetings on Thursday July 30, Tuesday August 4 and Thursday August 6, 2020 afforded us the opportunity to brief schools on what was required and deal with the questions that inevitably emerged. Every school has its own story of what had to be done to facilitate the return of our students, and the extraordinary collective endeavour that was entailed culminated in the re-opening of all our schools.

There were inevitable complications as the new distancing, cleaning and supervision requirements bedded down. A number of schools experienced particular difficulties with regard to the wearing of masks as the system teased out where exemptions might apply and we had to deal with a vocal cohort of parents who felt that the wearing of masks should not be required. There were difficult days in some schools as we held the line on the necessity of all to abide by the regulations for the common good.

As we settled in to the new routines in school, in JMB we were in constant contact with Department and health officials to try to ensure that when Covid cases emerged in schools proper supports and advice were available to management. It did take some time for systems to be put in place that adequately supported schools, but as we moved towards the Christmas break a certain equilibrium was evident as schools and the Department and



health officials all became more used to the challenges faced and the new routines for students and staff became established.

The surge in cases over the Christmas period and the emergence of new variants meant that in the first instance the re-opening of schools was postponed and then cancelled, the Minister's original plan that at least Sixth Years and students in special classes would return from January 11, 2021 proving untenable. Remote teaching and learning for all was reintroduced, and at least the lessons learned and the experience of the previous academic year meant that this was a relatively seamless transition for all at school level.

The phased re-opening of our schools commenced on February 22, 2021 when students in special classes were allowed return, and from March 1, 2021 Sixth Year students were allowed to recommence in schools. A full return for all of our students was scheduled for after the Easter holiday break on April 12, 2021. During the phased re-opening schools did have to operate in accordance with Department information notes on temporary changes to the parental leave and unpaid leave scheme which did impact on the availability to schools of some staff, and the temporary suspension of the Substitution and Supervision scheme during this period did put extra pressure on school management. Notwithstanding this, the return of students was most welcome and schools are again engaged in looking after a full cohort of students as we move towards the end of another extraordinary academic year.

See Appendix 1 Article by General Secretary in *The Irish Times* October 27, 2020

State Examinations 2021

At the start of the academic year, the Department, in conjunction with the NCCA and SEC, issued a document setting out adjusted assessment arrangements for post-primary students taking certificate examinations in the 2020/21 school year. These arrangements were designed to take account of the disrupted learning experienced by students during the 2019/20 school year. In essence, Leaving Certificate students would be given more choice in the written papers and there were adjustments to the Classroom Based Assessment and Assessment Task requirements for Junior Certificate students. It was the intention of all of the education partners that the State examinations would proceed in as normal a manner as possible, albeit with adaptations in delivery to take account of medical advice on such issues as the orals, practical examinations and spacing and cleaning requirements in examination centres. There was a recognition that the learning experience of our students had not been ideal since the closure of schools in March 2020, but the prevailing wisdom was that if at all possible we should afford our students the opportunity to engage with the examinations in the traditional way.

The equation started to change when our students were unable to return to school after the 2020 Christmas break. One of the reasons why JMB wanted schools to reopen, especially for exam classes, was the realisation that every week lost in school was making the traditional examination route less feasible. In essence, February 1, 2021 was the cut-off point, the conventional wisdom being that if Sixth Years were not back in school by then some alternative model would have to be considered. The view of Minister Foley and government was that students should be afforded a choice between



the traditional examination and some form of a calculated or accredited grades model. In engaging with our schools through a series of regional meetings, there was a broad range of opinion as to how we should proceed, but there was a relative consensus that oral and course work needed to be comprehended in some manner, and that whatever about the alternative of an accredited grades model, written examinations should go ahead and that, in so far as possible, students should be encouraged to take them. We were strongly of the view that whatever decisions were ultimately arrived at, all processes should conclude in June 2021, and this was reflected at the feedback we had at meetings. Students, teachers and management have been subject to an extraordinary year and it was incumbent on us to try to ensure that all would have a relatively normal summer break.

Following a Government meeting on February 17, 2021, and after intensive engagement with the education stakeholders, Minister Foley confirmed that Leaving Certificate 2021 examinations would proceed and students would also have the alternative option of applying for grades accredited by the State Examinations Commission (SEC), to be known as SEC-Accredited Grades.

It was felt that allowing both the examination and a corresponding measure of SEC-Accredited Grades was essential to ensuring a fair system, having regard to the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic and the loss of learning that had occurred for this group of students due to the interruption of in-person teaching and learning during the periods of school closure.

For those choosing to take the Leaving Certificate exams, oral examinations would be held during the Easter vacation or shortly after. Coursework would proceed in subjects where these formed a normal part of the examination.

Additional time would be provided by the SEC for completion of this work. In some subjects the holding of practical examinations would not be possible given public health considerations.

The Minister's strongly held view was that students must be afforded the choice as to whether to sit the examinations, including the oral and coursework components, as it would be entirely unfair to students to require them to participate in these elements, given the disruption in learning which has occurred. The oral and coursework components of the examinations would not form part of the Accredited Grades process.

All aspects of staging the examinations would be guided by public health advice and the results of the Leaving Certificate 2021 process would issue to students within the required timeframe for CAO admission to higher and further education.

The Minister also announced that Junior Cycle examinations would not be run in 2021. Schools would be provided with guidance on continuing to engage this year group in online learning and assessment during the period of school closure and through in-person learning when schools re-opened.

A Guide to State Examinations and Accredited Grades for Leaving Certificate 2021 soon issued from the Department, and this was supplemented by *Circular S07/21 Important Information in relation to the Arrangements for the delivery of the 2021 Leaving Certificate Examinations* from the State Examinations Commission (SEC) which gave new coursework completion dates, information on the orals and practicals and how candidates could sign up for the examinations and Accredited Grades process by means of the candidate self-service portal.

As we moved towards Easter, there was a flurry



of activity from all quarters to try to ensure that schools were properly prepared and adequately instructed on all issues relating to the holding of the oral examinations over the holiday period. SEC issued S13/2021 *Leaving Certificate Oral Language Examinations 2021 Guidance to School Management*, but a supplementary note soon followed as concerns from teachers necessitated that there was a change in the initial guidance and all participants in the oral examination process were required to wear masks.

It has long been JMB policy that the holding of the oral examinations might take place during the Easter holiday period, and we did advance that it should be considered given the extraordinary circumstances we found ourselves in this year, but we were acutely aware of the challenges that management faced in holding the oral examinations in this fashion. It is again testament to the remarkable commitment and professionalism of the leaders in our schools that these exams transacted in as successful a manner as they have at a time when we are routinely confronted by so many challenges.

With regard to the Accredited Grades process, the Department published a *Guide to Accredited Grades for Leaving Certificate 2021 for Out-of-School Subjects, and Out-of-School Learners*, a notable feature of which was that this year each school would establish a panel of 2/3 teachers to assist in evaluating data and estimating marks in relation to subjects taken outside of school. A *Supporting Teaching, Learning and Assessment in the Context of Accredited Grades 2021* document also issued to help teachers assess in a subject-by-subject manner how they should engage with the Accredited Grades process.

On Tuesday, April 13, 2021 JMB hosted a webinar, which had almost seven hundred participants, on the Accredited Grades process for Leaving Certificate 2021 to apprise

management of the key aspects of what was entailed and the steps that needed to be taken at school level.

Catholic Schools Partnership (CSP)

Over the summer months CSP commissioned Mr Will Flanagan and Mrs Miriam McCabe to prepare prayers for principals to use with staff and short liturgies for year heads or class tutors to adapt for use with students marking the return to school. A prayer resource for use by boards of management was also circulated to schools during the year and was very well received.

The theme for Catholic Schools Week, which this year took place from January 24 to 31, 2021, was *Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith and Resilience*. As always, support material was made available to schools and the level of participation was very encouraging.

Guidelines for schools on the Post-Primary Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme were prepared during the year. A pilot programme was conducted in a number of Ceist schools and programmes and resources are also being finalised for Junior Cycle RSE, and are under development in relation to Senior Cycle RSE for Catholic post-primary schools.

The last meeting of the Catholic Schools Partnership was held on November 12, 2020. The Catholic Education Partnership (CEP) commenced on November 23. It was noted that the CSP had been in operation since 2005. Bishop Francis Duffy was thanked for his work as interim chairperson of CSP and Patricia Bourden was thanked for her work as Acting CEO.

Throughout the year, work has been ongoing on the establishment of CEP. Marie Griffin was appointed as the chairperson of the new



organisation and arrangements were put in place for the appointment of a CEO.

Teaching Council

Catherine Moynihan, formerly Principal of Cross and Passion College Secondary School, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare, currently chairperson of St. Anne's Special School, The Curragh, Co. Kildare and chairperson of St Laurence College, Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin, and the Vice President of AMCSS/JMB between 2015 and 2017, currently represents the second-level management bodies on the Teaching Council. Attached as an Appendix to this report is Catherine's account of the current activities of the Teaching Council.

See Appendix 2 Teaching Council Report

2020/21 other Issues

Work is still ongoing on producing a successor to Circular 0003/2018, *Leadership and Management in Post-Primary Schools*, and we are intent on having this issue resolved as soon as possible as it will comprehend additionality in the number of middle-management posts allowed in some of our schools. Some matters are being finalised with regard to an appeal system for appointment to principal and deputy principal posts and this will be in place soon.

We did advocate during the course of the year that the extra teaching allocation we were allowed in 2020/21 would be extended for a further year, given that we imagine that Covid restrictions will be in place again next year, and we have been successful in this regard. We also asked that the review of school profiling for the purpose of the SEN allocation would be paused for a year, and again we have been successful

in this regard. We were also successful in suggesting that the move from 300 to 400 hours Wellbeing in schools should be put on hold for a year.

This is obviously a time of financial stringency in education, given that so much funding has had to be allocated to schools to deal with re-opening and examination issues, but we have been particularly pleased that our ongoing advocacy to have the threshold for a second deputy principal in DEIS schools reduced from 700 to 600 students has been successful, and we will continue to look for improved allocation for our DEIS schools in particular. We also welcome the recent announcement from Minister Foley that an extension of the School Completion Programme will comprehend 14 post-primary schools newly included in DEIS in 2017, and also that there will be a 5% increase in funding for the School Completion Programme to support the attendance and participation of vulnerable learners and those at risk of educational disadvantage.

We are concerned that the SLARs issue still remains unresolved. In February last year the Department issued Circular 0017/2020 'Guidance on the Junior Cycle Subject Learning and Assessment Review Process'. This circular required schools to arrange SLAR meetings in accordance with this guidance from the school year 2020/21 onwards, but the new arrangements for Junior Cycle completion this year and the fact that students will need to have completed only one CBA has meant that, in effect, resolution of the SLAR issue has been put on hold. We are in contact with the Department on this matter, but given that there is so much else going on in our schools at present we do not want this to be a source of conflict in any of our schools this year.



JMB Training and Events 2020/21

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how we all work, live and interact, so we adapted our training and events programme accordingly. Most of JMB training was delivered online for 2020 and will be delivered online for 2021, unless we find ourselves in a position where this can be reviewed. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, it was not possible to hold the Annual Conference and the Education Conference in 2020.

The range of activities is a tangible response to the growing complexity involved in running secondary schools at this time. A glance at the variety of topics covered gives some indication of the supports required to run a modern educational establishment:

- Allocations information seminars
- GDPR
- Interview competencies training
- DEIS information and planning seminars
- Further Education training
- Budget workshops
- Training for newly appointed principals and deputy principals
- Education Law Day
- School administration personnel training
- Training for members of boards of management
- Vetting
- CIDs
- Middle Leadership and Management training - did not take place

All of the above supports are provided by staff members in the Secretariat of Secondary Schools, ably assisted by relevant experts. The events and training programme is expertly

co-ordinated by Elizabeth O'Connor, with the assistance of Cathy Glavey and the administration team in Emmet House. All member schools are encouraged to participate in the wide range of supports and we welcome suggestions in relation to further supports that you believe are required.

Reports from Units

The Secretariat of AMCSS/JMB consists of component units and reports from each unit are included as part of *Reports 2021*. These are:

- Education Report
- FSSU Report
- HR/IR and Legal Services Report
- School Management Advisory Report
- School Building Projects Advisory Report
- Schools Procurement Unit (FSSU) Report
- Vetting Report
- Data Protection Advisory Report

Council

As always, we would like to thank the members of AMCSS/JMB Council for their work on your behalf in directing and informing the work of our organisation in the last year. This January 2021, a new Council elected by our member regions was constituted and we would like to compliment the members of the outgoing Council for their sterling work and to welcome the members of our new Council and to thank them for the work they are already engaging in, responding to the current challenges and to ensuring that AMCSS/JMB continues to operate in a manner conversant with the needs of our schools and the established purpose of the organisation.



During the year, work concluded on the revised constitution of the Secretariat of Secondary Schools, which comprehends the roles and functions of all of the component parts of our organisation, and on our accompanying Internal Regulations document. The Internal Regulations document sets out the manner in which our regions, our councils and our committees operate and is an invaluable reference for us all in ensuring efficiency and good governance. As well as our meetings of the Councils of AMCSS and JMB, our work is overseen by our newly constituted Board of Directors and will be supported in an ongoing manner by Finance, Strategy and Risk Committees as we ensure that our organisation operates to the highest standards and remains responsive to current and future demands.

Throughout this year there has been ongoing engagement to ensure that our organisation will work in a cooperative and cohesive manner with the newly constituted Catholic Education Partnership (CEP) and the Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools (APTCS) and that the mandates of each of the organisations will be mutually supportive and complementary and avoid duplication of role.

In all of these areas, as in many others, we owe much to the dedication and leadership of our President, Deirdre Matthews, who continues in her role on the new Council. Our President has been unstinting in her commitment to our organisation and gives a remarkable amount of time and energy to ensuring that we attend to the needs of our schools and that we are positioned to deal with current issues and to meet the challenges of the future. The nature of our involvement with the Catholic Education Partnership (CEP) and the Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools (APTCS) has added an extra layer of complexity to the role of our President and necessitates an attendant

investment in time, and we are very grateful for the manner in which our President has represented us in this regard. This has been an extraordinary time for our schools as we navigate our way through all of the problems that have confronted us because of the pandemic and an important time for our organisation as we engage with issues relating to governance and strategy, and the leadership our President has afforded us and the support she has given to all of us in Emmet House is exemplary and is very much appreciated.

We are indebted, too, to the hard work and commitment of our Deputy President, Patricia Higgins, who likewise has continued in her role on the new Council. Our Deputy President directed the work of our Strategy Committee during the term of the outgoing Council and will engage in a similar manner with the current Strategy and Risk Committee. She has played a key role in determining governance issues that we have needed to address and in helping to chart the course of the previous and current Council. We would also like to thank all of those who participated in our previous committees or are now enlisted to work on our current committees. Our organisation could not function without the generosity of all involved.

As an aide to understanding the governance and strategic work that we have been engaged with recently, we include as an appendix to this report an explanatory memorandum which sets out the background to the establishment of the Secretariat of Secondary Schools, a synopsis of the recent changes, and the nature of our relationship with the Catholic Education Partnership (CEP) and the Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools (APTCS).

See Appendix 3 Secretariat of Secondary Schools (SSS) Explanatory Memorandum

Deirdre Matthews	Principal	St. Vincent's Secondary School, Dundalk, Co Louth
Patricia Higgins	Principal	Our Lady's Secondary School, Templemore, Co Tipperary
Fr Paul Connell		Past President
Jimmy Reynolds	Chairperson	O'Connell Secondary School, Nth Richmond St, Dublin 1
John Barry	Principal	St. Michael's Secondary School, Finglas, Dublin 11
Marie-Thérèse Kilmartin	Principal	Colaiste Bride, Clondalkin, Dublin 22
Michael Denny	Chairperson	Loreto Secondary School, Bray, Co Wicklow
Fr Dermot Ryan	Chairperson	St Kieran's College, Kilkenny, Co Kilkenny
Mary Meade	Principal	Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School, Waterford
Helen O'Donnell	Principal	Scoil Chríost Rí, Borris Road, Portlaoise, Co Laois
Noel Merrick	Chairperson	St. Paul's Secondary School, Co Kildare
Donal Cronin	Chairperson	Ursuline Secondary School, Blackrock, Co Cork
Regina Butler	Principal	Scoil Mhuire, Wellington Rd, Cork
John O'Donovan	Principal	St. Joseph's Secondary School, Ballybunion, Co Kerry
Jerry Cronin	Chairperson	Laurel Hill Secondary School, Limerick
Br Matthew Hayes	Chairperson	Patrician Presentation Secondary , Fethard, Co Tipperary
Michael Brett	Chairperson	Presentation College, Tuam, Co Galway
Orla Malone	Principal	St. Paul's Secondary School, Oughterard, Co Galway
Leo Golden	Principal	St. Muredach's College, Ballina, Co Mayo
Brendan Forde	Chairperson	Jesus & Mary Secondary School, Crossmolina, Co Mayo
Kevin Wynne	Chairperson	St. Louis Secondary School, Dundalk, Co Louth
Bishop Brendan Kelly	Bishop	Galway Diocese, Co Galway
Sr Eithne Woulfe		Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI)
Brian Moore	Principal	Rathdown School, Glenageary, Co Dublin
Jill Storey	Principal	Villiers School, North Circular Road, Co Limerick
Jonathan Graham	Principal	Dundalk Grammar School, Dundalk, Co Louth



Council 2021-2023

Deirdre Matthews	Principal	St. Vincent's Secondary School, Dundalk, Co Louth
Patricia Higgins	Principal	Our Lady's Secondary School, Templemore, Co Tipperary
Angela McGarvey	Principal	Loreto College, Cavan
Ann Marie Brosnan	Principal	Sacred Heart Secondary School, Clonakilty
Brian Moore	Principal	Rathdown School, Glenageary, Co. Dublin
Colm Keher	Principal	Loreto Secondary School, Kilkenny
Fr Dermot Ryan	Chairperson	St. Kieran's College, Kilkenny
Donal Cronin	Chairperson	Ursuline Secondary School, Blackrock, Cork
Sr Eithne Woulfe		Association of leaders of Missionaries and Religious in Ireland (AMRI)
Bishop Francis Duffy	Bishop	Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise
Helen O'Donnell	Principal	Scoil Chríost Rí, Portlaoise, Co. Laois
Jerry Cronin	Chairperson	Laurel Hill Secondary School, Limerick
Jill Storey	Principal	Villiers School, North Circular Road, Limerick
Jimmy Reynolds	Chairperson	O'Connell Secondary School, Dublin
John Barry	Principal	St. Michael's Secondary School, Finglas, Dublin 11
John Kelly	Principal	St. Jarlath's College, Tuam, Co. Galway
John O'Donovan	Principal	St. Joseph's Secondary School, Ballybunion
Jonathan Graham	Principal	Dundalk Grammar School, Dundalk, Co. Louth
Leo Golden	Principal	St. Muredach's College, Ballina, Co. Mayo
Marie O'Neill	Chairperson	Cross & Passion College, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare
Marie-Thérèse Kilmartin	Principal	Colaiste Bride, Clondalkin, Dublin
Mary Caffrey	Chairperson	Eureka Secondary School, Kells, Co. Meath
Br Matthew Hayes	Chairperson	Patrician Presentation Secondary, Fethard, Co Tipperary
Michael Denny	Chairperson	Loreto Secondary School, Bray, Co. Wicklow
Patsy Sweeney	Chairperson	Scoil Muire agus Padraig, Swinford, Co. Mayo
Fr Paul Connell		Past President
Siobhan Quinn	Chairperson	St. Brigid's Secondary School, Tuam



Region Meetings

As always, the ten AMCSS regions are the foundation of our organisation and the regular meetings that take place at local level are integral to everything we do and inform policy and decision-making. I would like to thank all of our regional officers for the contribution they make in organising and ensuring the smooth running of meetings, and for liaising with all of us in Emmet House at all times. This year, I am particularly thankful for all that was involved at regional level in the election of our new Council in a manner conversant with our revised constitution and Internal Regulations. Obviously, current circumstances have determined that our meetings have to be held remotely and we all look forward to the time when we can meet again and engage with the normal social courtesies. However, perhaps these meetings have become more important than ever in allowing us to connect with friends and colleagues at this fraught time and availing of the mutual support that they engender. I would especially like to thank those chairpersons of boards who attend our regional meetings. Their contributions to our meetings are invaluable and their presence will continue to be key to the strength of our organisation. We are all very conscious of the debt we owe to those willing to take on such challenging roles in our schools and we will continue to try to support chairpersons in every way we can. Finally, I would encourage everyone to attend as many meetings as possible, and to be especially conscious of the support they can afford our newly appointed principals.

