



IPPN Annual Members' Report 2023/2024

Tacaíocht, Spreagadh, Misneach
Supporting School Leadership

ippn 
Leading and Learning

The value of school leadership

‘We know school leadership is shaped by the school’s context; we know that it has a moral purpose to make a positive difference and we also know that it is most effective when it is shared. Most importantly, we know that it matters. It’s a very simple equation – effective school leaders mean effective schools and effective schools mean better outcomes for children. Therefore, making sure that school leaders can dedicate themselves to delivering effective leadership must be a system imperative.’



[Primary School Leadership:](#)

[The Case for Urgent Action - A Roadmap to Sustainability](#)

IPPN, 2022

All text in blue contains hyperlinks

Photographs throughout:
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A message from our CEO and President

The aim of this report is to provide members with an overview of the work that has been undertaken over the past 12 months, both to support and to advocate on behalf of members. As we approach the final year of our 5-year work plan - *IPPN Strategic Priorities 2021 - 2025*, the team reflects on what has been achieved in relation to the specific objectives set out in that plan. The report details the approach taken by the organisation to improving and developing the advocacy, supports and services provided to members. The needs of school leaders are central to everything IPPN does.

We look forward to engaging with as many of you as possible throughout the year at the city/county network meetings, at our conferences, and via online gatherings, webinars, emails and phone calls.

Is sinne le mór mheas

Páirc Clerkin
CEO

Louise Tobin
President 2023-2025

IPPN Vision, Mission & Values

WHO WE ARE

IPPN is the professional body for the leaders of Irish primary schools. It is an independent, not-for-profit, voluntary association with a local, regional and national presence. Recognised by the Minister for Education as an official Education Partner, IPPN works with the Department of Education (DE), the National Parents' Council (NPC), management bodies, unions, education agencies, academic institutions and children's charities, towards the advancement of primary education. IPPN articulates the collective knowledge and professional experience of over 6,000 Principals and Deputy Principals.

WHAT WE DO

The importance of school leadership as an influence on, and key determinant of, pupil learning has been clearly established. The equation is simple – effective school leadership leads to school effectiveness, which in turn leads to better outcomes for children. It is, therefore, a priority that school leaders should be empowered and supported to deliver that effective

leadership in our schools, thereby maintaining their focus on what is most closely aligned with their core purpose – leading teaching and learning.

IPPN aspires to empower school leaders to provide the most effective leadership of their school communities. We do so through the provision of supports and services that enable that empowerment, and through our advocacy for the enhancement of leadership capacity, effectiveness and sustainability. This work is shaped directly by our engagement with our members to ensure that it reflects their needs and perspectives. We also advocate with our fellow Education Partners in the best interests of children, schools and school leaders.

The way in which we work to achieve our stated objectives is underpinned by our values of respect, trust and professionalism, which define us as an organisation.





VISION

Empowered Leaders;
Inspired Learners



MISSION

To support and advocate for sustainable highly effective leadership
Tacaíocht, Misneach & Spreagadh



VALUES

Our values define us as an organisation:
Respect | Trust | Professionalism

OBJECTIVES

To achieve our primary organisational goal - empowered leaders; inspired learners

to strengthen our network - harnessing the capacity and capability of school leaders

to maximise IPPN's impact - building collaborative relationships with key stakeholders

to enhance our supports and services - reflecting the needs of today's school leaders

Strategic Priorities 2021-2025

To progress the work on our stated objectives, we establish priorities that form the basis of our strategic plan. The plan was developed in consultation with our members, our Board of Directors, our staff and key stakeholders across the education sector. It identified five areas of strategic priority.

Sustainable Leadership - to create the conducive conditions that will enhance leadership capacity, effectiveness and sustainability in all schools. The Deputy CEO leads on this work.

Member Engagement - to provide all our members with access to the resources, guidance and networks required to support them in their roles as school leaders and, through this engagement, to attain insights that will inform IPPN's future plans and maximise our impact. The IPPN President leads on this work.

