



Research and Development Officer Professional Learning, School Culture and Communities of Practice

The Organisation

JMB/AMCSS represents the interests of, and negotiates on behalf of, voluntary secondary schools on all issues at national level that affect the management of schools. It meets at national level and consults continually with its constituent groups. In discharging these functions, the JMB interfaces with the Department of Education and Youth, Patrons and Trustees, the teacher unions, parent groups, other professional educational associations and bodies, and other Departments of State.

The mission of the AMCSS/JMB is

- To promote the interests of voluntary secondary schools through negotiations with the DEY and the other education partners
- To give leadership to the voluntary secondary schools through the articulation of well-prepared policies on issues of current concern and future development
- To provide support services for the Boards of Management and the Principals through a professional Secretariat staff structure
- To work in partnership with the Catholic Education Partnership (CEP), the Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools (APTCS) and the Irish Schoolheads' Association (ISA) to support and promote the ethos of Catholic schools and the ethos in each of the schools affiliated to the ISA.

Overview

The appointee will work as part of the Education, Research and Development (ERD) Unit of the Secretariat of Secondary Schools and will contribute to the implementation of the JMB/AMCSS Statement of Strategy 2026–2030.

This Research and Development Officer position is designed to support the development of leadership capacity, sustained professional learning and collaborative school improvement across the voluntary secondary school sector.

A central feature of the role will be the development and facilitation of communities of practice for school leaders as detailed below. This work will support schools in responding to national policy developments, strengthening inclusive practice, implementing curriculum and assessment reform, and enhancing organisational culture and leadership capacity.

The role will include responsibility for coordinating and supporting programmes in partnership with the Roche Centre for Catholic Education and under the direction of the Director of Formation at Boston College Ireland. Working closely with participating school leadership teams, the appointee will support programme implementation, facilitate professional learning and peer engagement, and help schools translate programme learning into practical school improvement processes.

The appointee will also contribute to the broader work of the ERD team including research, policy development, consultation processes, event planning, communications, stakeholder engagement and direct support for member schools in the areas of Inclusive Practice and Curriculum Redevelopment.

Candidate Profile – Essential Competencies and Experience

The successful candidate will be able to demonstrate experience and capability in the following areas:

- Professional learning, facilitation and adult learning.
- Curriculum, assessment, inclusion and school improvement.
- The development of communities of practice, collaborative learning and network leadership.
- Research, policy development and evidence-informed practice.
- Communication, stakeholder engagement, leadership and collaborative working.

The successful candidate will have experience of working with educators, school leaders or educational organisations and will demonstrate the capacity to support professional learning, leadership development and school improvement initiatives within the voluntary secondary school sector.

Experience of coaching, mentoring, facilitation, organisational culture development, leadership formation or system leadership would be advantageous.

The successful candidate will be expected to undertake occasional travel, school visitation and scheduled evening or weekend work as required.

Tenure: This role is available on a full-time basis. **This role is not available as a secondment.**

Employer: The Secretariat of Secondary Schools is the employer, and the line manager will be the Assistant General Secretary (Education, Research & Development). In relation to the School Culture Collaborative and Leadership Formation initiatives, the successful candidate will work closely with and receive professional guidance from the Director of Leadership Formation, Boston College Ireland.

Place of Work: The Research and Development Officer will be based in the JMB Secretariat of Secondary Schools' Offices at Emmet House, Milltown, Dublin 14. Travel outside the office and school visitation and occasionally scheduled out of hours and weekend work will be required. A hybrid/remote working policy is in place.

Salary and Pension: Information regarding salary and pension details are available from the Assistant General Secretary for Corporate Services. Email corporateservices@jmb.ie

Key Areas of Responsibility

1. School Culture Collaborative Programme in Partnership with Boston College

To undertake the role of School Culture Collaborative (SCC) Coordinator. Coordinator will contribute on a part-time basis (2 days per week) to the implementation, coordination and ongoing development of the programme, acting as the primary point of contact for all the participating schools. The coordinator will work closely with the Director of Leadership Formation in Boston College, Ireland to ensure seamless programme delivery.

Key Responsibilities as SCC Coordinators:

Programme Management: Coordinate all aspects of the SCC, including in person professional development sessions and the regional/online cluster meetings.

School Support: Serve as a coach and mentor to the participating school teams, providing guidance and support as they implement their school-based culture processes. This includes scheduled school visits.

Network Facilitation: Facilitate the establishment and growth of the peer-to-peer network, encouraging collaboration, idea exchange, and shared learning among schools.

Communication and Liaison: Act as a liaison between JMB, Boston College Ireland, and the participating schools.

Programme Support: Provide Programme and Post Primary Facilitation Support for Boston College Ireland Initiatives

Formation: Participate in a programme of formation for the Roche Center for Catholic Education to assure alignment with programme vision and values.

Reporting: Prepare regular reports on programme progress, challenges, and successes for JMB.

2. Communities of Practice and Professional Learning

Informed by national policy developments in curriculum redevelopment, assessment, inclusion and school improvement, lead and support the development of communities of practice for school leadership teams.

Design, coordinate and facilitate sustained programmes of professional learning that combine structured input, collaborative inquiry, peer learning, reflection on practice and action planning.

Support participating schools to identify priorities for development, implement agreed actions within their own contexts, review progress and share learning through iterative cycles of engagement.

Develop communities of practice that enable school leaders and educators to work collaboratively on the practical implementation of curriculum change, inclusive practice and school improvement.

Evaluate the impact of communities of practice and professional learning initiatives and contribute to the dissemination of emerging learning and effective practice across the voluntary secondary sector.

3. Curriculum, Assessment and Inclusion

Engage with national developments relating to curriculum, assessment, inclusion and special educational needs.

Support the work of the ERD team with relevant agencies including the Department of Education and Youth, NCCA, Oide, NCSE, SEC, NEPS, the Inspectorate and the Teaching Council and engage with system leaders as relevant to this role at a national level.

Engage with and support relevant JMB advisory groups and representative structures.

4. Research, Policy Development and Advocacy

Contribute to research projects relevant to the strategic priorities of JMB/AMCSS.

Contribute to the evaluation of Leadership development, school culture and professional learning initiatives undertaken by JMB/AMCSS.

Support consultation responses, submissions, briefing papers and policy development.

With regard to areas of responsibility, gather and analyse evidence from schools to inform JMB advocacy at a national level.

Participate in JMB national advisory groups and stakeholder engagement processes as required.

5. Direct School Support and Communications

Provide advice, guidance and support to school leaders and educators in areas relevant to the role, including curriculum redevelopment, inclusive practice, professional learning, leadership development and school improvement.

Respond to queries from member schools and support schools in implementing national policy developments relating to curriculum, assessment and inclusion.

Participate in school visits, meetings and professional learning events.

Develop guidance materials, resources and supports to assist schools in implementing educational initiatives and responding to emerging challenges.

Contribute to the planning and delivery of conferences, seminars and professional learning events.

6. Secretariat Activities

Participate fully in the work of the ERD Unit and the wider Secretariat.

Contribute to strategic projects and cross-functional initiatives.

Participate in team and inter-team staff meetings and organisational planning processes.

Undertake other duties appropriate to the role as may arise from time to time.