Emmet House

I would like to thank all of my colleagues in Emmet House for all that they do in trying to ensure that the requirements of all of our schools are attended to in an efficient and timely manner. It goes without saying that the current situation in which we find ourselves has made extra demands on us as we try to respond to need and to influence Department policy and direction, and to deal with overarching national prerogatives at this time of crisis. I would very much like to thank my colleagues for their unremitting commitment at all times, and to thank them also on your behalf for the courtesy that is always extended to those who contact us, and for the innate professionalism that is very much core to all of their work. All of us have had to contend with the remote working experience, and I would like to compliment everyone in Emmet House for the manner in which they have responded to the challenges that this has entailed. We will always try to meet the needs of our schools as best we can, and my sincerest thanks to Bernadette, Michael, Gerry, Louise, Ronan, Christine, Cyril, Siobhan, Bríd, Elizabeth, Cathy, Therese, Teresa, Jennifer, Ewa, Kathleen, Eileen, Lorraine, James, Joe, Breda, Liz, Fiona, Matthew and Gisele, and to Jack Cleary for his work as our vetting coordinator and Noel Merrick for his invaluable service as our School Building Projects Advisor.



Conclusion

We know that there will be numerous challenges ahead as we move through the rest of this academic year and prepare for the next. We know that the Covid situation will determine much of what will happen in our schools again next year and that the funding supports allowed us this year may not be replicated. As General Secretary of AMCSS/JMB, I have been enormously gratified by the professionalism and commitment of all of the personnel in our schools in serving our communities in these most difficult of circumstances, and by the perseverance displayed by all in management in particular and the sheer resilience displayed in dealing with all that has been asked of people. We can be justifiably proud of the contribution of all in education in serving our country at this time of unprecedented crisis. All of my colleagues I know join with me in assuring you of our continued assistance and support as we negotiate the current challenges, and look forward to the promise of times ahead and our *Hope for Renewal*.

John Curtis, General Secretary
April 2021



Appendix 1

Article by General Secretary in
The Irish Times October 27



Teachers are pulling out all the stops yet education continues to be underfunded

Covid-19 will place further challenges but we will keep on giving. It's in our nature

Tue, Oct 27, 2020

John Curtis

The fact that our schools are continuing to operate during Level 5 restrictions, even with recent difficulties such as contact tracing and sanitisation, is a testament to the extraordinary effort and diligence of our school communities. It is also a reflection, in particular, of the determination of school management to do everything possible to mitigate the negative effects on students.

It's been quite a year. We have had to contend with issues regarding the State examinations, and that protracted and complex saga brought about the calculated grades process which, inherently imperfect as it was, has allowed our students to progress and a chance to conclude the second-level education chapter of their lives in a relatively orderly fashion.

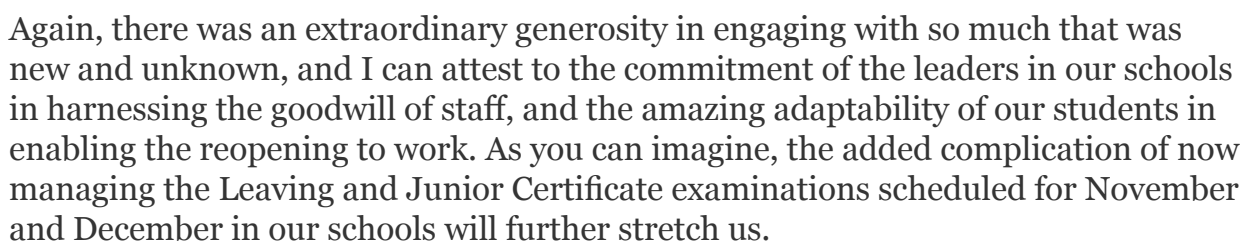
There has been criticism of the decision to postpone the Leaving Certificate but, as someone involved in the deliberations this necessitated among the education partners, what was striking was the unanimity evident when medical advice and forensic interrogation of all the possible options led to the difficult decisions that had to be taken.

I have always maintained that the quality of the teaching workforce in this country is second to none, and the generosity exhibited by teachers in engaging with the calculated grades process was exemplary, but it was the investment of school management in organising and overseeing the process throughout the summer that enabled it to function. It was not a simple task. Unprecedented as the model was, it inevitably presented management with profound challenges and frayed many nerves as we all endeavoured to make it work.

Determining grades

That issues subsequently arose regarding the use of historical data in determining grades and the algorithm errors that occurred was far from ideal, and compounded the difficulties that schools experienced at local level in explaining, managing and supporting students, with our principals inevitably to the fore.

Covid-19 in schools





We know that we are now at the forefront of a national endeavour to keep our schools open. We are proud of the progress to date and will do everything we can to enable that to continue. But I do worry about my colleagues involved in the running of our member schools, by virtue of their giving nature, the unrelenting and unrehearsed journey they have been on and the incessant demands we all seem to place on them.

Difficulties

Prof Selina McCoy, head of education research at the ESRI, and Dr Eamonn Carroll in their recent report, *Learning for All? Second-level Education in Ireland during Covid-19*, have pointed to the difficulties principals are experiencing in the face of the unprecedented demands on their time and emotional energy and the toll this invariably takes.

We can take too much for granted. I would like to think there would be a collective acknowledgement of how much has been achieved by leaders in our schools. This has masked the ongoing underinvestment that has characterised education in this country over many years. At an Oireachtas hearing on school buildings, I made the point that our issue with underinvestment was not with the Department of Education. There are different parties in the education sphere who would all contend that available funds should be directed more in their direction, and those of us in the voluntary second-level sector are particularly exercised over issues relating to equity of funding. But, in essence, if the Minister and department personnel are allocated funds, they will spend them judiciously. The real issue is the proportion of the national financial pie that is allocated to education in the first instance – the OECD report *Education at a Glance 2020* ranks Ireland in last place out of 36 countries for investment in second-level education as a percentage of GDP.

Sense of service

This is the crux. We acknowledge that this year's budget had to take account of unique circumstances, but yet again education remains underfunded. Our schools, and management in our schools, need more support. Given our present situation, there are inevitably further challenges on the horizon but we will keep on giving. It's in our nature, and, tired as we are, there is that collective drive to look after our students, to lead with optimism and confidence, and to replicate that sense of service that so many of us have experienced in our own time in our country's schools. So, with the schools reopened, well done and thank you to all of my colleagues on the front line. Perhaps we might all reflect on the value we place on education and what we need to do to sustain what we have and to provide for our children's future.

John Curtis is general secretary of the Joint Managerial Body, the advisory and negotiating body for the management authorities of almost 380 voluntary secondary schools.



Appendix 2

Teaching Council Report



Report on the Teaching Council – November 2020 Update on Key Areas of Work over the Period 2018-2019

1. About the Teaching Council

The Teaching Council was established on a statutory basis in March 2006.

It is the professional standards body for the teaching profession, which promotes and regulates professional standards in teaching. It acts in the interests of the public good while upholding and enhancing standards in the teaching profession.

2. Membership of the Teaching Council

The Council has 37 members. 16 of these are registered teachers who are elected by teachers. The membership comprises of:

- ◇ 11 primary teachers, nine of whom are elected and two of whom are teacher union nominees
- ◇ 11 post-primary teachers, seven of whom are elected and four of whom are teacher union nominees
- ◇ 2 nominated by colleges of education
- ◇ 2 nominated by specified third-level bodies
- ◇ 4 nominated by school management (two primary and two post-primary)
- ◇ 2 nominated by parents' associations (one primary and one post-primary) and
- ◇ 5 nominated by the Minister for Education, including one representing each of IBEC and ICTU

*A new Council commenced its term in April 2020, following the election of teacher members. In June 2020, Mr. Seán McMahon was elected Chairperson and Ms. Noelle Moran was elected Deputy Chairperson.

3. Strategic Objectives

The Teaching Council Strategic Plan 2018-2020 sets out seven strategic goals as follows:

- ◇ Consolidate and communicate the progress made towards a seamless continuum of Teacher Education
- ◇ Work with the DES and stakeholders to agree a model and process for ensuring a better match between teacher supply and demand
- ◇ Support teachers in enhancing their professional practice through professional learning frameworks which facilitates a culture of shared learning
- ◇ Continue to safeguard entry to the profession through high standards for initial teacher education, as well as effective and efficient review and registration processes
- ◇ Ensure that the implementation of the Fitness to Teach process is robust, fair and transparent for teachers and the wider public.
- ◇ Promote the teaching profession, including well-being and enhance awareness of the Council's work through innovative and accessible communications.
- ◇ Ensure that the Teaching Council has sufficient resources, including from other sources, to support efficient ways of working, compliance with corporate governance, and the development of effective policies.

Registration with the Teaching Council is a requirement for a teacher to receive a State funded salary. The registration renewal fee remains at €65 and is claimable for tax relief.

102,756 teachers were registered with the Teaching Council on 27 th March 2019			
Primary	Primary	Further Education	Other
47,852	44,484	13,336	1,215

A total of 1,345 teachers lapsed for non-payment of renewal fee, with 56 teachers reregistering. A further 231 teachers voluntarily removed themselves from the Register during the period.

This facility was used 153,415 times during the year.

- ◇ 9,599 teachers were vetted for initial registration or employment purposes
- ◇ 10,384 were vetted as part of the re-vetting of registered teachers

The second edition of the Code of Professional Conduct (updated in 2016) sets out the standards of professional knowledge, skill, competence and conduct that are expected of registered teachers. The Code is a statement of what good teaching should look and feel like. It is a statutory document that acts as a reference point during Fitness to Teach inquiries.



The Investigation of Complaints

The Council's Fitness to Teach functions (Part 5 of the Teaching Council Acts 2001-2015) were commenced on 25 July 2016. Thus, the Council can investigate complaints made against registered teachers on serious matters. Once a complaint is made, the Council will initiate an investigation and decide if it should be dealt with through the Council's formal disciplinary procedures.

Complaints before the Committee:

39 new complaints were received during this reporting period.

- ⇒ 11 related to post-primary teachers
- ⇒ 26 related to primary teachers
- ⇒ 2 related to teachers in Further Education

37 of the complaints related to individual teachers and
2 complaints related to two teachers.

Five of the complaints were refused at Director's review stage as they did not meet the requirements of the Teaching Council Acts 2001-2015, i.e. they were not signed or accompanied by relevant documentation and information.

Grounds of complaint include:

- ◇ Professional misconduct
- ◇ Poor professional performance
- ◇ Engaging in conduct contrary to the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers
- ◇ being medically unfit to teach
- ◇ A court conviction for certain offences
- ◇ Failing to comply with, or contravening a provision of the Teaching Council Acts, 2001-2015; the Education Act, 1998; the Education Welfare Act, 2000; the Education and Training Boards Act, 2013, and any regulations, rules or orders made under those Acts
- ◇ Failing to comply with an undertaking or to take any action specified in a consent given to a panel of the Council's Disciplinary Committee at an inquiry and
- ◇ Erroneous registration due to a false or fraudulent declaration or misrepresentation

Investigating Committee

The Investigating Committee is *a screening committee* that considers and investigates complaints received by the Teaching Council in relation to registered teachers.

This Committee must decide whether action is required or whether all or part of a complaint should be referred to the Disciplinary Committee for an inquiry.

Categories of Complaint during the reporting year:

30	Conduct/behaviour*
10	Competence/performance/practice
1	Medical concerns
3	Criminal convictions
2	Dishonesty/professional integrity
1	A teacher's failure to report/notify
1	Breach of Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers
0	Breach of the Specified Acts listed at section 42(1)(a) of the Teaching Council (Amendment) Act 2015



* Complaints related to conduct/behaviour include physical abuse/assault, verbal assault, sexual/ intimate contact with a student, inappropriate personal relationship with a student (non-sexual), inappropriate communications (of a sexual and non-sexual nature), bullying, discriminatory behaviour and inappropriate social media usage.

6. Initial Teacher Education & Induction

Promoting high standards across the continuum of teacher education is central to the work of the Teaching Council. The Council's functions in this area begins when a teacher enters initial teacher education, and continue throughout the teacher's career.

School Placement

A School Placement Working Group was convened in November 2018. The Group was tasked with working towards a coordinated, appropriate and sustainable approach to School Placement, to review the implementation of school placement guidelines and the recommendations of Teaching Council commissioned research on school placement (Hall et al, 2018). The Group chaired by the Teaching Council, comprised 18 members and included representatives from the HEIs, Teacher Unions, IFUT, the Management bodies, DES Senior Officials, the DES Inspectorate, the HEA and the Teaching Council.

Droichead

Droichead entered the third year of its growth phase during this reporting year.

Droichead became the sole route of induction for teachers in:

- ◇ All post-primary schools, with more than 400 students
- ◇ Special Education Teaching (SET) settings and Primary schools with 16 or more mainstream teachers

Communications issued to all schools in the mandatory category for 2019/2020 advising them that *Droichead* is the only route of induction for NQTS in their schools from September 2019.

Droichead Quality Assurance Process

Data was gathered from 24 schools in the primary and post-primary sector. Each school was visited by the Droichead Quality Assurance (DQA) panel and a series of interviews was conducted during the visits. A report was drafted by Council staff, and was agreed and finalised by the panel.

7. Teaching, Learning and Research

i. Teaching and Learning

Cosán - the National Framework for Teachers' Learning

Cosán recognises that professional learning is 'part and parcel of a teacher's working life'. It is a flexible framework that fosters a culture of 'powerful professional learning' based on teachers' active engagement in their own learning, for their benefit and that of their students.

As part of the Cosán Development Process, workshops for teachers arranged as series of workshops in Education Centres throughout the country. These would offer attendees with an opportunity to discuss and plan their involvement in the Cosán Development Process, with each other and with the Teaching Council staff.



Mindful of this need for more space and time to facilitate further engagement with the teaching profession and the wider public on their views of the complexity of teachers' learning, and of the need to resource and incentivise it, the Council approved the following motion at its meeting in October 2018:

Council recognises the importance of ongoing CPD for all teachers as part of their life-long learning. Council believes that CPD should be both encouraged and incentivised and mandates the Cosán working group to produce proposals to bring to the Council as to how this can be done. In this regard, Council resolves that renewal of teachers' registration will not at this time be subject to engagement in CPD.

ii. Research

Webinars

In keeping with Cosán, engagement with research webinars is recognised as offering a valuable professional learning opportunity.

The Council broadcasted nine webinars on a range of themes as part of its CROÍ (Collaboration and Research for Ongoing Innovation) research series.

Schools are encouraged to watch webinar recordings as a school-based professional learning community, or as a cluster of schools.

All webinars and recordings are available on the research pages of the Council's website.

CROÍ Research

Seven research ezines were produced over the year covering:

- ◇ Student Engagement
- ◇ Reflective Teaching
- ◇ Childhood Bilingualism
- ◇ Inclusion for All

Another was a special edition ezine to mark World Book Day in which 20 eBooks from the Teaching Council's online library were reviewed by school leaders, practising teachers, policy makers and researchers.

Commissioned Research - DEEPEN (*Droichead: Exploring and Eliciting Perspectives Experiences and Narratives*).

This research has been commissioned by the Teaching Council and is being carried out by Marino Institute of Education and Trinity College.

It seeks to research teachers' experiences of the Droichead professional induction framework

It has a particular focus on small schools, Gaelscoileanna, DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) schools and special education settings.

It is hoped to present its final Report in Autumn 2021.

Research Engagement Group (REG)

The Research Engagement Group (REG) is comprised of registered teachers and others with experience of, and an interest in research in the areas of teaching, learning and/or assessment.

During the year, members of the REG:

- ◇ Participated on the John Coolahan Research Support Framework review panel
- ◇ Summarised articles for inclusion in its research ezines
- ◇ Helped to shape the 2019/2020 CROÍ programme



Online Library

The Teaching Council provides all registered teachers with free access to an online library of journals and eBooks. To access the library, registered teachers log in to the library using their Teaching Council Registration Number.

8. Promoting Teaching as a Profession

The Teaching Council communicates with stakeholders to explain its role and responsibilities, to build understanding of what its work means, and to generate support for its efforts to regulate and promote the profession of teaching, in the public interest.

During the year, the Council:

- ◇ Hosted the sixth annual FÉILTE event on 6th October 2018
- ◇ Hosted the Seventh Féilte event at National University of Ireland Galway in October 2019
- ◇ Issued 35 ezines, including 3 video ezines, with an average open rate of 64%
- ◇ Had almost 2.4 million page views on its website from over 454,052 users, 23.6% of whom were new
- ◇ Increased its Twitter followers to a total of 30,600
- ◇ Facebook followers increased to 6,200
- ◇ Attended numerous education conferences, seminars and meetings hosted by stakeholders
- ◇ Met with final year teacher education students in 27 Higher Education Institutes (HEIs)

Media relations

As part of its strategy to promote the profession and increase understanding of the Council's work, the Council engages in proactive media outreach, as well as responding to queries from the media.

FÉILTE

Féilte 2019 took place in NUI Galway on Friday, 27 and Saturday, 28 September – The Theme: 'Education 360: Learning from Others'

In 2020, the event took place on Saturday 3rd October, online due to Covid- '19 restrictions The Theme: Collaborating to Connect'.

All presentations from the events can be viewed on the Teaching Council website: <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/feilte/feilte-2021/>

The theme of Féilte 2021, to take place on the 2nd October 2021 is: Transforming Teaching in a Sustainable World.

Papers and Publications

In a further initiative to promote the profession of teaching, the Director of the Teaching Council regularly presents papers on issues related to the Council's work and engaged with a broad range of stakeholders, teachers, parents and the wider public, including:

- ◇ Webinars on a variety of topics
- ◇ Organisations promoting overall wellbeing including conferences focused on teachers' wellbeing and events promoting research conducted by and for teachers
- ◇ Consultation with CSL to discuss a quality assurance framework for professional learning programmes for school leaders
- ◇ Workshops on the Professional Code of Practice
- ◇ Presentation to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform conference on innovation



- ◇ Stakeholder briefings/meetings relating to Teacher Supply
- ◇ Promotion of the Cosán Development Process
- ◇ Presentation at IFTRA regarding child protection and opening address at NCSE Conference

BEACONS (Bringing Education Alive for our Communities On a National Scale)

During the reporting year, the Director initiated conversations with a diverse group of stakeholders on how more and better conversations could be facilitated between teachers, parents and students. This arose from a symposium on creative education hosted by the Burren College of Art in September 2018.

A steering group was established and met in Lucan, Thurles and Dublin West Education Centre. BEACONS was adopted as the title for this process which seeks to develop a range of models that schools could choose to support ongoing engagement with their students, parents and wider communities.

At the close of the reporting year, plans were in train to host a first prototype event in Ennistymon, Co. Clare. The intention was to gather evidence and feedback as to how such conversations may be best facilitated to inform future work.

Website

The Council's website had almost 2,000,000 'views' last year. - 76% of these were from new visitors.

Catherine Moynihan

November 2020



Appendix 3

Secretariat of Secondary Schools (SSS) Explanatory Memorandum



Secretariat of Secondary Schools (SSS) Explanatory Memorandum

1. Background

Up to the 1960s, Catholic voluntary secondary schools were established and run by the bishops (Diocesan schools) and by the religious orders of priests, brothers and nuns. In addition, a small number of Catholic schools were owned and run by lay people.

The interests of Catholic school management were looked after by a number of organisations: Catholic Headmasters Association (CHA) representing priests, Conference of Convent Secondary Schools (CCSS) representing nuns, Teaching Brothers Association (TBA) representing teaching brothers' institutes and Federation of Lay Catholic Secondary Schools (FCLS) representing the lay owners of schools. With the exception of FCLS, the organisations were subject to either episcopal or religious authorities.

There were two education commissions for Catholic schools: the Episcopal Commission for Education (Bishops) and the Education Commission of the Conference of Major Religious Superiors (CMRS).

In 1968, the Council of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (CMCSS) was established by the Episcopal Conference and CMRS. CMCSS comprised representatives from CHA (2), CCSS (3), TBA (2), FCLS (1), Episcopal Commission (1) and CMRS (1).

In 1964, religious and lay Catholic managerial groups and the Protestant groups came together informally as the Joint Managerial Body (JMB) to conduct negotiations with and make representations to the Department of Education and the ASTI. This cooperation was particularly important to present a united front to respond to industrial relations issues and the consequences of the introduction of free education in 1968.

The Secretariat of Secondary Schools (SSS) was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in 1973 under the Companies Act 1963 to look after the interests of voluntary secondary schools. SSS provided a small administrative staff to support the work of the CMCSS and the JMB.

In 1987, CMCSS was restructured to take account of the declining numbers of religious in schools and the advent of boards of management. Part of this restructuring led to the establishment of the Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (AMCSS) comprising ten geographic regions. The principal and chairperson of the board of management of each school in the region attended meetings of the region. Each region elected one principal and one chairperson to represent the region on CMCSS giving 20 regional representatives. One representative from the Episcopal Commission and one representative from CORI brought the total membership of CMCSS to 22.