Professional Learning for Leadership - to strengthen our facilitation of professional learning and development opportunities, ensuring they are

inclusive, relevant, and impactful. The Leadership Support Team and the Professional Development committee of the National Council lead on this work.

Communications - to embed effective communication in all aspects of IPPN's work and to continue to improve communication with our members and the education stakeholders. The Advocacy team leads on this work.

Governance - to strengthen IPPN's governance structures to ensure efficiency, transparency and accountability at all levels within the organisation. The CEO and General Manager lead on this work.



Sustainable Leadership Project

IPPN's direct engagement with members has highlighted the increasing levels of challenge, frustration and disillusionment experienced and articulated by school leaders in response to their experience of the practice of leadership. The intensity of that sense of frustration and disillusionment has noticeably increased in recent years and prompted IPPN to undertake its Sustainable Leadership project.

The purpose of the project is to explore and understand:

- why so many of those who are tasked with one of the most strategically important roles in education, and a key determinant of a school's effectiveness, are struggling to sustain themselves in those roles
- what are the factors that are undermining that sustainability
- what is the impact on their leadership practice
- what are the implications for their health and well-being, and
- what can be done to render school leadership roles more effective and sustainable.

EVIDENCE GATHERING AND ANALYSIS

As part of phase 1 of the project, we endeavoured to:

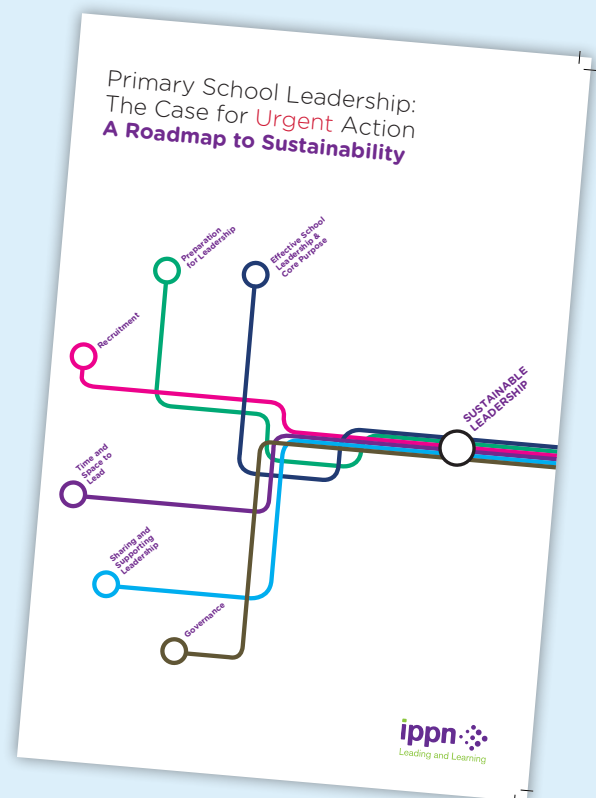
1. provide a research-informed analysis of the current reality of primary school leadership and
2. explore the key issues and identify solutions that will have a positive impact on leadership capacity, effectiveness and sustainability, with a consequential positive impact on school effectiveness and outcomes for children.

This culminated in the publication of a report in November 2022 - *Primary School Leadership: The Case for Urgent Action - A Roadmap to Sustainability* - which can be accessed [here](#).

In November 2023, IPPN published a progress report on the project in order to

- reaffirm the rationale underpinning the project.
- highlight what actions had been undertaken and what progress had been made since the publication of the original report.
- provide an up-to-date evidence base which demonstrates an ongoing need for action.

The progress report can be accessed [here](#).



There are four elements to the evidence base:

1. The extent to which the workload of school leaders has increased since 2016.
2. The nature of that workload with reference to the domains of the quality framework for leadership and management
3. The impact of the preceding factors on the sustainability of leadership roles
4. The impact on the health & wellbeing of school leaders as measured by an independent research study.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

1. The breadth of tasks and responsibilities that are ascribed to school leaders has increased considerably over the last 8 years as each circular, each set of policy guidelines, and each new scheme or initiative is published.
2. Those tasks and responsibilities demonstrate a significantly disproportionate focus on managing the organisation with a much lesser focus on the leadership of teaching, learning and school development.
3. This is impacting on the sustainability of leadership roles with the mean score for all principals rating that sustainability at 3.61 out of 10 with teaching principals reporting a rating of just 3.18 out of 10.
4. 97% of principals agree that the factor that most undermines the sustainability of their roles is the number of tasks & responsibilities they have to undertake that have nothing to do with their core purpose.