The CMCSS together with three representatives of the ISA came together in 1987 to form the Council of the JMB. The SSS continued to provide administrative services to the CMCSS and the JMB.

2. Strategic Plan for Post Primary Catholic Education

In recent years, the congregations involved in education sought to secure the future of Catholic education through the establishment of education trust bodies (e.g. CEIST, ERST, Le Chéile, Spiritan Education Trust, Loreto, Presentation Brothers Trust). In 2009 the various trust bodies agreed to set up the Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools (ATCS) to promote best practice.



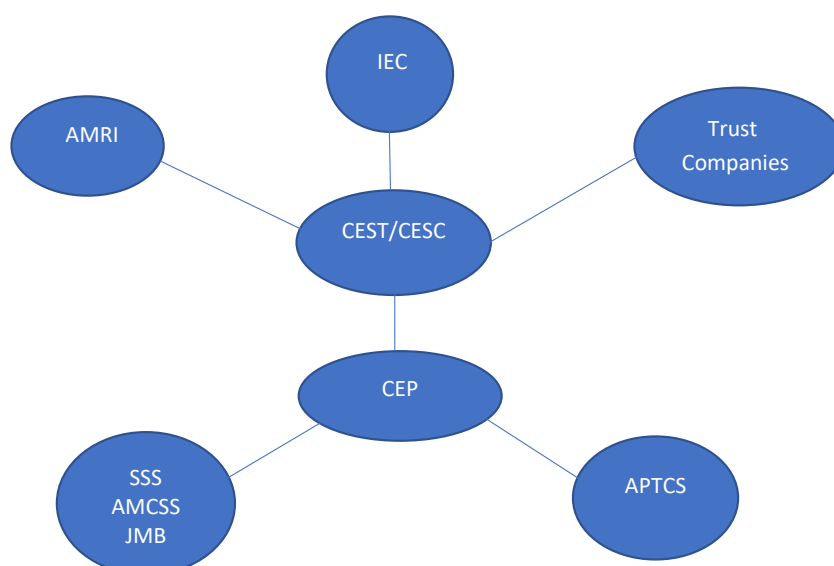
In the early 2000s, CORI and IEC met to consider the future of the Catholic voluntary school sector. This led to the establishment of the Catholic Education Service Committee (CESC) in 2010 comprising six bishops from IEC and six congregational leaders from CORI. CORI later restructured itself as the Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI).

CESC in turn, set up the Catholic Schools Partnership (CSP) as its operational arm and as a forum for all of the stakeholders involved in Catholic education at first, second and third level. From the beginning, SSS was represented on the council of CSP through the Council of the AMCSS. CESC established a fund to finance CSP and to protect these funds the Catholic Education Service Trust (CEST) was set up comprising six members (four bishops and two representatives of AMRI).

A working group was set up by CESC in 2016 to develop a strategic plan for Catholic Post Primary Education. The plan was accepted in principle by IEC and AMRI in March 2017 and an Implementation Group was set up to put the strategic plan into operation. As part of this plan:

- Patrons and trustees across the Catholic sector agreed to form the Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools (APTCS), a new company replacing ATCS;
- CSP was dissolved and the Catholic Education Partnership (CEP) was set up;
- CESC was restructured to include six bishops, four provincial leaders of the teaching congregations, two representatives of APTCS and one third-level representative;
- Work on the relationship between CESC and CEST is ongoing;
- SSS continues as before but with a revised constitution to comply with company law and the Charities Act;
- There is now legal clarity for SSS and for its constituent committees, the Council of the AMCSS and the Council of the JMB. The Irish Schoolheads Association (ISA) representing the Protestant education sector continues to be represented on the JMB and is represented on the SSS board of directors;
- CEP is the holding company for SSS and APTCS.

Post Primary Catholic Education





3. The Secretariat of Secondary Schools (SSS)

SSS was set up as a company limited by guarantee in 1973. To comply with the Charities Act 2009 and the Companies Act 2014, and to regularise the operation of AMCSS and JMB, it was necessary for SSS to draw up a revised constitution comprising a Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association. In conjunction with the constitution, Internal Regulations have been drawn up and approved. These regulations replace the Manual on Procedures first drawn up in 1987 and revised in 1993 and 2000.

The objects and powers of SSS are laid out in the Constitution. In legal terms, the Catholic Education Partnership (CEP) is the sole member and owner of SSS and appoints its board of directors. The business of SSS is managed by the board of directors in accordance with the provisions of its constitution. As a holding company, CEP has the normal reserved powers in relation to authorising the incurring of debts, the purchase of assets and disposal of assets in excess of 10% of annual SSS turnover in each case. In addition, CEP has a reserved power in relation to the Catholic ethos of the SSS company. As a company, SSS has full autonomy in relation to its activities.

4. SSS Board of Directors

The board of directors of SSS comprises:

- The president of the Council of the AMCSS who is chairperson of the board;
- The deputy president of the Council of the AMCSS;
- The outgoing president of the Council of the AMCSS;
- The treasurer of the Council of the AMCSS;
- Two persons appointed by the ISA who must be members of the Council of JMB;
- One person nominated by the AMRI;
- One person nominated by the IEC;
- Two persons nominated by the Council of the AMCSS who are serving members of that council;
- Two persons nominated by APTCS who are serving directors of APTCS;
- Three persons nominated by the board of directors who have been recommended by the Nominations Committee having regard for the balance of skills and expertise required.

At least three of the directors appointed will be serving school principals in voluntary secondary schools and at least two will be chairpersons of boards of management in voluntary secondary schools.

5. SSS Structure

The SSS company is organised in two divisions, the AMCSS and the JMB. Each has a distinct role and function which are governed by the board of directors. The board has overall responsibility for SSS, its divisions, committees, the FSSU, the SPU and all employees.

The company's grassroots activities are organised by the AMCSS which is organised on a regional basis comprising ten AMCSS regions. The principal and chairperson of each Catholic voluntary secondary school in each region form the membership of the region.

5.1 Council of the AMCSS

5.1.1 At a national level, representatives from the AMCSS regions are organised into the Council of the AMCSS which is constituted as a committee of the board of directors. The council comprises two persons appointed by each region, one of whom is a principal and the



5.3.4 All provisions in relation to appointment, term of office etc. relating to the Council of the AMCSS apply equally to the Council of the JMB and are outlined in detail in section 7 of the Internal Regulations.

5.3.5 The Council of the JMB is answerable to the board of directors of SSS and provides the board with a copy of the minutes of approved meetings and informs the board of all material matters which have come to the attention of the council.

5.4 JMB Standing Committee

5.4.1 The role and function of the JMB Standing Committee is set out in detail in section 8 of the Internal Regulations.

5.4.2 The JMB Standing Committee is a sub-committee of the Council of the JMB and comprises the president, deputy president, the outgoing president and two members of the Council of the JMB (one a school principal and one a school chairperson) plus one ISA nominee from the Council of the JMB.

5.4.3 The JMB Standing Committee only meets when matters arising between full meetings of the council and requiring urgent attention arise, as determined by the president.

5.5 AMCSS Regions

5.5.1 The AMCSS operates on a regional basis comprising ten AMCSS regions. The functions, composition and procedure for region meetings are outlined in section 6 of the Internal Regulations.

5.5.2 School principals and school chairpersons of each voluntary secondary school in the region form the membership of each AMCSS region. These individuals are spokespersons for their schools at AMCSS region meetings and report to their respective school boards on relevant matters raised at the region meeting.

5.5.3 An AMCSS region meeting takes place following each meeting of the Council of the AMCSS or Council of the JMB. Reports from meetings of the AMCSS and JMB Councils are considered at the region meetings. A short report on AMCSS region discussions is submitted for inclusion on the agenda of AMCSS/JMB council meetings.

5.5.4 A school principal or school chairperson of a voluntary secondary school in the AMCSS region, other than AMCSS member schools, but whose school is availing of the services of the JMB (e.g. Gaelcholaistí, ISA and Educate Together Schools), may be invited to attend AMCSS region meetings.

5.5.5 Each AMCSS region holds an AGM in November each year. Every three years at the AGM, each region elects its officers for a three-year term (region chairperson, secretary and treasurer) and appoints two persons to the councils of the AMCSS and JMB. The council nominees must be a school principal and a school chairperson and may or may not be the region chairperson and/or secretary.

5.5.6 At the first AGM of a three-year term, each AMCSS region elects a steering committee comprising the region's chairperson, secretary, treasurer and the two representatives on the councils of the AMCSS and JMB, to administer the activities of the region.



5.5.7 Representatives of voluntary secondary school in the AMCSS region, other than AMCSS member schools, but whose school is availing of the services of the JMB (e.g. Gaelcholaistí, ISA and Educate Together Schools), are not eligible to attend an AGM.

5.5.8 At the end of each school year, the region steering committee evaluates the activity which has taken place in the region for the year and provides a report (template provided) to the Council of the AMCSS for submission to the SSS board of directors.

5.5.9 Each region is responsible for managing its own subscriptions and ensuring compliance with company policies and guidelines, including those on finance. A financial statement (template provided) is presented to the region's AGM and to the Council of the AMCSS for submission to the SSS board of directors and may be subject to audit.

5.6 Other Company Committees

5.6.1 Finance Committee: The Finance Committee comprises the president, deputy president and treasurer of AMCSS plus three other directors nominated by the board of directors, one of whom will be a director appointed by the ISA, one of whom will be a school principal and one of whom will be a chairperson. The SSS general secretary is entitled to attend meetings of the finance committee but not vote. The treasurer of AMCSS is the chairperson of the finance committee.

The role of the Finance Committee is to monitor all aspects of the financial affairs of SSS. The committee keeps the board fully informed on all matters of financial importance and provides a written report in advance of each board meeting.

The detailed role and functions of the finance committee are laid out in the Internal Regulations, section 10.

5.6.2 Strategy Committee: The Strategy Committee comprises the president and deputy president of AMCSS and four members of the council of the JMB selected by the board of directors, one of whom will be a person appointed by the ISA to the council of the JMB and at least one of whom will be a school chairperson. The AMCSS deputy president is chairperson of the Strategy Committee.

The role of the Strategy Committee is to identify and oversee the enactment of a strategic planning process for the SSS company and to ensure that the strategic plan is in accordance with the principal objects of the company as set out in the constitution.

The detailed role and functions of the Strategy Committee are set out in the Internal Regulations, section 11.

5.6.3 Nominations Committee: The Nominations Committee comprises three directors appointed by the board of SSS, one of whom shall be either the president, deputy president or treasurer of AMCSS.

The role of the Nominations Committee is to assist the board of directors in nominating persons as directors of SSS in accordance with the constitution.

The detailed role and functions of the Nominations Committee are set out in section 12 of the Internal Regulations.



5.6.4 Risk Committee: The Risk Committee is a committee of the board of SSS (see Internal Regulations, Section 13) with the primary function of assessing, reviewing and reporting on risk and ensuring compliance with the CRA governance code. The board, having determined its terms of reference, shall establish the Risk Committee by appointing a small number of nominees (two or three) with appropriate skills and experience, and not necessarily office holders of the company.

5.7 Annual Conferences

5.7.1 The AMCSS holds an annual conference where the agenda incorporates activities, business matters and discussion relevant to the two divisions of the company – the AMCSS and JMB. The AMCSS reserves the right to hold private sessions for AMCSS business only, as deemed appropriate.

5.7.2 The JMB holds a national education conference on an annual basis.

5.7.3 Other national conferences may be organised by the JMB from time to time.

5.8 Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU) and the Schools Procurement (SPU)

5.8.1 The FSSU was set up by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in 2004 under circular M36/05. The FSSU is hosted by SSS and fully funded by the DES. It was set up to provide advice and support to voluntary secondary schools in all aspects of financial governance. Under DES circular 60/2017, the role of the FSSU was expanded to comprehend all schools at primary level. The role of the FSSU was further expanded in 2018 to include all schools in the Community and Comprehensive sector.

DES Circular 02/2018 was issued to remind boards of management of all voluntary secondary schools of their responsibilities in terms of compliance with Section 18 of the Education Act 1998 and to extend the remit of the FSSU to include schools in the Community and Comprehensive sector.

The circular also refers to a role for the FSSU in relation to school patrons. A board of management is required to manage the school on behalf of the patron. In this regard “the FSSU will, where requested, provide patrons with a list of their schools indicating if they are compliant in relation to the submission of annual school accounts. Patrons may, where appropriate, contact the FSSU to request that an audit of a school be carried out”.

5.8.2 The SPU is the central support resource for providing guidance to all primary and post-primary schools (except ETB schools) on all procurement-related issues. The SPU delivers advice and practical support to schools to help them achieve improvements in their procurement processes, practices and outcomes. The SPU was set up and fully funded by the DES in 2012 and is hosted by SSS.

5.8.3 All FSSU and SPU personnel are employees of SSS.



6. Structural Relationship between CEP, SSS and APTCS

6.1 Under a Memorandum of Agreement (protocol) between CEP, SSS and APTCS a new structural and organisational model has been established to enable the development of:

- The advocacy role and consistency of messaging for Catholic education in Ireland;
- Vision and mission cohesion in the context of various traditions and Church documents;
- Collaboration and resource management for Catholic patronage, trusteeship and management of schools in Ireland.

The Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA) may become party to the agreement, if so decided.

6.2 The model uses the structures of Charitable Companies limited by Guarantee with:

- Clear consistency between the constitutions of CEP, SSS and APTCS;
- Rights of representation on the respective boards of each of the companies;
- Agreement by the three companies to work collaboratively.

6.3 The agreement between CEP, SSS and APTCS will come into effect after consultation with, and approval given by, the boards of directors of each company.

7. Strategic Mandates of CEP, SSS and APTCS

The agreed structure is designed to create close cooperation and cohesion in relation to the respective mandates of CEP, SSS and APTCS.

7.1 The Catholic Education Partnership Company (CEP): CEP is the holding company for SSS and APTCS and has a mandate for all sectors of Catholic education – primary, post-primary, third level and adult. Among other responsibilities, CEP will:

- Provide an authoritative and unified voice for Catholic education in the public forum, with educational bodies and with the government;
- Exercise a corporate governance role for SSS and APTCS.

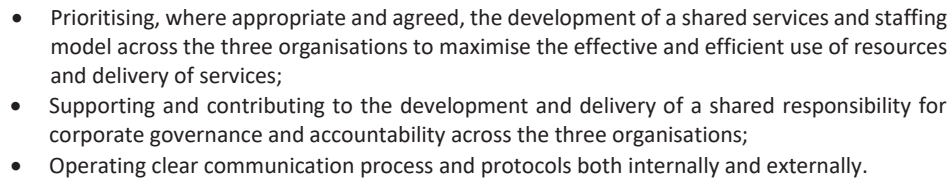
7.2 The Secretariat of Secondary Schools Company (SSS): SSS represents and provides services and advice to the boards of management and principals of voluntary secondary schools in areas such as school management, finance, governance, good practice and compliance. These services and advice are delivered through its AMCSS and JMB divisions.

7.3 The Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools Company (APTCS): The mandate, role and responsibility of APTCS is to provide a professionally serviced structure for Catholic school patrons and trustees (including joint patrons) to:

- Provide services, advice and support to Catholic trustees and patrons of schools in areas such as ethos, property, financial matters and other trustee/patron matters;
- Provide, through dialogue and consultation, a joint collective position where appropriate and agreed in relation to trustee/patron matters.
- Enable co-patrons and patron partners to exercise their roles in Community and Comprehensive schools and in Designated Community Colleges.

7.4 Areas covered by the Protocol: The protocol, once adopted, commits CEP, SSS and APTCS to:

- Identifying and clarifying roles and responsibilities to deliver their respective mandates;
- Operating strong, collaborative and harmonious working relationships between the executives and staffs of the three organisations;



- The designated lead officers for each organisation will be the CEO/General Secretary of each organisation;
- Each organisation will establish a sub-committee of the board of directors to oversee the operation of the protocol;
- A detailed schedule of activities will be developed by each organisation;
- The designated lead officers will prepare annual and biannual reports for submission to the boards of directors in each organisation as laid out in the protocol.



Data Protection Report



Data Protection Report

AMCSS/JMB 34th Annual Conference 2021

JMB support to schools is provided through the services of a full-time Data Protection Advisor. Advice on data protection issues is primarily accessible through telephone and email. In addition JMB issues policy templates and bulletins to schools.

Issues arising

A wide range of data protection queries are referred to JMB. The impact of COVID-19 has led to schools seeking clarification on a range of new issues this year, for example:

- cybersecurity risks
- staff accessing personal data when working from home
- safety when teaching online
- security of video-conferencing software and online meetings
- issues arising from the increased use of online learning platforms and apps
- dealing with Covid-related data relating to the members of the school community
- lawful basis for remote delivery of education-related services (e.g. online learning; continued operation of school meal scheme during periods of school closure).

Advice was also sought on more regular data protection issues, such as

- Management of Data Subjects Access Requests (DSARs)
- Managing and Reporting of Personal Data Breaches
- CCTV (Access, Sharing, Policy)
- Appropriate retention periods and erasure of personal data
- Use of school Management Information Systems (MIS)
- Sharing data with Parents' and Past Pupils' Associations
- Rights of students at various ages (including 18+)
- Dealing with data sharing requests from law enforcement bodies
- Data sharing with other controllers (other schools, colleges, DES, etc)
- Data export outside the European Economic Area
- Third Party Contracts
- Social media (consent, right of erasure where inappropriately used)
- Guidance on processing of Special Category Data (counselling, health data, SEN etc)
- Processing of personal data for school events (school reunions etc)
- Technical and Organisational Measures for data security



Managing and Assessing Risk

At the onset of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Irish Data Protection Commission warned that as organisations adjusted to the new working circumstances there might be heightened risks of events such as personal data breaches.

In line with this, an important work objective for the past year has been on helping schools to manage and mitigate risk. A comprehensive JMB Advisory Note on *Minimising Risk when Teaching Remotely* was shared with members in early 2020. Following on from this, issues addressed in related JMB Bulletins have included *Staying Safe Online* and the *Live Streaming of Lessons*.

The JMB Data Protection Advisor is also available to assist schools with the risk assessment process that must be undertaken whenever a personal data breach is identified. The JMB template *Procedure for Handling a Personal Data Breach* provides a useful checklist to schools who find themselves having to manage such a scenario. A related webcast has been recorded and made available on the JMB website.

Other engagements

JMB continues to engage with other stakeholders where it believes that this will be of benefit to member schools. Most recently, this has included the preparation of a formal JMB submission in response to the *Children's Fundamentals*, a comprehensive publication from the Data Protection Commission that addresses many important issues related to the processing of children's personal data.

Cyril Drury

JMB Data Protection Advisor
April 2021



Education Report

Introduction



GOAL 1

Preparing for Post-COVID Education

Sustainable School Leadership for Reopening and Recovery

Since March 2020, our voluntary secondary principals have put their own wellbeing on the line and consequently transformed what could have been a catastrophic fracturing of their school communities into creative, life-affirming, dispersed families of adults and young people caring for and about each other.

What is less certain, however, is that our principals are well supported and resourced to carry out their legislatively determined roles. JMB acknowledges and welcomes the provision of additional deputy principals in larger schools in recent times, which represents a cost-effective model of enhancing the leadership base in our schools. We have relied on a single person at the neck of a responsibility hourglass for far too long. Schools need a unitary apex leader, but to exercise the type of transformational leadership demanded of them, fit-for-purpose second and third tiers are essential. JMB is in no doubt but that principals have, at several points during this pandemic, been at breaking point. Witness the term *'the school will ...'* repeated time and again in each and every policy document issued by the Department during this crisis. For *'the school will ...'* or *'schools will ...'*, read *'the principal will ...'*.

Meanwhile, the teaching and learning mission of the school, and its associated administrative workloads, continued apace.

The Government, on behalf of the people, faces many choices. One of these, if their rhetoric that schools *'will play a key role in our recovery after Covid-19'* is to be believed, must be to enable their school leaders to lead and manage sustainably. In simple and stark terms, additional

staffing resources will be required in every school for the foreseeable future.

Boarding schools also continue to require an additional range of specific supports in terms of enrolment capacity, accommodation configuration, social distancing and Covid-related health and safety provision.

JMB very much welcomes the decision by the Inspectorate to substantially restrict its programme of in-school evaluations into 2021 and to pause its planned circular on the school self-evaluation process. In line with such a reasoned approach, and also the programme's commitment 'that schools be given the time to implement required changes', JMB strongly recommends that the Department allows at least two academic years to lapse before initiating any further policy agendas impacting on the workload of principals.

Activities

- Advocacy for a policy-pause across the range of demand areas impacting on schools
- Continuing communication with DES and others on the workload of principals in contemporary voluntary secondary schools
- Continuing support of peer support ('Balint') groups across the network of voluntary secondary school principals
- Ongoing advice and support for middle-management systems in schools
- Engagement with JCT relating to leadership-for-learning amongst principals
- Meetings with CSL on current developments
- Leadership training and development opportunities



- Continuous engagement with DES and the education partners in relation to evolving policy, resourcing and supports for schools during the current crisis
- Provision of a JMB Mindfulness Programme for school leaders in 2020/21

Enhancing Guidance & Counselling Services

It is incredible that we are still seeking at least a restoration of guidance and counselling provision in our schools to pre-financial crash cutback levels. At this point, a 50% increase is required in provision for guidance and therapeutic counselling in the face of a generation of students returning to school with unprecedented needs in terms of trauma recovery, metacognitive skills loss, career plan damage and a raft of other crises which must be mediated by their school.

What has emerged in the tentative restoration approaches undertaken thus far is a re-modelling of provision, which does not restrict the allocation of the full quantum of G&C hours to a single person. Management bodies have supported this flexibility and, by and large, its evolution has been effective in creating a school-wide appreciation of, and provision for, these core activities.

In demanding a 50% increase in provision, JMB is cognisant of the difficulties of recruiting fully qualified and experienced guidance and counselling personnel. The model of deployment currently in place, however, facilitates a realignment of role and responsibility on a school-wide basis to ensure that each student receives the restorative care, whether personal, psychological, pedagogical, or career-related, which they deserve. We cannot carry out this critical task on behalf of society on a shoestring. The money spent on such an early, school-level

intervention will pay itself back to the exchequer in many multiples over the next five to ten years when it will become the responsibility of our clinics, hospitals, social workers, psychiatric services, employers and, indeed, prisons who will have to bear the burden.

Meanwhile, the adverse treatment of fee-charging schools in terms of their reduced G&C allocation (based, as it is on a higher PTR), should be discontinued. The effects of the pandemic on young people knows no borders, territorial or social.

In terms of supply challenges, we urge the Department to support the training of new guidance counsellors, particularly in light of (a) the cost to individual teachers (b) release for training, now more frequently only offered in school time, and (c) time for shadowing. We need a structure mirroring that provided for special education teachers and which increases post-graduate opportunities to specialise in this much needed field.

Activities

- Meetings with both the IGC and NCGE on current developments, policy and best practice
- Advocating for enhanced G&C allocation to schools
- Continued development of guidelines for schools on whole-school guidance provision during the pandemic
- Consulting with NCCA on the role for guidance in Wellbeing
- Responding to school queries on guidance and counselling provision



Resourcing Digital Technologies for Blended Learning

In a 2020 paper, Michael Fullan et al said:

The fallout of Covid-19, continuing advances in digital technology, and intensifying pent-up demand for student-centred learning have combined to present an unprecedented opportunity to transform education across whole systems.

We have been impressed by the tireless action to address the emergency needs of students and families. We are deeply encouraged by the growing desire to seize the opportunity to focus on the deep purpose of education through the twin pillars of well-being and learning.

This powerful shift to a learner-centred system will be amplified by technology and driven by education that is steeped in purpose and meaning.

So, we now have ‘an unprecedented opportunity to transform education’.

If we take this opportunity, Fullan maps it out into three phases:

Phase 1 Disruption identifies initial responses and the lessons learned during the first months of the pandemic.

Phase 2 Transition outlines how to navigate planning for reopening, when the pandemic is still creating uncertainty.

Phase 3 Reimagining lays out a vision for an educational approach that enables all students to thrive and prepares them with skills to navigate ambiguity and change. This phase draws from the best of traditional approaches, innovative practices, and insights from remote learning to shape new, flexible, agile hybrid learning models.

‘Shape new, flexible, agile hybrid learning

models’: Imagine being principal of a school still trying to afford a fit-for-purpose Wi-Fi network in the school; find time and resources to provide relevant CPD for their teachers; plan for a digital learning strategy which can be delivered in a device-poor and broadband-deficient community; source cost-effective technical support; navigate the plethora of advice, policies, child protection guidelines, GDPR and other important but administratively demanding requirements; fit a classroom-shaped curriculum into a digitally-shaped space, and the list goes on.

The government’s own school re-opening policy states that ‘to a greater or lesser extent, schools may be required to provide both in-school and remote learning support during the coming school year’. This is precisely what occurred, and, in fairness, the document also admitted to some of the many challenges facing schools and students in terms of their blended learning experience:

- The cost and availability of suitable devices for students
- Poor broadband coverage and broadband blackspots
- In DEIS schools in particular, a near total reliance on mobile phones
- Pay-as-you-go credit
- Inequity of access in the virtual learning environment
- The effectiveness of a distance learning programme for SEN students
- Sustained and purposeful CPD
- Students known to be living in difficult circumstances
- Students with mental health difficulties

Yet again, the state did not mitigate these challenges in any meaningful way. It is clear that Ireland will need to borrow substantially to pay



for capital and infrastructural requirements which will support recovery. Failing to invest properly in this once in a generation opportunity to capitalise on an imposed but very real digital revolution makes no sense.

Activities:

- Close liaison with PDST Technology in Education on a range of developments
- Feedback to DES on draft policy and guidance relating to emergency remote digital teaching and learning
- Engagement with DES data section on enhancement to P-POD, ESINET and other

platforms

- Provision of learning opportunities for members on assistive technologies
- Meetings with key IT providers to schools
- Engagement with SEC on technological issues relating to state examinations 2020 and 2021
- Data protection updates relating to IT in schools
- Engagement with curricular developments in digital studies and applications

GOAL 2:

Striving for Excellence in Education

Embedding and Evaluating Junior Cycle

The decision to limit Classroom-Based Assessments to one instead of two for the cohort of students entering 3rd year in September 2020 was a welcome adaptation of the Framework in terms of responsiveness to the current crisis. This provision should be repeated for current 2nd year students. JMB also welcomes the NCCA's awarding of a research contract to UL to conduct a large-scale and longitudinal study of the impact of the Framework in schools. It is expected that the learnings from such an independent study will generate significant opportunities for ongoing policy in the areas of curriculum and assessment and JMB encourages the Minister and partners to engage positively with all recommendations as they emerge.

Meanwhile, as the Framework for Junior Cycle continues to be implemented across our

schools, several outstanding issues remain to be addressed. The first relates to the inadequacy of the replacement hours to be provided for the 22 hours per year, pro-rata, professional time for teachers. It is incomprehensible that the Department is still providing less than the number of hours lost to allow for this. The missing hours must come from somewhere – reducing curricular options, enlarging class size, cutting special needs time – the Department's assertion that 'the quantum of hours provided to replace TPT were never intended to fully compensate for those lost' is not only meaningless, but it also betrays a set of values we have never associated with the Department or its officials. It is time to remediate this injustice once and for all and to fully compensate school communities for the loss of hours they must allocate under the junior cycle agreements.

In an equally serious development, Circular 0076/2020, and previous relevant circulars, cite the DES-union agreement on scheduling SLAR



meetings thus:

‘Since professional collaboration meetings can only be held when the relevant subject teachers can be present, a limited number of meetings may need to draw on teachers’ bundled time to run beyond normal school tuition hours for some of the duration of the meeting’.

There are 27 subjects on the junior cycle curriculum and even a medium-sized school will offer at least 20 of these. Such provision will require 40 SLAR meetings per year, into the foreseeable future.

If teachers cite the clause ‘... a limited number of meetings may need to draw on teachers’ bundled time to run beyond normal school tuition hours ...’ and seek to have their SLAR meetings begin within tuition time (a rational interpretation of the wording) this would require an average of, say, five 40-minute class periods to be substituted-for in respect of virtually every SLAR meeting for the next 20 – 30 years at least. This represents a staggering loss of over 133 hours of tuition time every year, not to mention the cost of cover, the unavailability of substitutes, parents’ concerns around multiple ‘free classes’ and the student discipline issues this would raise in 200 untaught last-class-of-the-day sub-periods every school year.

In reality, however, some teachers are taking the clause above at face value and seeking to have the *entire* SLAR meeting take place within tuition time. This would represent a loss of four teaching hours per teacher per subject each year and twice that if, as is the case with the majority, teachers have a second subject.

Even during the current crisis, this issue has been reiterated as ‘not having gone away’. Failure to achieve a re-negotiation or an agreed re-interpretation of this clause will leave school management and teachers in an impossible position; will result in some schools not being in

a position to operate SLAR meetings; will cause friction between staff and principals; will erode the whole intention of junior cycle reform; will create a SLAR substitution precedent which will only escalate and from which there will be no return, and will alienate both teachers and management from the junior cycle enterprise.

Activities:

- Regular and frequent meetings with the DES Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit
- Advocating for reform in relation to scheduling of SLAR meetings
- NCCA liaison at the highest levels – Council, Board for Junior Cycle, Development Groups and consultations
- Meetings with JCT on roll-out of CPD
- Policy-practice dialogue via the JMB National Curriculum Advisory Group

Renewing Relationships & Sexuality Education

Education cannot be deemed to be holistic in any sense if it ignores either our actions or the spiritual or moral basis of the values that inform such actions. Neither can we be deemed to be fulfilling our school mission statements, the majority of which cite ‘development of the whole person’, if we ignore the values and the humanity underpinning our sexuality and sexual activity. It is therefore incumbent upon schools to engage fully with patrons, parents and policymakers in the development of high-quality programmes of relationships and sexuality education (RSE) congruent with the ethos of the school and setting out to inculcate, in the truest sense, the values, understandings and actions of the generation of young people in their care.

Our commitment to the integration of Gospel values into the curriculum and daily life of



the school means that the ethical and moral frameworks underpinning what is taught within RSE classes aligns with church teaching on sexual morality, within the particular faith tradition of the school.

This does not mean that an embargo exists around any truly human experience or that faith schools will not discuss or engage with any particular aspect of the curriculum. The exact opposite is the case. The fully human nature of Jesus Christ means that nothing truly human is alien to God and cannot be alien to true educators either.

JMB is thus encouraged by the scope of the ongoing RSE review which has been undertaken by the NCCA, and which included:

- How the RSE curriculum is planned, how it is taught and how parents are involved
- That the entire curriculum is being taught in schools to a high standard
- The role of the classroom teacher in teaching the curriculum and the appropriate level of supports which are currently being provided by external providers
- What time is given to it, what resources are being provided, and what support materials are being used
- How effective are the continuing professional development opportunities which are currently provided by the Department and other bodies to RSE teachers?

As a matter of priority, and in advance of the emergence of a new set of curriculum specifications for RSE, which could yet take some time, the Department should invest in a new round of training opportunities for teachers to maintain and increase the pool of such educators available for scheduling into RSE classes. There exists a need to adequately train and professionally develop RSE teachers in their own right – developing expertise in every

aspect of both the course materials and the likely questions necessarily arising in the classroom setting. The development of a post-graduate diploma course in SPHE/RSE and recognition of the subject for registration by the Teaching Council are particularly to be recommended.

Transgender Students

There is an urgent need for a targeted, evidence-based programme to support young transgender people in post-primary schools. A school's response should be holistic and integrated, where the support of the student is the key consideration.

A key partner with JMB in providing professional and effective pastoral support to transgender students, their families and their schools is the advocacy and support organisation, Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI). TENI is seeking funding to deliver training and create and provide practical tools and resources to schools and staff. JMB urges the Minister to positively consider a forthcoming service-delivery proposal from TENI which has the support of the management bodies and teacher unions.

Activities

- Close involvement with NCCA on their review of RSE across all sectors
- Contributing to the RSE review through close liaison with Church and Trusts regarding RSE and school ethos
- Establishment of a Transgender Education Advisory Group with TENI
- Continuing endorsement and support of 'Stand-Up' week in schools
- Responding to school issues relating to RSE, ethos and LGBTI



Review of Senior Cycle

JMB/AMCSS actively participated in the NCCA's review of senior cycle on behalf of our members in 2020/21. A framework for Leaving Certificate education in the Republic of Ireland has been in place since 1924 and it may be argued that a time-travelling student from that era would have little difficulty in recognising the overarching experience within a contemporary school. A renewal of senior cycle is thus very timely as there can be little doubt but that social, economic and technological changes impacting on Irish society have been both pervasive and deep. Indeed, the impact of the Covid pandemic on senior cycle and the Leaving Certificate examination has been nothing less than seismic.

The argument for completely radical educational change at senior cycle is not, however, unassailable. For all its faults, the system suits many students, their families, the 'shape' of our schools and, of course, the higher education system. What is arguable, however, is whether such a monolithic system is inclusive of all, aligns with our culture and human spirit or develops the critical democratic citizenry contemporary States such as ours desperately need if we are to be economically, socially and morally progressive. The emphasis on individualisation at the expense of social learning and global engagement should concern everyone, and this is but one facet of the discussion that politicians, policymakers, practitioners and society in general must have in the current debate.

JMB/AMCSS, an organisation at the forefront of post-primary educational delivery, is focused on the experience and outcomes of *schooling* and the role that school life must play within the broader education landscape of the young person. We nonetheless view the present renewal debate as an opportunity not merely to 'catch-up' with postmodern societal realities

but also as an opportunity to lead and frame the direction in which the lives of this and future generations will be lived. The medical profession is not alone in having a direct impact on people's health, wellbeing and future – in education, lives are at stake here too.

Emerging themes from our consultation process set out the perspective of voluntary secondary school management:

The scale of change is challenging but many significant educational and curricular shifts have occurred during times of economic constraint, for example the introduction of free secondary education for all in 1967 and, indeed, the development of the current Leaving Certificate programme while the modern Irish State was itself just emerging.

The scope for differentiated provision across schools, while demanding attention to equity issues, nonetheless represents an exciting opportunity for universal learning themes to be given authenticity by becoming grounded in the local context.

'All schools together' articulates a very important value-in-action in that no school should either be left behind or choose to stay behind as the nation's 15- to 18-year-olds are liberated from some of the more limiting and stifling characteristics of the current paradigm.

That feedback indicates there is much to retain in the existing senior cycle is heartening. This is not a conservative or reactionary voice but an acknowledgement that there exists a long tradition of school communities busily adapting curricula, within its limits, to suit the specific cohort of the young people they serve.

The phrases 'empowerment' and 'sense of ownership' represent a call for educational democracy. We see both as 'enablement' wherein schools and the wider communities can have confidence in both the processes



and outcomes impacting on the country's most precious resource.

The themes of connections, bridging and transitions emerge from our consultation. It is self-evident to identify renewed early childhood and primary curriculums as providing an urgent impetus for coherence with, and change in, post-primary but it must be acknowledged that the continuing renewal of junior cycle is acting as a catalyst for significant change, if not infectious renewal, at upper secondary level.

The Points System is universally unloved by educators as it enshrines superficial 'equality' at the expense of true equity. Education is not a preparation for life – it *is* life. While the points system may impose a backwards pressure resisting change, the long-term impact of successful renewal at lower secondary could finally bring about a freeing of post-primary education from its colonisation by the matriculation process:

..... I would urge that the Irish school system of the future should give freedom - freedom to the individual school, freedom to the individual teacher, freedom as far as may be to the individual pupil. Without freedom there can be no right growth; and education is properly the fostering of right growth'. P.H. Pearse, January 1916

That the existing terminal examination system is not appropriate for a contemporary senior cycle is virtually beyond argument. It is time we took courageous decisions around assessment for and of learning while trusting in the professionalism and instinctive fairness of our teachers.

Confidence in Certification represents a requirement of civic society that cannot be diluted. There is, however, no contradiction between the validity and reliability demanded of a certification system and its methodologies – i.e.,

we do not need to persist with this externally corrected, academic, largely written, stress-filled, terminal Leaving Certificate for the nation's young people – we can do better than this.

Bespoke Qualifications at Senior Cycle?

Why not? We have successfully implemented specifications and assessment modalities for Levels 1, 2 and 3 in our schools and so greater alignment of the system with the person has already begun. Level 5 outcomes in terms of knowledge, competencies and skills may be demarcated in a wide variety of frameworks and, while a plethora of bewildering subordinate awards is unnecessary, an imaginative approach to, for example, credit-based certification, can nonetheless offer acceptable outcomes to stakeholders and society as a whole.

Teaching and Learning – our core project.

We are engaging here in nothing less than the re-professionalisation of our educators and a re-shaping of the expectations of students, parents and the wider community. We must stop 'filling-up the empty vessels' and acknowledge both the multiplicity and plasticity of intelligence and accept the existence of a staggering amount of pre-existing knowledge and skill in the brain of a modern young person. We must re-frame our task as teachers and finally abandon the factory model of 'schooling'.

In terms of activity, we will frame our 2021 JMB Education Conference as:

**A SENIOR CYCLE FOR ALL:
Priorities – Pathways – Possibilities**

Whether in-person or online, we look forward to seeing you there!



GOAL 3:

Investing in High Quality Education

Enhancing Teacher Supply

JMB has actively participated in all aspects of the Department's and the Teaching Council's data gathering, consultative and strategic approaches to the issue of teacher supply, an issue exacerbated by the pandemic at all levels.

School leaders in our sector recommend that in addition to the long-term processes underway, the following steps could be undertaken immediately:

- Address the current impasse regarding the inequality of salary for young teachers as current pay policy is leading many graduates to emigrate
- The fractionalisation of secondary teaching posts is having a huge effect
- It is impossible to get a Home Economics replacement teacher. Our single training college needs to take in at least triple the cohort if not quadruple to meet anywhere near the national demand as graduates are going into better paid jobs in hospitality and the food industry
- The Teaching Council needs to work with the universities in relation to how places are allocated on PME courses
- A two year part-time post-graduate course in Irish and modern continental languages similar to that provided for out-of-field Maths would help alleviate teacher deficits
- We need a standing connection between PME providers, second-level school representatives and the Allocations section in DES
- Teachers from abroad still find it extremely difficult to get registered. This needs to be addressed by a dedicated teacher-recognition pathway within the Teaching Council

- Particular teaching subjects should be put on the prioritised professions list for the granting of visas from, in particular, English-speaking countries. The Irish language requirements, where they exist, should also be waived.

JMB appreciates the level of seriousness and urgency with which the Department and its associated agencies have been affording this crisis. We are, however, anxious that approaches relying on self-regulation at initial teacher education provider level, coupled by increasingly onerous recognition pathways for teachers from outside the jurisdiction, are adding to the problem.

Activities

- Sector-specific data-gathering to inform submissions and engagement with DES on this issue
- Participation in the DES Teacher Supply Data Group
- Consultation events on teacher supply involving both the Department and the Teaching Council

Adult & Further Education

JMB and ACCS FE-providing schools have, up to 2020, been working closely together under a structure known as JFERG - the Joint Further Education Representative Group. JMB-ACCS have established sound working relationships with DES, FESS, SOLAS and QQI and, in a major step forward, we have secured renewed funding for 2021/22 from SOLAS for our newly established Further Education Support Unit, which will continue to carry out the following functions:

- Establish arrangements with JMB-ACCS FE-providing schools both nationally and



regionally to work effectively with ETB and SOLAS structures

- Coordinate and support schools in relation to planning and re-focusing provision in consultation with SOLAS in response to the recommendations from the PLC evaluation.
- Coordinate the provision of relevant CPD to JMB-ACCS FE-providing schools
- Provide a communication channel facilitating the exchange of information between JFERG, ETB, ETBI, SOLAS, QQI and other relevant stakeholders
- Support JMB-ACCS FE-providing schools with the process of QQI Quality Assurance, QQI re-engagement and QQI programme validation
- Contribute to the establishment of formal arrangements through ETB FET services to facilitate collaboration between ETB FET services and JFERG schools
- Collaborate to develop and share FET mechanisms to support and encourage cohesive, integrated local planning and delivery

JMB continues to monitor changes to the funding model of further education in mixed-provision settings such as our schools. We advocate that JMB and our colleagues at ACCS be afforded the recognition our providers deserve at policy level and that we be included in all decisions impacting on such provision within our schools.

Activities

- Continuing funding of our joint JMB-ACCS Further Education Support Unit
- Meetings with QQI to explore pathways for school-based providers in meeting compliance demands and costs
- Continuing engagement with SOLAS on developing both FE and adult education in our sector
- Developing relationships with a range of ETBs and with ETBI to achieve maximum coherence and avoid work duplication in areas such as programme development and external authentication

GOAL 4:

An Inclusive Vision for Education

Resourcing Recovery for Students with Special Educational Needs

While it is clear that both State and schools remained highly concerned about the fate of students with special educational needs during the school closures, there has been clear evidence of a loss of engagement, skills, learning and human connection that will require to be treated with the urgency it deserves as schools continue on their second reopening

journeys. In addition to the enhanced guidance and counselling provision identified earlier, every school will require a pro-rata increase in its special education teacher (SET) allocation for at least the next two years. We still have not restored the quantum of hours to schools that were lost due to the cutbacks in 2010, and nor have we made any distinct provision for an expanded range of SEN coordination responsibilities which will inevitably inflate once this traumatised and disconnected cohort of students try to re-engage, yet again, with school life.