5. The experience of the practice of leadership is having a serious and detrimental impact on the health & wellbeing of school leaders with their negative health scores being double or more than double those of the healthy working population and with 54% now falling into either the high or severe categories of burnout.
6. If the job of principal became vacant in their school, 81% of deputy principals would not apply chiefly because of the negative impact it would have on their health and their work / life balance.

WHERE IMPROVEMENT CAN BE ACHIEVED

Three areas clearly emerge which, if addressed, have the potential to have a profound impact on leadership practice in Irish primary schools.

1. Role clarity
2. Sharing of leadership
3. School Governance.

If school leaders were enabled to maintain their focus on their core purpose through greater clarity of role, if they had greater capacity to share leadership effectively and if our schools had a governance structure that had the capacity to meet its onerous responsibilities, then

- there would be greater leadership capacity within our schools,
- that leadership would be more effective and
- those leadership roles would be more sustainable.





Advocacy

A key aspect of IPPN's work is to advocate for improved policy and funding for primary education, as well as leadership development and supports for school leaders. Our advocacy work covers IPPN's overall vision for school leadership, as well as our key objectives outlined above, as well as specific issues and concerns that relate to particular cohorts of our members, including special schools, schools led by teaching principals, DEIS schools and developing schools.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Having built credibility and influence over the past several years, particularly during the Covid pandemic – see below under Stakeholder Development - IPPN is now proactively leading in certain discussions with the Department and key agencies such as the NCSE on matters of significant importance to school leaders and primary education.

Over the past year or so, IPPN has lobbied extensively, through our position papers, and our budget and other submissions, as well as directly with the Secretary General of the Department of Education, the Minister for Education, senior officials, the Chief Inspector, our fellow education partners, education agency leaders and political opposition spokespersons. The following achievements for school leaders are the result:

2024

- At the IPPN/NAPD symposium on education and leadership in January 2024, the DE acknowledged that it accepted the data and analysis with regard to the unsustainability of school leadership roles and that the focus now needed to move to actions and solutions.
- IPPN made specific proposals to the DE in relation to
 - Role Clarity
 - Time to Lead
 - Enhancing current governance practice in schools
 - Determining what governance structure would best meet the needs of schools into the future
- IPPN met with DE officials in March, April, May and June to progress discussion of our proposals. A further meeting is scheduled in September.
- IPPN has developed three costed models for the **increased allocation of leadership time** to primary schools

The Small Schools Action Research Project has been **extended by two years** to further explore clustered approaches to the sharing of leadership and development of leadership capacity.