As a matter of urgency, the government must increase the SET allocation to all schools by at least 30% and, once and for all, make distinct provision for SEN Coordination. JMB has repeatedly asserted the need for a dedicated post of SEN coordinator (SENCO) in every school. Principals' feedback has emphatically asserted the following points:

1. There is absolute unanimity that every school must have a dedicated SEN Coordinator
 2. Continuing to find coordination time from within the resource-hours allocation to students is widely seen as unethical and inefficient
 3. There is no clarity or advice on the proportion of hours which should be dedicated for SENCO activities
 4. SENCOs continually express their sense of being overwhelmed by the demands of the role
1. Principals report being unable to keep a SENCO in the role for any extended length of time, due to the role expansion, admin overload and lack of time
 2. Voluntary secondary schools are given no time for duties in their posts of responsibility
 3. Principals agree that SENCO time should be given as a flexible but adequate quantum of hours each year

The current practice of taking resource hours away from students for in-school coordination is flawed, insufficient and widely seen as unethical. The Department must immediately provide for SENCO functions as a post of responsibility with time for duties or as a separate, pro-rata allocation of hours to each school.

The commitment to 'make further progress towards a needs-based, responsive set of State supports for students with special educational needs' is welcome. The first phase of this new

full-service support model based on the NCSE policy advice of 2017, *'Delivering for Students with Additional Care Needs: The Right Support at the Right Time in Schools'*, was postponed at the beginning of the first lockdown. As the then proposal was to implement solely the profile model of SNA allocation to schools without proper trialling, the JMB welcomed the pause. The capacity of school management to both identify additional, often complex, care needs and make resource allocation decisions (a) is already exceeded in terms of an oppressive workload, (b) has never been fully resourced or supported in terms of training and external advice, and (c) leaves principals exposed to immediate and *post hoc* challenges relating to their deployment decisions and their consequences. Indeed, schools with significant SNA allocations will need a dedicated person to manage this resource. The administration alone virtually constitutes a senior management role in itself, and the current proposals presume the principal will undertake everything from recruitment to identification and re-identification of ever-changing care-needs, to deployment, to HR and IR operations, to training and CPD, to conflict resolution, to professional accountability etc. etc.

It is the position of JMB that the proposed implementation of this model of SNA allocation and deployment be paused until the professional development needs of school leaders, SENCOs, SETs and SNAs have been met; sufficient coordination and administration capacity has been provided to operate the model effectively; the industrial relations parameters relating to current SNA Ts&Cs have been fully resolved, and the voices of families have been heard and comprehended, particularly in relation to the devaluing of clinical judgements and their consequences.

Meanwhile, the recognition of the need for timely



and consistent access to occupational, speech and language and behavioural therapeutic services represents both an opportunity and a challenge for the Department. It is the view of JMB that the Minister should consider the establishment of a nationwide team of therapists fully within the Department of Education and Skills and not outsourced from other Departments such as Health or DCYA. Education requires to be ring-fenced from both capital and current expenditure overruns in other Departments as this full-service model will require (a) to be developed as a long-term, indeed permanent, model of addressing additional care needs and (b) will demand education-specific professional expertise from its growing team of therapists and psychologists.

Activities

- Ongoing communication with NCSE and DES across the three post-primary sectors, via the Management Representative Group
- Engagement between our JMB National SEN Advisory Group and a range of policymakers
- Close involvement and advocacy on policy relating to a new SNA allocation model
- Communicating with the Inspectorate on the new model of SEN evaluation in schools
- Liaison with SEC on developments relating to RACE supports
- Ongoing engagement with DES and NEPS on the circular regulating exemptions in Irish
- Feedback to DES on draft policy and guidance relating to emergency remote digital teaching and learning for students with additional needs

The DEIS School Response

The lengths to which DEIS school leaders and their communities have gone to maintain student engagement and inclusivity during the pandemic emergency may perhaps never be known. DEIS principals, most without a second

deputy, had to implement every single element of distance teaching and learning provision, school administration, junior cycle reporting, calculated grades administration and all that every school leader had to perform, but also to:

- Completely redesign, administer and arrange for the provision of school meals for hundreds of families across their communities
- Operate remote pedagogy across a school population with little or no appropriate digital infrastructure
- Find ways to support their students with special educational needs – typically well over 40% of their enrolment
- Mitigate the worst effects of lockdown on young people at risk of neglect and/or abuse
- Try to re-establish contact with students who completely disengaged from all school provision
- Provide for book rental scheme operations during the lockdowns

Of all the stress-points JMB experienced during the school closures, it was across our 48 DEIS principals that the most worrying levels of anxiety and distress were, and continue to be, evidenced. It is finally time for this inhuman imposition of un-resourced responsibility to change.

The impact of policy and initiative overload on DEIS schools is but one factor. What is far more concerning is the effect of higher levels of student behavioural challenges due to emotional, social and cognitive-capacity issues which erode the time and energies of the DEIS school leader, particularly in our under-funded and under-staffed voluntary secondary schools. This position will have worsened, if anything, as a result of the school closures.

As an immediate action, we now call for the provision of a second deputy principal in DEIS schools of between 500 and 699 students.



JMB urges the Minister to implement this equity measure for the forthcoming school year, with an extension of the initiative to all DEIS schools immediately following 2021/22.

Activities

- Continued development of the JMB National DEIS Advisory Group as an agent of change
- Engagement with key policymakers including TUSLA, DES Social Inclusion Unit, NCSE etc.
- Consultation on a process to identify new DEIS schools
- Advocacy for enhancement of middle and senior management resources in DEIS schools
- Annual JMB DEIS seminars with presentations on policy, practice and programmes
- Sharing of good practice on social inclusion initiatives amongst JMB schools
- Linking with Trusts on their DEIS school support models
- Research on key support needs of DEIS schools to inform submissions

Submissions 2020-2021

- JMB Submission to the Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, on the topic 'School Bullying and The Impact on Mental Health'
- JMB Submission on the Draft Framework for a new Primary Curriculum
- JMB Submission on 'Ensuring that Schools are open in a manner which is both Safe and Sustainable' to the Oireachtas Special Committee on Covid-19 Response
- JMB Submission: Example of a risk assessment exercise for schools planning opening 2020-2021
- JMB Submission: Example of operational issues for schools opening 2020-2021
- JMB Submission on the Re-opening of Schools 2020
- JMB Submission on Health and Safety Considerations
- JMB Briefing Statement on the Proposed New Model of Allocating SNAs to Mainstream Schools
- JMB Submission to NCCA on the Review of Senior Cycle
- JMB Submission on Textbook Rental and Educational Technologies
- JMB Submission on the DES Draft Guidelines on the Use of Reduced Timetables in Schools
- JMB Pre-Budget Submission 2021
- The Joint Managerial Body Submission on Harmful Online Content
- JMB Submission to the NCSE Consultation on Special Schools and Classes
- JMB Submission on Supporting the DEIS Programme in Voluntary Secondary Schools
- JMB Submission to NCSE on a Customer Charter and Customer Service Action Plan
- JMB Submission to DES on a New Statement of Strategy
- JMB Submission on the School Building Programme and related matters
- JMB Submission on the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018
- JMB Submission on School Costs and related matters
- JMB Submission on Relationships and Sexuality Education to the NCCA
- JMB Submission on Granting Exemptions from the Study of Irish
- JMB Commentary on Scheduling SLAR Meetings

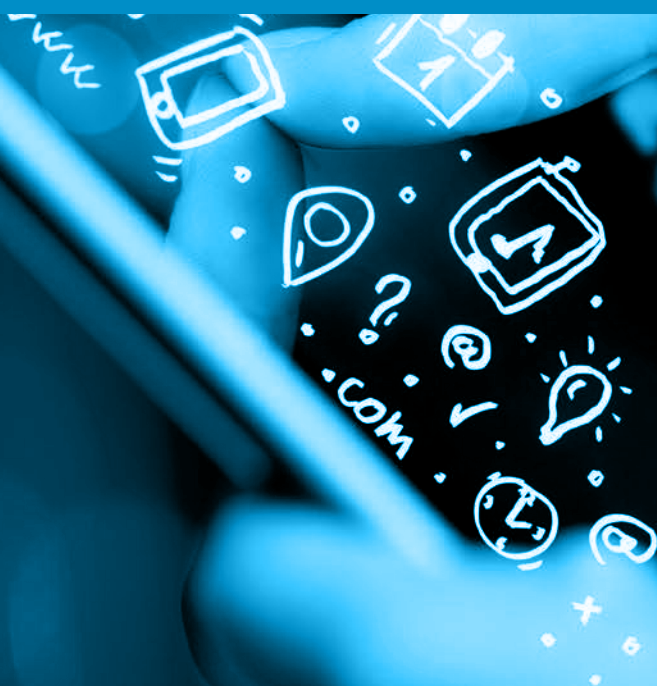
Dr Michael Redmond,

JMB Director, Research & Development

April 2021



FSSU Annual Report





FSSU Annual Report

AMCSS/JMB 34th Annual Conference 2021

Executive Summary

The Financial Support Services Unit was established under Department of Education & Skills circular M36/05. In the school year 2018/2019, the Department expanded the remit of the unit to include the Primary (DES Circular 60/2017) and Community & Comprehensive (DES Circular 02/2018) sectors. Objectives for the FSSU were set out in these circulars. This report outlines the founding objectives of the unit and the activities undertaken by the unit over the past year to adhere to and put into practice these objectives.

1. Provision of advice and support to schools on financial governance matters including compliance with the requirements of the circulars:

1.1 The unit issued the following Financial Guidelines to support school management in good financial practice:

- Selection Committee Member Payments
- COVID-19 Refund Scheme
- Update to COVID-19 Payments
- Remote Working
- COVID-19: Update to Payments to Employees
- COVID-19: Review of Contracts for Service
- Update on VAT Compensation Scheme
- Calculated Grades Aides 2020
- Appointment of an External Accountant
- Working from Home Tax Credit & Allowance
- Parents' Association & Finance
- COVID-19: Operational Supports
- Guidance on PPE, Consumables & Equipment & Accounting for COVID Grants
- COVID-19: Supervision Arrangements
- COVID-19: Arrangements for Certain Employees
- Important Dates for 2020/2021
- COVID-19: Payments-New Employment Wage Support Scheme
- Financial Year-End 2019/2020
- Annual VAT Return of Trading Details (RTD)
- Payments to Members of Selection Committees
- External Accountants Guideline
- Revised salary rates applicable from 1st October 2020
- Supervision and Substitution payments to schools during the school year 2020/2021
- Registration with the Charities Regulator and updating board of management members' details
- Government Budget Summary 2021
- Additional Superannuation Contribution (ASC)
- Revision of Schools Support Staff Funding Grant Rates for Voluntary Secondary Schools in the Free Education Scheme
- Grants payable to Non-Fee-Charging Voluntary Secondary Schools School year 2020/2021
- Payment to staff for enhanced supervision hours and enhanced cleaning hours & Covid grants
- Update from the Revenue Commissioners COVID-19 Payments - Employment Wage Support Scheme (EWSS)
- VAT Compensation Scheme for Charities



1.2 A Financial Update and School Budget 2021/2022 webinar was held in February 2021 to allow school management to develop a budget, ensuring good financial management.

2. Development of templates for use by schools in relation to financial matters, including a standardised national template for annual school accounts

The unit has devised budget templates, board of management reporting templates and practical sample forms and spreadsheets. These templates are consistently revised to enhance effectiveness.

The monthly template reports tie into the year-end reporting format.

3. Acting as a central repository for receipt of annual school accounts prepared by an external accountant/auditor registered with a recognised accountancy body in the State

The unit has developed an online secure cloud system for the submission of school financial data. This data is uploaded by the school's external financial accountant/auditor. This allows the unit to receive timely, accurate data that allows comparisons and research. The online submission incorporates the ability to fulfil the obligations of the board to the Central Statistics Office and the requirements of the Charities Regulator.

4. Carrying out such audits as may be required

A number of requests have been received from the Department to carry out audits on specific areas of concern in schools.

5. Preparation of an annual report for the Department

An annual report is prepared and submitted to the Department of Education

6. Liaison with the Department in relation to financial matters pertaining to schools

When issues of a financial nature arise that affect schools, the unit will liaise with the Department on behalf of the schools.

The unit continues to provide advice and support to our schools through the following mechanisms:

- A. Financial Internal Controls Review
- B. Telephone and online support from the unit on all aspects of financial management
- C. Free support on the computerised accounts package, Sage 50, is available to all voluntary secondary schools
- D. One-to-one training for new principals, boards of management and finance committees

Louise McNamara, Director,
Financial Support Services Unit
April 2021



HR/IR & Legal Services Report



HR/IR & Legal Services Report

AMCSS/JMB 34th Annual Conference 2021

Introduction

The HR/IR and Legal Services Unit provides a wide range of services in connection with employment-related matters to JMB members who benefit from the unit's expert knowledge and experience in dealing with employment issues arising in the school environment.

Bernadette Kinsella and Christine West have built on this unique knowledge and expertise to assist and advise our boards of management on how to handle individual people-management challenges.

The unit offers a range of solutions, varying from assistance in ensuring compliance with employment legislation through to implementation of best practice solutions to enable effective people management.

The philosophy of the unit is to ensure that our members understand that the advice, guidance, support and representation reflect best practice in addressing people-management challenges.

2020 Challenges

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented disruption to workplaces across Ireland. The school environment did not escape this disruption either.

2020 brought about the greatest changes that our workplaces have seen in decades, if ever. From a human resource perspective, school management has had to address challenges and make decisions like never before, especially in relation to lockdown, remote working, use of technology, absences due to Covid-19, pandemic unemployment benefits, health and safety etc.

The Return to Work Safely Protocol from the Health and Safety Authority, HSE and Department of Health provided government guidance for employers and workers on the measures required to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. At all times, decisions to re-open our schools were made in compliance with Government and public health advice. Much of the unit's time was spent addressing the management of the human resource requirements of the protocol during 2020. Together we ensured a safer working environment for all.



Activities 2020/2021

While every effort in the last year has been focused on managing the pandemic, ongoing HR/IR and legal services activities continued throughout the year and the following is a snapshot of those activities:

- Virtual attendance at the national negotiations in relation to school secretaries' pay claim
- Advising and representing the interest of boards of management and school management in employment law matters and before the employment rights bodies
- Legal services with respect to family law queries, termination of contracts; TUPE, redundancies etc.
- Advising on admissions policies and the new section 29 appeal procedures for appeals against decisions to refuse admission
- Participation in the newly formed SNA HR/IR Forum led by the DES
- Reviewing contracts of employment; leave policies;
- Advising on recruitment and selection
- Advising on how to manage performance during the probationary period
- Developing effective communication strategies at local level where conflict presents
- Engagement with the education partners and stakeholders

Snapshot of topical calls:

While every effort in the last year has been focused on managing the pandemic, ongoing HR/IR and legal services activities continued throughout the year and the following is a snapshot of those activities:

- Covid-19 employee-related queries
- Engagement with the occupational health providers
- Critical Illness Provision
- Health and Safety
- Contracts of employment
- Interpersonal difficulties
- Termination of employment
- Dignity in the workplace
- Performance management
- Admission policies, procedures and S.29 appeals



National HR Developments 2020/2021

2020 Code of Practice on the Prevention of Bullying

A new single joint 2020 Code of Practice on the Prevention of Bullying at work came into effect on 23 December 2020. In a development welcomed by employers and employees, the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) prepared a joint code of practice on the subject of workplace bullying via a statutory instrument SI No. 674/2020.

The new code replaces the HSA's 2007 code and the Labour Relations Commission's 2002 code relating to the issue of bullying at work which have been incorporated into many of our schools policies relating to dignity in the workplace. The JMB HR unit will be advising schools on how to update their policies in the autumn to reflect the new changes.

Public consultation on the introduction of a Statutory Sick Pay Scheme in Ireland

In 2020, the Government committed to the establishment of a statutory sick pay scheme to bring Ireland in line with other OECD countries. This will build on the improved social protections for workers over the last five years, including paternity benefit, parental leave benefit and the extension of social insurance benefits to the self-employed. The intention is to develop a scheme that is fair and affordable and that does not place an undue burden of costs on employers. The Government's commitment is to publish a general scheme of a Bill in Spring 2021.

Through its membership of IBEC, JMB communicated its views as part of the consultation process with the relevant stakeholders, which included unions, employers, employees and other Government departments and bodies.

Proposed new Code of Practice for the right to disconnect

On 15 January 2021, the Government published the National Remote Work Strategy that sets out a range of actions and commitments from Government over the course of 2021. These actions include legislating for the right to request remote working and developing a Code of Practice for the right to disconnect.

The new Code of Practice that the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) has been tasked with developing is intended to address a perceived blurring of the boundary between work and home life because of the impact of new technology and ways of working.

The new Code was published on 1st April 2021. Many workplaces, including schools, have been proactive in this space in the last year, recognising that disconnecting from work is beneficial for mental health and wellbeing. The new Code of Practice will help to continue this trend of ensuring that employees and employers are managing working time in a healthy, balanced manner.

JMB contributed to the consultation process conducted by the WRC.



Employee Assistance Scheme

2020 has shown all of us how crucial our own wellbeing is and that of our school principals and employees.

Following the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) tendering process, Spectrum.Life was awarded the new EAS contract from 26th July, 2020. The service for employees is known as 'Wellbeing Together: Folláine le Chéile'. This service is available to teachers, SNAs, and all school staff.

The EAS provides advice to employees on a range of issues including wellbeing, legal, financial, bereavement, conflict, mediation etc. The EAS also provides advice and support to school management and delivers interventions to help them deal with health and wellbeing issues in the workplace.

JMB is represented at the education sectoral meetings in relation to the OHS strategy for schools, which also includes the employee assistance service provision.

The JMB HR Unit is working with other JMB colleagues in developing an area on the JMB website for easy access to the resources provided by Spectrum.Life.

Conclusion

In assessing the activities of our unit in the last year and particularly during this time of significant change, Christine and Bernadette believe that their advice, engagement and support have been led by their professional principles and values. We believe that work matters, people matter and professionalism matters. We leave you with three takeaways from this philosophy:

Good work is purposeful. It is designed to help everyone use their skills and talents effectively and find personal meaning in the work they do.

People should have access and opportunity to work, and be provided with the support, development and resources to be effective; in turn, individuals have a personal responsibility for their work, development and behaviour.

We are ambassadors for the people management profession, acting with integrity and championing better work and working lives in all we do.

Bernadette Kinsella,
Assistant General Secretary

Christine West
JMB HR/IR and Employment Law Advisor

JMB Human Resources/Industrial Relations and Legal Services Unit – April 2021



School Management Advisory Report





School Management Advisory Report

AMCSS/JMB 34th Annual Conference 2021

The Team

The Management Advisory Team 2020/21 comprises Director, Gerry McCaul and School Management Advisors Siobhán Corry and Bríd de Brún.

Role

- Providing support to school management
- Responding to day-to-day queries
- Advice on a broad range of issues relating to the management of the schools
- Individual consultations
- Complaints, grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Attendance at hearings when appropriate
- Undertaking case work on behalf of JMB
- Professional advice and support on policy and best practice
- Advice on education legislation and national agreements
- Liaison with teacher unions and representative organisations
- Liaison with the Department of Education and Skills
- Liaison with other relevant institutions/bodies
- Training, for example, the allocation of teaching resources, middle leadership and management, annual Law Day
- Training for newly appointed principals, deputy principals and boards of management
- Training for national programmes, in cooperation with the DES e.g. Child Protection



COVID-19 Crisis

Since Friday 13 March 2020 JMB staff has been working remotely. With the technology available to us, and to schools, we have been very busy dealing with the many queries coming in as schools adjust to the new situation. It appears that schools have adapted well, and teachers are very engaged in delivering remote learning when necessary to their students. Principals and deputies are occupied with supporting staff, answering calls from parents and keeping in contact with vulnerable students as well as the usual tasks which must be done.

The huge amount of work that is being carried out is remarkable and highlights the dedication of the profession in stepping up to the plate and ensuring that learning and pastoral care for students can continue as near to normal as possible.

2020/21

This school year has presented many challenges for school management. The summer term of 2019/20 concluded with extensive engagement from the School Management Advisory Unit with schools in implementing calculated grades for Leaving Certificate students.

We returned to school for the new year not expecting to be ruled by COVID 19 considerations once again. The advisory team was fully occupied with advising schools on the reopening in line with the Roadmap. This had a great impact on all of us, in particular, on our principals and school management. We have sought to support school management through representation and by providing briefings and seminars together with support materials which are on the JMB website.

While engagement with these activities is very demanding timewise, we always try very hard to fulfil our commitment to respond to all queries, including emails, on the same day or at the latest within 24 hours.

Middle Leadership and Management

The Biennial Review

This important review was due to be completed by most schools in the last school year but given the difficulties of engaging with staff remotely on such an important issue, an extra year for completion of the review was granted. While many schools had completed the review before the closedown in March 2020, this alleviation was a welcome break for those that had not done so. The twelve month suspension period ended on 12 March 2021 and these schools must complete the review before their anniversary date.

The School Management Advisory Unit devoted a lot of time to answering queries and providing guidance to schools as they engaged in a significant number of interviews and appointments. It is very important that interview panels appointed by boards of management are comprised of interviewers who have attended JMB training. In this way the possibility of procedural errors in the interview process is minimised.



About 14 appeals were lodged this year with 2 appeals being upheld. One of the cases upheld was for a breach of the advertising rules and the other was because the criteria for appointment were varied from that laid down in the circular. An appeal involves a considerable amount of time and expense, so school management is encouraged to contact us in advance if there are any uncertainties about the appointment procedures.

Circular 0003/2018 is currently being reviewed, a review that has been ongoing for in excess of eighteen months. This has delayed the allocation of an additional 300 AP posts, for which the Department has approved funding, pending agreement on a revised circular. JMB will continue to try to break the logjam with the partners but progress is extremely slow.

Allocations

Due to COVID 19, the issuing of the allocation schedules to schools was delayed by several weeks. However, when the schedules arrived, schools were very pleased to see the COVID allocation was to continue for the next school year. JMB had consistently and vigorously campaigned for this retention. To ensure that all schools had the very latest information and to explain the intricacies of the allocations, a webinar was held in early April.

We are very grateful to Gabriel Martin, Assistant Principal Officer and Geraldine Kennedy, HEO in the Teacher Allocations Section, Athlone, for their very worthwhile engagement with principals and school representatives in the webinar and for their guidance and assistance to schools always. We would also like to acknowledge the support of all the team in the Allocations Section who despite the constraints of COVID were always willing to engage with principals who had queries.

Pupil numbers at second level continue to grow and will peak at over 400,000 by 2024. Many schools, particularly those newly established, are experiencing rapid growth in pupil numbers. JMB continues to make representations for these schools on the SEN and guidance allocations, which are pressure points, as the allocation is based on the previous year's lower pupil numbers.

Redeployment

Since 2011 approximately 600 teachers have been redeployed in the post primary sector. This has resulted in the number of schools in surplus being reduced to a very small number in any school year. Redeployment has delivered a very significant financial saving of about €36m to the exchequer.

It is anticipated that the number of teachers compulsorily redeployed in the current year will be approximately 15 over all the schemes in our sector.

The Pilot Voluntary Redeployment Scheme 2021 is available to permanent/CID teachers who are employed in a post primary school:

- in counties Galway, Roscommon and Wicklow and who wish to be considered for redeployment to a school in any location.
- outside of Dublin and who wish to be considered for redeployment to a school in Dublin.



Redeployment Statistics 2020

Reviews	Secondary	1
Surplus - Voluntary	Secondary	4
	C&C	2
Surplus - Compulsory	Secondary	3
	Primary	1
Ward - Voluntary	Secondary	2
Ward - Compulsory	Secondary	6
	C&C	4
Pilot	Secondary	9
	C&C	0
	ETB	2
Total		34

From	To Secondary	To C&C	To ETB	Total
Secondary	20	2	3	25
C&C	2	2	2	6
ETB	0	2	0	2
Primary Special School	0	0	1	1
	22	6	6	34

Pilot Scheme	
Redeployment offered	14
Offer accepted	11
Offer not accepted	3

Child Protection

Following the closure of schools in March 2020, the Department advised schools that the requirement to provide a Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) would not apply to board meetings held remotely. This was because it was not possible in the context of such meetings to meet the requirement to provide the board with the specified documentation in the secure and confidential manner required by the procedures. The Department advised that principals should continue to maintain the relevant data and records so that the CPOR could be provided at the next face-to-face meeting of the board and that the data in that next report must reflect cases arising since the previous CPOR was provided to the board.

In December 2020, in the context of schools having reopened and having regard to the ongoing public health emergency, the Department laid down revised requirements in relation to the provision by the principal of a Child Protection Oversight Report to the board of management. The requirement now is that if there is a case(s) arising under one or more of the headings in sections 9.5 to 9.7 of the Child Protection Procedures then there is a requirement to have a face-to-face meeting once per term



and, thereby, for the board to resume and continue to carry out its important oversight role in respect of the reporting of child protection concerns in accordance with the procedures.

Education Law Day

The eighth Essential Education Law Day, presented by Mason Hayes and Curran, moved to a half-day webinar format this year, on December 7. We had a very full, interactive morning. The feedback was extremely positive, and the participants took away many nuggets of practical advice. Our thanks go to Ian O’Herlihy, Liam Riordan, Catherine Kelly, Paul Rochford and David Ruddy for once again sharing their expertise with us. We plan to hold a similar day in early December 2021 so watch the events calendar!

Principal & Deputy Principal Professional Development

The School Management Advisory Unit played a significant role in training for new principals and deputy principals. It was our first foray into the world of Zoom and between August 10 and the end of November, four and a half days’ training were delivered to new principals and four days to new deputies. It is a privilege to work with such enthusiastic and talented new leaders. The feedback from participants was extremely positive, as the training provided is of a very practical nature and provides essential information for the participants as they take up their new role. However, we all missed the person- to- person interaction that usually takes place, with participants normally making connections and friendships which will support them in the years ahead.

Crisis Management

All principals dread a crisis, particularly where they are the person to whom everyone turns and relies upon. Mason Hayes & Curran in conjunction with the Communications Clinic delivered a valuable webinar on the topic of crisis management on February 3. Almost 600 participants logged on to listen to Ian O’Herlihy, Liam Riordan and Catherine Kelly from MHC and Eoghan McDermott from CC, outline the types of crises likely to arise and how to devise an advance plan. Of particular note was advice on the best way to deal with media queries and keeping the school community itself informed.

Ready to help and advise.

In conclusion, may I stress that the School Management Advisory Team is there to help and advise school management. No matter how small the query may be, please do lift the phone or send us an email. You are not ‘bothering us’, we welcome and enjoy engaging with you.

Siobhán Corry, on behalf of the School Management Advisory Team.
April 2021



School Buildings Projects Advisory Report

Like

School Building Projects Advisory Report

AMCSS/JMB 34th Annual Conference 2021

The School Building Projects Advisory Service was set up in June 2014. The principal aim of the service is to provide a support for principals and boards of management in meeting the practical challenges surrounding building projects.

A great number of schools have accessed the service over the past seven years, many of them on multiple occasions.

Due to Covid restrictions, visits to schools were curtailed to a certain extent but online meetings became much more common.

The service includes the following:

1. School visits and advising on the possibilities for future development

The needs of schools differ. The visits are aimed at assisting school management identify the physical needs of the school, often in the context of a review of its curricular provision.

2. Assisting with and reviewing applications for:

- Emergency Works
- Additional Accommodation
- Summer Works

3. The appointment of individual consultants and Design Teams

- Tendering – including advertising on e-Tenders
- Assessment of tenders
- Formal appointment of consultants
- During the past year, JMB, at the request of the Department of Education, has been actively assisting the boards of management of over 25 secondary schools and 20 primary schools with the appointment of full design teams for Additional Accommodation projects valued at between €1m and €8m. This assistance to schools now forms a significant part of the service's work.



- In 2020 JMB assisted with the appointment of a full design team for four major capital projects. These projects receive ongoing support from JMB and they are in addition to three others appointed in previous years and where ongoing support is provided.
- In addition, JMB continues to assist many schools that have been approved for additional accommodation or 'small works' of values less than €1 million.

4. Summer Works Scheme 2019 - 2020

A new multi-annual Summer Works Scheme was announced in March 2019. Applications for this scheme closed in June 2019 and the first set of projects in the category Life Safety Systems were approved in December 2019. A second set of projects for the refurbishment of toilets was announced in December 2020. However, just 13 voluntary secondary schools benefitted from this round of approved projects. It is hoped that a further set of projects will be approved in November 2021.

5. Minor Works Grants

Due to the pandemic and in order that schools could safely re-open in September 2020, a special scheme to allow schools re-configure their classroom accommodation and improve external facilities was put in place during the summer of 2020. While all non fee-charging schools automatically benefitted from the scheme, fee charging schools did not and had to apply on a case by case basis.

6. Emergency Works Scheme

The Emergency Works Scheme continues to deal with emergency situations in schools. The scheme also caters for the needs of students and staff with physical disabilities. The scheme has now gone online with applications being made through esinet portal.

7. PE Halls

Last year, JMB welcomed the commitment of Government in the National Development Plan to a '*PE build and modernisation programme*'. The plan states that this will ensure "that students in all post-primary schools have access to appropriate facilities to support PE provision, particularly also in the context of the roll-out of PE as a Leaving Certificate subject. Enhanced and modernised PE facilities will also provide important amenities for local communities". However, we still wait for implementation of this aspect of the plan, to the great disappointment of many of our school communities.

8. Major Projects – Six Year Plan 2016 – 2021

54 voluntary secondary schools are listed on the Major Capital Plan and each of them can look forward to a fine extension and the refurbishment of the existing premises. Progress is slow but most projects have been devolved to various project management teams. Design teams are being appointed on an ongoing basis and schedules of accommodation agreed. However, there is still a number of schools that await news on how their building project is to be delivered. In a number of cases (as discussed above), the project has been devolved to the respective board of management with JMB assistance.



9. Collaboration with the Building Unit

- Meetings with senior officials continued during the year
- Ongoing representations also continued to be made to the Building Unit on behalf of schools

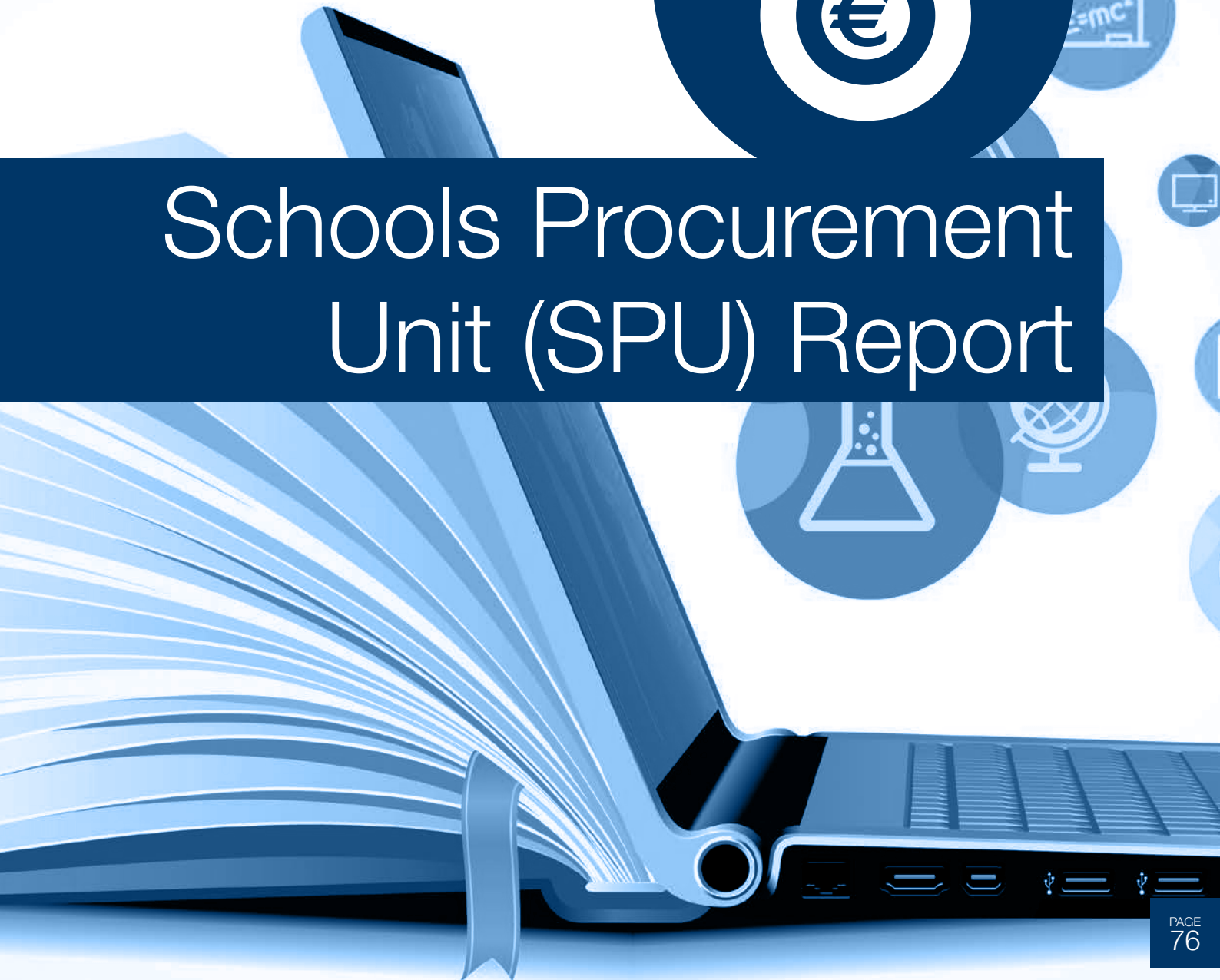
10. Finally

It has been a pleasure to assist so many of our schools over the past year. The commitment and dedication of school management to modernise their school buildings for the benefit of their students and staff is to be highly commended. I also wish to acknowledge the continued support of the General Secretary and JMB Council for the service.

Noel Merrick,
April 2021



Schools Procurement Unit (SPU) Report



AMCSS/JMB 34th Annual Conference 2021

2020 has presented operational, logistical, technological and morale demands for everyone, and the SPU has not been sheltered from these challenges. It is a tribute to the commitment and endeavours of the individual SPU team members that the year-on-year progress across all areas of activity, as reported annually, has been continued in 2020. For this I wish to acknowledge the considerable effort of the team and thank them for these increases in service delivery to our client schools.

The Schools Procurement Unit continues to deliver free a professional advice and practical support service to schools to help them achieve improvements in their procurement processes, practices, and outcomes. Fundamental to the role played by the SPU is improving access for schools to the centralised procurement model. The stated ambition is to change the behaviour at school level from sourcing to ordering their requirements. To this end, 2020 has seen considerable engagement with a number of business units across the Department of Education, the Office of Government Procurement (OGP), and a range of pre-qualified suppliers, with the ultimate goal of making it easier for schools to get their requirements directly, and thereby removing the requirement for them to embark on lengthy procurement exercises. These efforts are central to the remit of the SPU being able to promote the significant advantage to schools of availing of centrally devised frameworks and contracts delivered by the Office of Government Procurement.

What remains clear is that a considerable amount of procurement activity and effort is still taking place at the level of individual schools. Where OGP frameworks exist, frequently the mechanism by which schools access goods and services - through mini-competitions - presents barriers, particularly where small-scale requirements and tight timelines are confronted with prescribed timescales and high resource commitment on the side of the OGP. In such circumstances, this can mean that mini-competitions are often unfeasible to undertake. Consequently, the direction from the OGP will be to 'self-procure' and this presents a problem for the school as, generally, the knowledge and expertise required to conduct such competitive processes is frequently not resident within the school itself.

To help schools make the ‘self-procure’ processes easier to conduct, a significant amount of the SPU’s operational time is invested in providing practical support to schools in supporting the drafting of heavily detailed procurement documents and in providing guidance on how schools navigate their



tender evaluation and contract award processes in a legally compliant manner. Minimum expenditure thresholds apply across several of the OGP frameworks, and this also remains a barrier to schools in gaining access to using them. In essence, it means that schools, because of low relative demand, cannot avail of the goods and services across a range of frameworks.

Though the levels of engagement by schools across the broad range of OGP contracts and frameworks remain relatively small, it is worth exploring several of the reasons as to why this perhaps remains the case:

- Schools continue to find the manner for accessing the OGP model to be far from straightforward;
- There remains an administrative complexity that some schools cannot invest time in trying to overcome;
- Schools typically view the way they have always sourced their goods and services to be the simplest in terms of administration, and they secure outcomes which they consider as satisfactory;
- Culturally, there has hitherto been a tradition of schools sourcing locally, and they view their relationship with their local supply-base as being almost symbiotic;
- Direct sourcing is not unusual and there are no perceived consequences for awarding contracts without a competitive process;
- Most importantly, until the OGP contracts are perceived as the easiest way to source goods and services and demonstrably offering excellent value, the problem of low levels of engagement among the schools will persist.

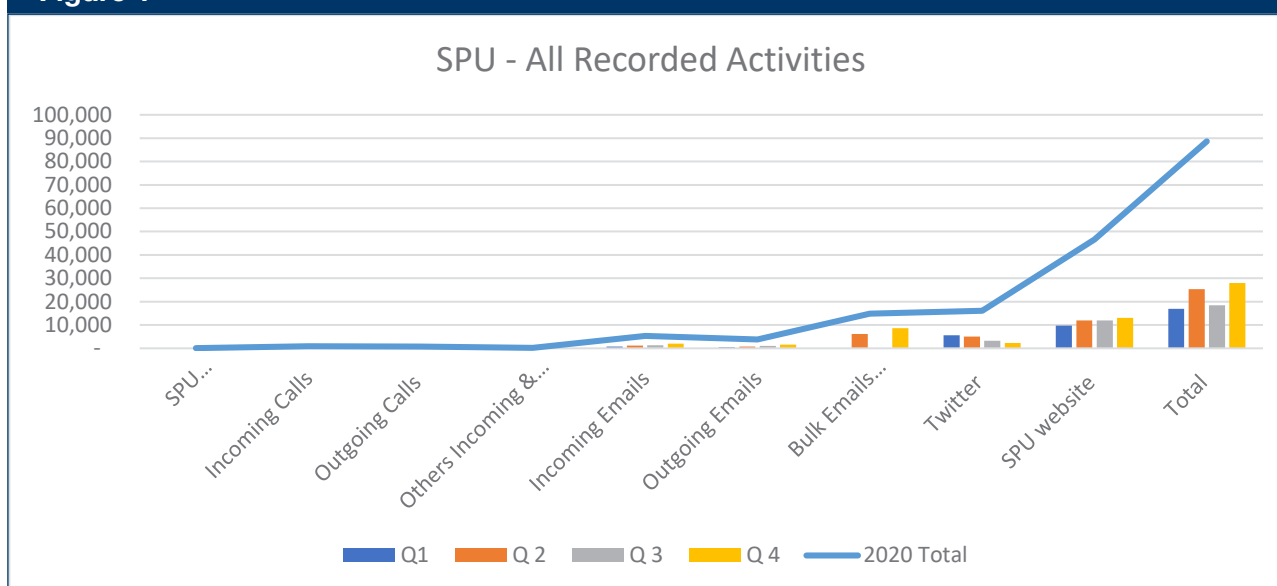
Since 2019, the SPU has extended its service to the national network of Education Centres. The ambition in respect of the Education Centres is to capacity build their procurement capability, and a number of initiatives were undertaken in 2020 in support of that goal, including the development of a Procurement Policy Template as a tool to be adapted and adopted by each Education Centre to give a structure to the overall organisation and governance of procurement.



SPU Operations:

The SPU continuously strives to improve both the services it provides, and its further penetration into the school sector and across the Education Centres network. Figure 1 below shows the type and volume of business activities engaged in by the SPU across 2020, as recorded in our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The overall aggregated figure represents an almost 17% increase on the 2019 figure as the levels of engagement with SPU continue to rise year on year. This success is a testament to the commitment and professionalism of the SPU team, in what is recognised as the most challenging of circumstances.

Figure 1



SPU - All Recorded Activities by Qtr	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2020 Total
SPU Internal/External/Tasks	25	25	25	13	88
Incoming Calls	177	218	389	122	906
Outgoing Calls	164	196	357	105	822
Others Incoming & Outgoing Calls	38	11	9	120	178
Incoming Emails	821	1,191	1,298	2,065	5,375
Outgoing Emails	464	724	1,004	1,594	3,786
Bulk Emails /Newsletter/Survey /Electricity & Gas	12	6,088	128	8,585	14,813
Twitter	5,528	5,010	3,260	2,295	16,093
SPU website	9,670	11,896	11,920	13,094	46,580
Total	16,899	25,359	18,390	27,993	88,641



Procurement Projects

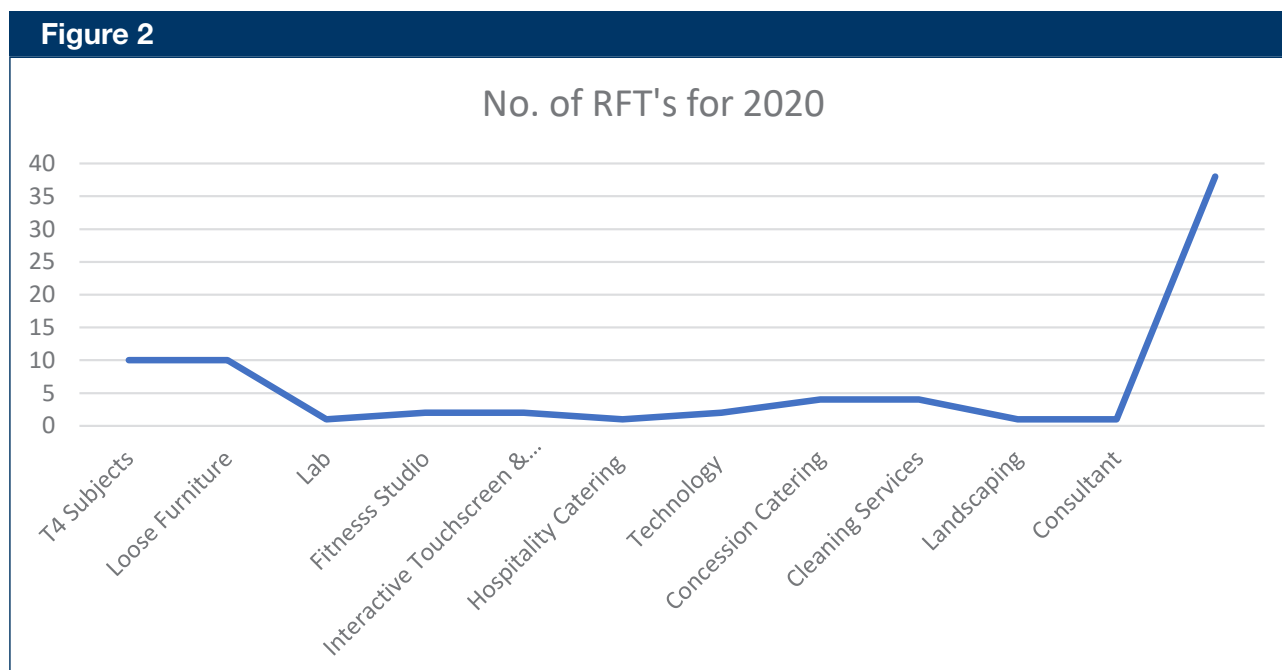
The SPU keeps close records of each procurement project it supports on behalf of primary and post-primary schools, and Education Centres. The rationale for doing so can be summarised thus:

- i. Maintain statistics to enable quarterly and year-on-year comparisons.
- ii. Track activity across all categories, which provides intel for future potential central procurement pipeline planning.
- iii. Identify trends or patterns by quarter – seasonal behaviours.
- iv. Resource planning.

Figures 2 and 3 below break down the total number of procurement projects in which the SPU Team had close involvement, by category. In total, there have been 80 such projects across 2020.

Projects categorised as 'RFTs'¹ have a high level of complexity which necessitates commensurate high levels of SPU resource commitment.

Projects categorised as 'RFQs'² have a lower level of complexity, and consequently a lower level of SPU resource commitment is required.



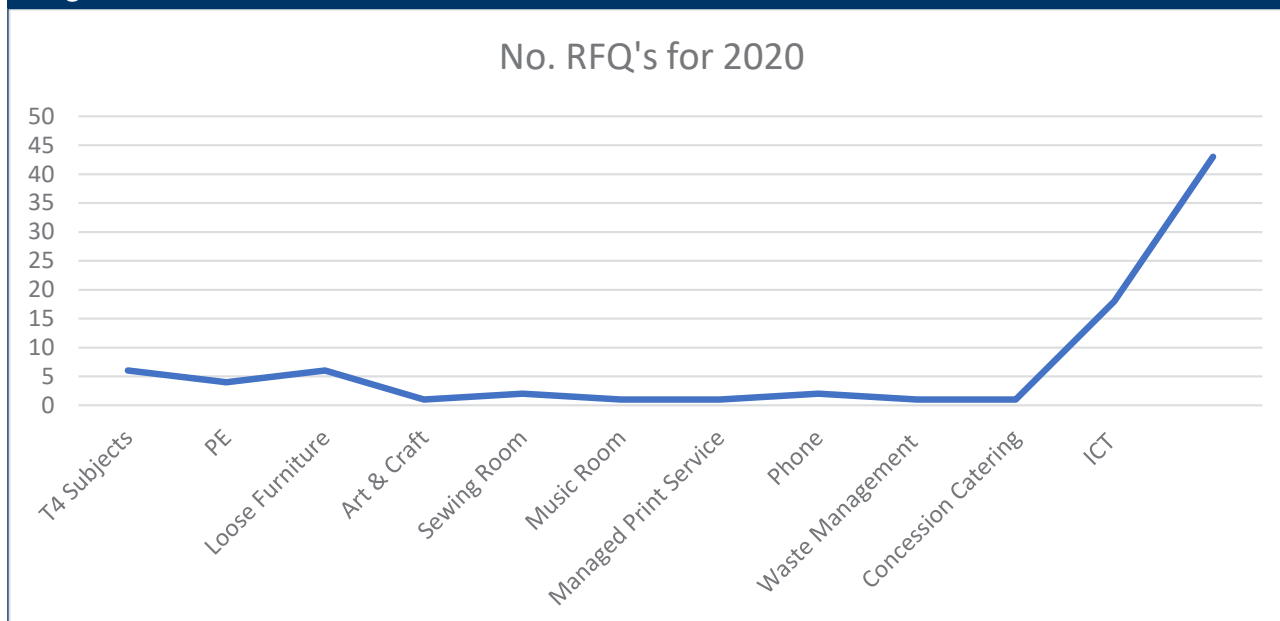
Total Number of RFT Projects 34

1 Request for Tender – a formal process for projects with contracts greater than €25,000 in value being offered that must be put to public tender.

2 Request for Quotation – a less formal process for projects with contracts less than €25,000 in value being offered and where a minimum of three proposals/quotations must be sought.



Figure 3

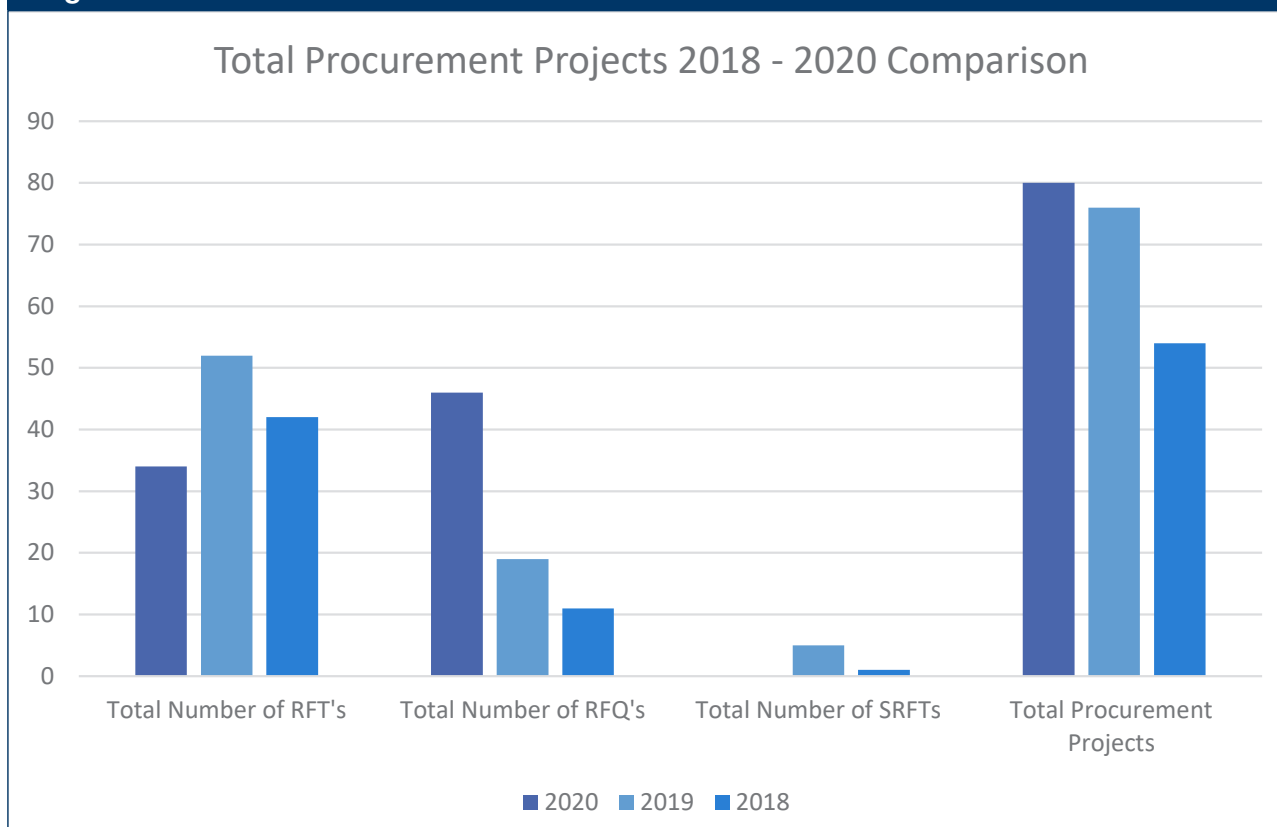


Total Number of RFQ Projects 46



The comparative year-on-year analysis is summarised in Figure 4 below. The overall total for Procurement Projects in 2020 – indicating medium to heavy SPU Team involvement - represents just over a 5% increase on the 2019 figure and a 48% increase on the 2018 number for procurement projects. Through the monitoring of activities on a quarterly basis over several years, it is possible to chart that schools are starting now to seek support earlier - beginning in quarter 3 when schools re-open annually for the academic year - compared with a high of quarter 2 back in 2018 - where schools chose to undertake procurement projects going into the summer months. This behavioural change can be attributed to the continued messaging from SPU for schools to plan well in advance, and to allow themselves time and space to undertake their major procurements. This has also assisted the SPU Team to achieve a better balance in the support they are providing the schools – better planning and more time generally results in better outcomes.

Figure 4

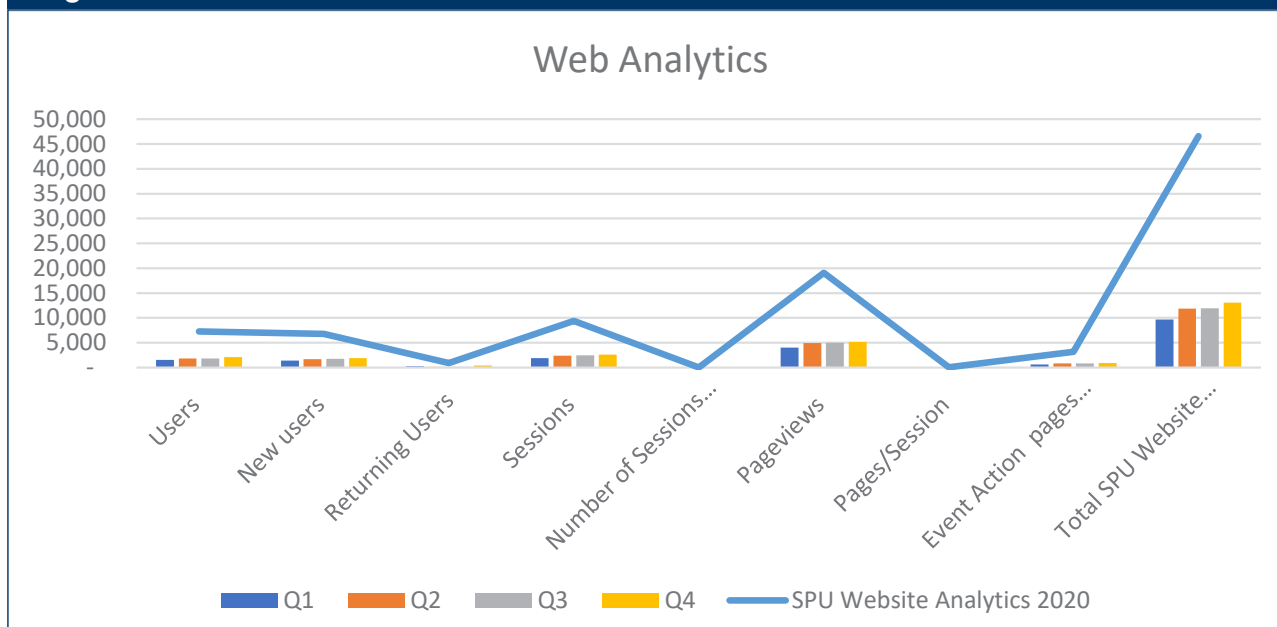




SPU Website

Through deployment of web analytics, we can collect, measure, analyse, and report upon activity by visitors to SPU website, thereby helping us to understand user behaviour in assessing and improving the effectiveness of the site. It assists us to gauge traffic, and the relative popularity of the various landing pages and downloads informs future areas of potential initiatives. Encouragingly, this activity provides a measurable indicator of the point made earlier that schools are thinking about their procurements earlier than they did the previous year, consistent with the advice being provided by the SPU to the schools. The website has become a central tool in raising the profile of the SPU and in generating the greater levels of interaction with the school sector as evidenced in the overall figure shown at Figure 5 below, representing a 38% increase on recorded 2019 website activity.

Figure 5



SPU Website Analytics	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	SPU Website Analytics 2020
Users	1,524	1,821	1,828	2,112	7,285
New users	1,404	1,701	1,728	1,921	6,754
Returning users	252	120	123	383	878
Sessions	1,894	2,424	2,430	2,621	9,369
Number of sessions per user	5	4	5	4	17
Pageviews	3,988	4,952	4,996	5,159	19,095
Pages/Session	7	6	6	6	25
Event Action pages downloaded	597	868	804	888	3,157
Total SPU Website Analytics 2020 per Quarter	9,670	11,896	11,920	13,094	46,580



Conclusion

2020, despite Covid restrictions, remote working and school closures has proven to be another highly effective year for the SPU. With metrics up across all areas of business and support activities, the SPU continues to grow its client support base, becoming of greater relevance to schools as the likely impact of procurement compliance comes into focus across the sector. These successes could not be achieved without the dedication of the SPU Team and I take this opportunity once again to thank them for their outstanding efforts.

With the SPU well into its 7th year of operation, and the Unit approaching full capacity, the time for a fundamental review of the function and role of the SPU is probably now at hand. The ambition must be for the Unit to be properly constituted to best serve its schools and the Education Centre clients into the future.

Ronan Farrell

Manager

Schools Procurement Unit

April 2021



Vetting Report

CYBERBULL

CYBERBULL



Vetting Report

AMCSS/JMB 34th Annual Conference 2021

Vetting of non-teaching staff

The closure of schools because of Covid-19 had a dramatic influence on the numbers of vetting applications from our schools. It quickly became apparent that the number of schools from which TY or LCA students would be going on work experience would be greatly reduced in 2020. In particular, the practice of whole cohorts of TY students going to primary schools to work with primary school pupils ceased. Small but increasing numbers of TY students did apply for vetting later in the year. Again as a direct consequence of the Covid pandemic, not just in Ireland but throughout Europe, school exchange visits also came to an end. The net effect for JMB's vetting process is that, where 2019 saw 15500 applications processed, the numbers for 2020 were just over 9000. Approximately 1000 others had to be returned to schools because of errors. Most were applications from under 18s who did not supply a parent's or guardian's email address. Other common errors were forms which were not accompanied by a cover letter in the format specified in the template provided on the JMB website or a lack of clarity in very many email addresses supplied by applicants. These usually resulted in applications expiring after 30 days, in which cases applicants had to start the process afresh, with significant resultant delays. Schools can help reduce the likelihood of applications being delayed by printing the applicant's or the parent's email address on the cover letter.

Vetting during lockdown

To assist schools who needed to have personnel processed while schools were closed or partially closed and much work was being done remotely, we accepted and processed application forms scanned and emailed to evetting@jmb.ie. Where this happened, schools were asked to ensure that the hard copies were posted to Emmet House and marked as already submitted in scanned form. This is because JMB requires to retain hard copies of all applications together with the corresponding cover letters.

The National Vetting Bureau requires that schools continue to obtain proofs of identification sufficient to satisfy the 100 point system from all vetting applicants, including those who live overseas, and are required to retain the identification documents for as long as the vetting subject remains in the school. (See below for more details). When schools open fully again, the facility to submit scanned application forms will cease. Schools will be notified in a bulletin from JMB.

Webinar

JMB produced a webinar which sought to provide detailed advice to schools on all aspects of vetting for all school personnel, teaching and non-teaching. The webinar is especially useful for newly appointed principals and deputy principals and was used as part of the programme for them in September. The webinar, and the accompanying slides, are available on the Child Protection and Vetting section of www.jmb.ie. While principals are



encouraged to consult the slides as necessary, support continues to be readily available by telephone or by email to jackcleary@jmb.ie

Retention of documentation

Schools are reminded that the National Vetting Bureau has advised that there is an obligation on the Data Controller (the board of management) to retain documentation with respect to ID validation. The NVB specifies that 'Copy of documentation produced to validate identity (is) to be retained for the lifetime of the vetting application, i.e. until the person is re-vetted, resigns or ends their involvement with the school.' It is important that schools keep a record of persons who have been vetted and that a record of the outcome is kept on file. (See JMB bulletin 21 of 2017).

Retention of vetting disclosures by schools

JMB has received the following legal advice:

Retaining vetting disclosure:

The Acts do not provide how long these disclosure documents should be retained. The Office of the Data Protection Commissioner previously issued guidance in relation to this. Firstly, it is important to note that this was "guidance" only, and was not a definitive statement of the law. However, one would have to have good and compelling justification for diverging from the ODPC's guidance on any matter.

The ODPC noted: *"Personal data must be destroyed when the purpose for which it was sought has expired. This can be problematic in relation to the continued holding of vetting disclosures as the Data Protection Commissioner is concerned that their long-term retention creates the potential for unauthorised access and use. Accordingly, the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner recommends that vetting disclosures should be routinely deleted*

one year after they are received except in exceptional circumstances. In case of future queries or issues in relation to a vetting disclosure, the reference number and date of disclosure may be retained on file and this can be checked with An Garda Síochána. This practice is sufficient for all organisations engaged in vetting, including organisations subject to external statutory inspection of staff vetting practices". On this basis, it would appear that the ODPC generally advises that the vetting outcomes should be "routinely deleted one year after they are received". However, it is not clear what is meant by "except in exceptional circumstances".

- a. It could cover the scenario where a disclosure appears on a vetting outcome but the board of management decides to employ the person notwithstanding the disclosure, subject to certain restrictions (e.g. a dangerous driving conviction appearing on the disclosure and the board deciding to hire the person subject to their not being allowed to drive the school minibus).
- b. It could cover the scenario where a disclosure appears on a vetting outcome and on that basis the board decides not to employ the person. The record might be held thereafter for the purposes of defending an equality claim. However, one would reasonably anticipate that a school would have heard about the applicant's threatened claim before the expiry of the 1 year period referred to above.

The ODPC's guidance refers to the retention of the vetting disclosure itself, not the policies and procedures supporting vetting. So, for example, it will still be important for the school to retain a record that vetting was concluded and that the recruitment decision was taken on the basis of that disclosure.

It is hoped that new guidance from the ODPC will be available soon.



JMB retaining documents

JMB retains (a) vetting application forms, (b) parent consent forms (for those under 18 but over 16) and (c) cover letters certifying that schools have established applicants' identities. In compliance with the Vetting Acts and data protection, once JMB has concluded processing the vetting applications and the disclosure/outcome has been returned to the school, and once the school has

- a) verified that there are no errors in the disclosure and
- b) that the vetting subject does not dispute any disclosure in the document,

JMB's role in the matter is concluded. Thereafter there is no basis for JMB to retain these documents (either in hard copy or in encrypted electronic back-ups). It is therefore very (very!) important for schools to note that JMB will not retain any copies and that it is the school's own obligation to ensure that they have received disclosures within 30 days for all correctly completed applications submitted to JMB and that any documents are retained securely to meet their own requirements. For all vetting disclosures received by a school, the disclosure should be downloaded and a hard copy placed on the vetting subject's personnel file. A hard copy should also be given to the vetting subject. Schools are advised not to give an electronic copy to a vetting subject. Finally, schools should understand that JMB is not a repository for "old" vetting disclosures, should the school require a further copy.

Re-vetting of registered teachers

The Teaching Council re-vets teachers every three years. The process is managed by the Teaching Council and school management does not have to initiate the process to have registered teachers re-vetted.

Re-vetting of non-teaching personnel

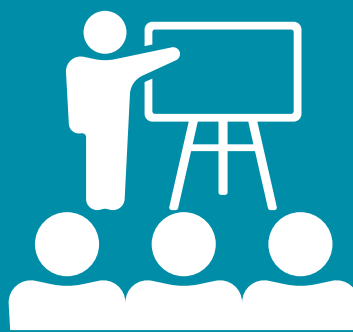
It is expected that the DES may this year initiate the re-vetting of non-teaching staff in our schools. Initially, this will involve requiring all school personnel who were vetted by the Garda Central Vetting Unit prior to the establishment of the National Vetting Bureau in April 2016 to be vetted again, this time by the NVB. This will impose a significant burden on school management and on JMB staff.

JMB acknowledges the excellent service provided to schools by the National Vetting Bureau. The Bureau is constantly improving its systems to provide better information to organisations such as JMB and to enable us to correct errors such as incorrectly entered data without the necessity to start the process afresh. However, schools will know that if an application has expired after 30 days or if it has been cancelled by the applicant, such an application will have to be submitted again.

We are greatly obliged to Cathy Glavey, our Office Manager, and to her staff for the support provided for the vetting process. Our thanks in particular go to Jennifer McManus and Teresa Madden, whose great efforts have resulted in the substantial majority of properly completed applications being processed promptly in Emmet House. Most of all, we are conscious of the significant burden on schools arising from the vetting requirements imposed by the Vetting Acts and we are greatly appreciative of the work of school management and staff in ensuring that all our schools are compliant with legal requirements.

Jack Cleary

Vetting Coordinator
April 2021



JMB Training & Events Report



JMB Training & Events 2020/21 Report

AMCSS/JMB 34th Annual Conference 2021

Analysis 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how we all work, live and interact, so we adapted our training and events programme accordingly. Most of JMB training was delivered online for 2020 and will be delivered online for 2021, unless we find ourselves in a position where this can be reviewed. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions it was not possible to hold the Annual Conference and the Education Conference in 2020.

The JMB continues to offer a broad range of training programmes that have been specially designed in response to the needs of its members. The past year has again seen a range of training and blended learning programmes organised by the Joint Managerial Body as part of the supports provided for the member schools, principals, chairpersons, members of boards of management, deputy principals, school administration personnel and other school personnel.

Training/Event	Dates
JMB/ACCS Further Education Seminar Key school personnel engaged in delivery of adult and further education came together for structured input, sharing best practice and networking.	January 2020
Interview Competency Training The objective is to support schools in the quest to appoint the best possible candidate for senior leadership posts. The training programme is designed for members of Selection Committees and is open to Principals/Chairpersons/BOM members. A review of the JMB framework of competencies for Principal and for Deputy Principals was commenced in November 2018 in the light of feedback from members of selection committees, Principals, Chairpersons of Boards of Management and Trustees representatives. During this review it was decided to redefine four of the six competencies to include more explicitly the four domains identified in the Department of Education and Skills document, <i>Looking at Our School 2016: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools</i> . This document identified, within the dimension Leadership and Management, four domains which would be relevant in the recruitment of Principals and Deputy Principals.	January/February 2020 7 Training Sessions



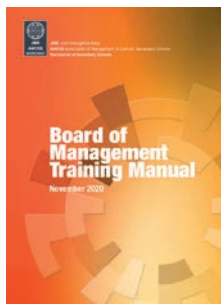
Training/Event	Dates
Budget Workshops The FSSU delivered a practical hands-on workshop to assist the principal and school accounts personnel in preparing the school's annual budget.	February 2020 1 Seminar
Allocations; Leadership and Management Biennial Review, Annual Review, and Reporting Seminars The seminars addressed the principles underpinning the allocation of teaching resources and enabled school management to correctly interpret the schedules. A Q&A session with representatives of the Teacher Allocation Section and JMB formed part of the event. The seminar included advice on preparing for the review with all the teaching staff of needs and priorities, the roles and responsibilities, setting objectives in each role assigned, conducting the annual end of year review meeting with each post holder, and the principal's report to the board of management.	February/March 2020 8 Training Days
Newly Appointed Principals Training was presented in 2 modules: Training programme (September) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Principalship • Principals and Boards of Management • Current Education Issues • Administrative Year & the New Principal • Child Protection Procedures • The dynamics of the Principal-Deputy Principal Leadership team • Code of Behaviour, Suspension & Expulsion • Middle Leadership & Management • Day to Day Management • Supervision & Substitution Scheme • Complaints, Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures Training programme (November) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Education Issues • Leading Learning • Timetabling Pre-Planning • Management Scenarios • Professional Behaviour • Code of Conduct – Teaching Council • OLCS • Medmark 	August/September/November 2020 Online



Training/Event	Dates
<p>Newly Appointed Deputy Principals</p> <p>Training presented in 2 modules:</p> <p>Training programme (September)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Deputy Principalship Circular 4/98 • Education Issues • Day to Day Management • Supervision & Substitution • Deputy Principal in Action Workshop • Child Protection Guidelines & Vetting • Middle Leadership & Management • Code of Behaviour <p>Training programme (December)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Education Issues • Managing Complaints • Leading Learning • Timetabling Pre-Planning • Professional Behaviour • Code of Conduct – Teaching Council • OLCS 	<p>September/ December 2020 Online</p>
<p>Board of Management Online Training</p> <p>The Board of Management in-service training programme provided board members with a clear insight into their roles and responsibilities as board members and the relationship between the board and the trustees.</p> <p>In looking at the role and functions of the board, particular reference was made to the Articles of Management, government guidelines and relevant legislation.</p> <p>Training programme is two and a half hours.</p>	<p>19, 21, 28 November and 8 December 2020 Online</p>
<p>Education Law Day Webinar</p> <p>In partnership with Mason Hayes & Curran, and its team of leading lawyers in education, JMB hosted a half-day webinar on legal matters that impact daily on schools. The webinar facilitated members being kept up-to-date with respect to recent education case law.</p>	<p>7 December 2020 Online</p>
<p>School Budgeting 2021/2022 and Annual Finance Update Webinar</p>	<p>24 February 2021 Online</p>



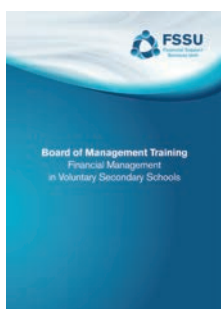
Resources – Training Manuals & Booklets



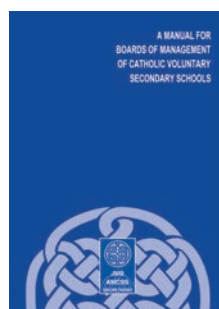
BOM Training Manual (November 2020)
<https://www.jmb.ie/Site-Search/resource/2218>



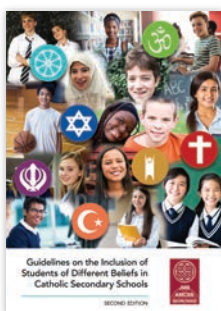
BOM Training Manual for Educate Together schools (November 2020)
<https://www.jmb.ie/Site-Search/resource/2220>



Financial Management Booklet - BOM Training
<https://www.jmb.ie/Site-Search/resource/247>



Board of Management Manual (updated November 2017)
<https://www.jmb.ie/Site-Search/resource/1757>



Guidelines on the Inclusion of Students of Other Faiths in Catholic Secondary Schools (2019)
<https://www.jmb.ie/Site-Search/resource/2008>



JMB School Building Projects Advisory Service
<https://www.jmb.ie/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=hYvyhScVQBo%3d&portalid=0×tam>



 JMB JOINT MEDICAL BOARD, IRELAND

Vetting Procedures

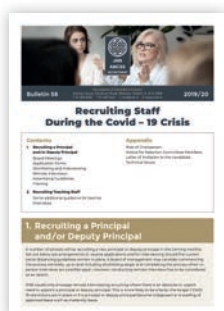
Jack Cleary, JMB
jackcleary@jmb.ie
 2020

Resources – Infographics



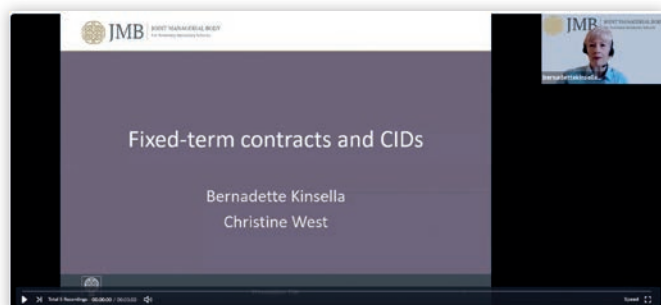
<https://www.jmb.ie/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=zB37Tq4XY6g%3d&portalid=0&resourceView=1&forcedownload=true>

Resources – Recruiting Staff During The Covid-19 Crisis



https://www.jmb.ie/Members-Login?returnurl=%2fLinkClick.aspx%3ffileticket%3dQRW_uatAdxw%253d%26portalid%3d0%26resourceView%3d1%26forcedownload%3dtrue

Resources – Fixed-term contracts and CIDs



<https://www.jmb.ie/Members-Login?returnurl=%2fTraining-events%2fVideos%2fJMB-Training-Videos>

Elizabeth O'Connor

Training & Events, JMB

April 2021



Communications Report



Communications Report

AMCSS/JMB 34th Annual Conference 2021

JMB Bulletins 2020– 2021

Bulletin 01 **Reopening our Schools**

Bulletin 02 **Composite**

1. Amendments to Covid-19 Response Plan for Safe Re-opening of Post-primary
2. Guidance for Post Primary Schools on PPE, Consumables and Equipment

Bulletin 03 **Composite**

1. Additional Teaching Posts
2. Enhanced Supervision Supports

Bulletin 04 **Supervision and Substitution Scheme in each school**

Bulletin 05 **Composite**

1. Summary of DES Circular Letter 0054/2020 Covid-19 Arrangements Ancillary Staff
2. Summary of DES Circular Letter 0049/2020 Covid-19 Arrangements for Teachers and SNAs
3. JMB Advisory Note on Covid-19 Very High Risk and High Risk for Privately Paid Personnel
4. DES Employee Assistance Scheme extended to all school staff

Bulletin 06 **Education and Other Considerations for School Re-Opening**

Bulletin 07 **Composite**

1. Zoom Meeting Notification, tomorrow Friday, 21 August 10am.
2. Return to School - Questions and Answers

Bulletin 08 **Composite**

1. Meetings in Schools
2. FAQs on School Reopening

Bulletin 09 **Composite**

1. Sequence for Filling Available Teacher Posts/Hours for the 2020/21 School Year
2. Selection of Lead Worker Representative(s)

Bulletin 10 **Considerations Around the Issuing of Calculated Grade Results 2020**



Bulletin 11

Composite

1. Supporting students who are at very high risk to Covid-19
2. Foreign Language Assistants – New DES Protocol

Bulletin 12

Implementation of the Covid-19 Response Plan

Bulletin 13

Clarification on the use of face coverings in Post Primary schools

Bulletin 14

Template covid health and safety policy

Bulletin 15

Composite

1. External Supervisors and Additional Supervision Arrangements for the 2020/21 School Year
2. Covid-19 Illness Benefit and sample Covid-19 Sick Leave Policy for privately paid personnel.
3. Statement of Terms for Additional Teaching Hours OLCS

Bulletin 16

Composite

1. Vaccinations
2. Physical Education
3. Extra-curricular Activities
4. Parent Teacher Meetings
5. Open Evenings
6. Croke Park Hours
7. Staff Meetings
8. Field trips
9. Work Experience
10. Evening Study
11. Parents Association AGM
12. Board of Management Meetings
13. Board of Management Elections (Parent/Guardian nominees)
14. COVID 19 App
15. MLM Interviews
16. Use of School Premises for Outside Use
17. Foreign Trips
18. Guidance Lesson Plans at Junior Cycle – New Resources from NCGE

Bulletin 17

Admissions Application Forms/Enrolment

Bulletin 18

Composite

1. COVID-19 FAQs
2. HSELive
3. Email addresses and phone numbers for your local Public Health Department
4. Return to School Parental Declaration Form

Bulletin 19

Plan for Living with COVID-19

Bulletin 20

SSRS Inspections



Bulletin 21

Composite

1. Safe operation of schools during the pandemic
2. Admissions for the 2021/22 school year
3. Covid-19 Education SNA – HPSC Advice

Bulletin 22

Composite

1. State Examinations 2020
2. Schools and the HSE
3. Level 5 restrictions
4. Final date for the appointment of permanent and regular part-time (RPT) teachers for the school year 2020/21
5. Board of Management Training
6. Elections at Regional Level for the Council of AMCSS/JMB 2021/23
7. Catholic schools

Bulletin 23

Improved supportive measures to sustain the safe operation of schools and where a positive case of Covid-19 is identified and connected with a school

Bulletin 24

Elections to the Councils of AMCSS/JMB 2021-2023

Bulletin 25

Special Needs Assistants and the Optimum Usage of the 72 hours

Bulletin 26

Composite

1. Circular Letter on Junior Cycle
2. Supporting the Safe Provision of Schooling

Bulletin 27

Composite

1. Classroom-Based Assessment Arrangements, Assessment Tasks and Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) Meetings in 2020/21
2. Supervision of PME Students During Covid
3. Catholic Schools Week 2021

Bulletin 28

New section 29 appeal procedures

Bulletin 29

Shortage of substitute teachers

Bulletin 30

Composite

1. Summer Works Scheme
2. Exemption in Irish for Certain Newly Arrived Students
3. JMB Representative to the Junior Cycle Physical Education Development Group

Bulletin 31

Board of Management meetings and Child Protection Oversight



Bulletin 32

Composite

1. Demographic Review – Enrolment Data 2021/22
2. Guidance on Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning in a COVID-19 Context
3. Staff Return to Work, January 6th, 2021
4. Letter to Parents
5. Staff and Travel
6. Allianz
7. Christmas Arrangements for the Secretariat of Secondary Schools

Bulletin 33

Composite

1. Extension of Christmas Holidays
2. OLCS and payment of staff
3. Ancillary Staff
4. Middle Leadership and Management Appointments
5. Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle Examinations 2021 – Important Updates

Bulletin 34

School Re-Opening, January 2021

Bulletin 35

Composite

1. Minister Foley's Announcement on Engagement with Students from January 11th, 2021
2. Letter to BOM from FORSA

Bulletin 36

Continuation of the School Meals Programme

Bulletin 37

Composite

1. Job-Sharing
2. Career Breaks
3. Secondments

Bulletin 38

State Examination Component Timeframes – Update from SEC

Bulletin 39

Composite

1. Launch of Spectrum.Life Digital Wellbeing Series and Digital Gym - DES Employment Assistance Scheme
2. Circular on Inspectorate Engagement with Schools
3. Temporary Changes to the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)
4. UCAS – Estimating of Grades
5. Remote Teaching of SPHE and RSE

Bulletin 40

Staying Safe Online



- Bulletin 41** **Composite**
1. Mock Leaving Certificate Examinations in 2021
 2. Consultation on RSE/SPHE
 3. Catholic Education Partnership (CEP) and Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools (APTCS)
 4. Redeployment 2021
- Bulletin 42** **Phased Re-Opening of Post Primary Schools – Phase 1: Special Classes**
- Bulletin 43** **In-person Supplementary Programme**
- Bulletin 44** **Seniority List for Redeployment Purposes**
- Bulletin 45** **Composite**
1. Leaving Certificate 2021
 2. School Transport for Special Class Reopening
 3. Supplementary Programme – Insurance Clarification
 4. Student Return to School Declaration
- Bulletin 46** **Phased Re-Opening of Post Primary Schools – Phase 2: Sixth Years**
- Bulletin 47** **Budget 2021 Illness Benefit changes requiring possible amendments to sick leave pay contractual terms for non-teaching staff**
- Bulletin 48** **Composite**
1. State Examinations and Accredited Grades for Leaving Certificate 2021
 2. Teacher Allocations
 3. Ancillary Personnel - Reopening schools
 4. Work Safely Protocol – Returning to School
- Bulletin 49** **Redeployment in accordance with Circular 0024/2015 (Ward Report)**
- Bulletin 50** **Composite**
1. PME Supervision Payments
 2. Oral Examinations
 3. Continuation of Phase 2 – March 15th
- Bulletin 51** **Leaving Certificate Candidate Portal**
- Bulletin 52** **Composite**
1. Allocations
 2. Compulsory Redeployment
 3. Ward Redeployments
- Bulletin 53** **Composite**
1. Oral Language Interviewers - Vetting
 2. Leaving Certificate Geography – PDST Supports re Coursework
 3. Assessment and Reporting – Junior Cycle 2021
 4. New Entrants 2021 Assessment Tests



JMB Submissions 2020-2021

- Submission 01 JMB Submission to the Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, on the topic 'School Bullying and The Impact on Mental Health'
- Submission 02 JMB Submission on the Draft Framework for a new Primary Curriculum
- Submission 03 JMB Submission on 'Ensuring that Schools are open in a manner which is both Safe and Sustainable' to the Oireachtas Special Committee on Covid-19 Response
- Submission 04 JMB Submission: Example of a risk assessment exercise for schools planning opening 2020-2021
- Submission 05 JMB Submission: Example of operational issues for schools opening 2020-2021
- Submission 06 JMB Submission on the Re-opening of Schools 2020
- Submission 07 JMB Submission on Health and Safety Considerations
- Submission 08 JMB Briefing Statement on the Proposed New Model of Allocating SNAs to Mainstream Schools
- Submission 09 JMB Submission to NCCA on the Review of Senior Cycle
- Submission 10 JMB Submission on Textbook Rental and Educational Technologies
- Submission 11 JMB Submission on the DES Draft Guidelines on the Use of Reduced Timetables in Schools
- Submission 12 JMB Pre-Budget Submission 2021
- Submission 13 JMB Submission on Harmful Online Content
- Submission 14 JMB Submission to the NCSE Consultation on Special Schools and Classes
- Submission 15 JMB Submission on Supporting the DEIS Programme in Voluntary Secondary Schools
- Submission 16 JMB Submission to NCSE on a Customer Charter and Customer Service Action Plan
- Submission 17 JMB Submission to DES on a New Statement of Strategy
- Submission 18 JMB Submission on the School Building Programme and related matters
- Submission 19 JMB Submission on the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018
- Submission 20 JMB Submission on School Costs and related matters
- Submission 21 JMB Submission on Relationships and Sexuality Education to the NCCA
- Submission 22 JMB Submission on Granting Exemptions from the Study of Irish
- Submission 23 JMB Commentary on Scheduling SLAR Meetings



FSSU Guidelines 2020-2021

Financial Guideline 01	Important Dates for the School Year 2020/2021
Financial Guideline 02	Update from the Revenue Commissioners COVID-19 Payments - New Employment Wage Support Scheme
Financial Guideline 03	Financial Year-End 31st August 2020 on Surf Accounts
Financial Guideline 04	Financial Year-End 2019/2020 on Sage 50
Financial Guideline 06	Annual VAT Return of Trading Details (RTD)
Financial Guideline 07	Payments to Members of Selection Committees
Financial Guideline 08	Preparation and Submission of Annual School Accounts for the Year 2019/2020
Financial Guideline 10	Revised salary rates applicable from 1st October 2020 for Privately paid School Secretaries & Caretakers, Cleaners, Other privately paid staff
Financial Guideline 13	Supervision and Substitution payments to schools during the school year 2020/2021 & hourly rates of pay for Supervision and Substitution duties
Financial Guideline 14	Registration with the Charities Regulator and updating Board of Management Members details
Financial Guideline 15	Government Budget Summary 2021
Financial Guideline 16	Additional Superannuation Contribution (ASC)
Financial Guideline 17	Revision of Schools Support Staff Funding Grant Rates for Voluntary Secondary Schools in the Free Education Scheme
Financial Guideline 18	Grants payable to Non-Fee Paying Voluntary Secondary Schools School year 2020/2021
Financial Guideline 19	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Payment to staff for enhanced supervision hours and enhanced cleaning hours2. COVID-19 Grants
Financial Guideline 20	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Update from the Revenue Commissioners2. COVID-19 Payments - Employment Wage Support Scheme (EWSS)
Financial Guideline 21	VAT Compensation Scheme for Charities