- IPPN has developed a tool to allow schools to **reflect on their leadership practice** with reference to the domains and standards of the quality framework for leadership and management
 - **The three-year longitudinal research study** on leaders' wellbeing, commissioned by IPPN and NAPD, has been completed with early reports on the **2024 data indicating a slight improvement in a few key areas**. This suggests that actions taken so far are having an impact.
 - **The Small Schools Action Research Project** has been **extended by two years** to further explore clustered approaches to the sharing of leadership and development of leadership capacity. **Some** of the **initiatives** piloted within the project have been sanctioned for implementation across all schools e.g. combining SET hours and Principal leadership and management days to form full-time posts in schools. This is **already having a profound impact**. Another initiative being explored is the creation of an Administrative Officer role to support the schools in a cluster – early indicators are that this is also having a significant positive impact on the schools and on the sustainability of school leadership.
 - **Free School Book Scheme** - IPPN conducted a survey of schools to evaluate the experience of implementing the scheme. 584 schools responded to the survey, providing rich data and feedback. That data and feedback were shared with the Department of Education (DE) to inform the planning for the implementation of the scheme in 2024. Account was taken of that feedback with the enhancement of the Administrative Support Fund, in recognition of the additional workload, and the scaling back of the audit process to make it more manageable.
- 2023**
- The position paper prepared by the National Council's Advocacy sub-committee on **SEN Allocations, Resources & Appeals** was welcomed by the DE and the NCSE. IPPN's focus has been to ensure that schools are allocated sufficient teaching resources to better ensure that they can meet the needs of all children and that those resources are distributed fairly and equitably. Children with the greatest level of need should receive the greatest level of support. Some improvements to the allocations model were made, including the use of a more accurate data set, a commitment to move towards schools declaring the level of resources they require and the recruitment of more SENOs. However, there is clearly some way to travel before the confidence of school leaders in the accuracy of allocations, and in the methodology used to calculate them, is achieved. Among the elements from the position paper taken into account are:
 - The use of a **more accurate data set**
 - the **recruitment of more SENOs** – by September 2024 there will be 120 SENOs in role, which is double the number that were in role when the position paper was published in June 2023
 - All **schools re-profiled** and will be on an annual basis, to guard against schools being disadvantaged by significant enrolment changes
 - Indicators of **progress towards** a stage where "schools have more input into identifying the need in their school". A move to such a **high-trust model of self-declaration** would be the most effective and efficient way to ensure that

schools were resourced adequately to meet the additional needs of children

- IPPN proposal re internship programme for newly-qualified teachers to provide support to special schools undertaking the Summer Programme is being piloted
- Our submission for **Budget 2024** achieved a number of improvements for school leaders:
 - **Deputy principals in special schools to have administrative status** (threshold removed) from Sep 2024
 - **Capitation grant to be increased to €200** from Sep 2024 (back to 2010 'pre-Austerity' level). Additional once-off measures also provided for cost-of-living increases amounting to an additional €49 per pupil. Education partners had sought an increase to €275 per pupil per annum and will do so again for Budget 2025.
 - **Additional posts of responsibility** €4m across primary and post-primary – details to follow from the DE **Funding continue the pilot mental health in schools** projects into 2024
 - Key issues relating to **SNAs** are being progressed through the implementation of the SNA Workforce Development Plan.

STAKEHOLDER DEVELOPMENT

IPPN has put significant effort into building positive, collaborative relationships with the key stakeholders in education, to ensure that the challenges, concerns and opportunities relating to primary education and school leadership are fully understood. This approach helps when key policy and funding decisions are being made. Over the past year or so, given our current strategic priorities, our primary focus has been on collaboration with the DE, the NCSE and Oide.

Working Groups

The DE and other education agencies have established a number of working groups to progress their policy work on a range of matters. IPPN is involved in the following working groups:

- Primary Education Forum (PEF) and its Consultation and Communications sub-committees

- Oide Leadership Steering Committee
- Anti-bullying Forum
- Primary Principalship Pre-appointment Programme Group
- Steering Group for the Professional Diploma in School Leadership
- Partnership Schools Ireland
- Small School Action Research Project Steering Group
- Summer Programme Steering Group
- Wellbeing for All (IPPN, NAPD, Teaching Council, National Parents Council and the Ombudsman for Children)
- Education Sub Committee of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy - STAR Project
- NCCA Early Childhood, Primary Curriculum and Cross-sectoral developments
- COGG - Choiste Comhairleach um Polasaí don Oideachas Gaeltachta
- TCD and Barnardos' CVDA (Children living with violence and domestic abuse).
- Children's and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) – nationally and at county level
- Education Matters Yearbook Editorial Board
- Global Citizenship, Education for Sustainable Leadership
- BEACONS project - working with the OECD to explore the means of engagement with education policymaking and enactment in Ireland.

IPPN is also represented internationally on the Board and Committees of

- the International Confederation of Principals (ICP)
- European School Heads Association (ESHA)

POSITION PAPERS AND SUBMISSIONS

IPPN uses 'position papers' to set out our vision for particular aspects of primary education that require change. They are evidence-based and reflect the real issues on the ground in our schools.

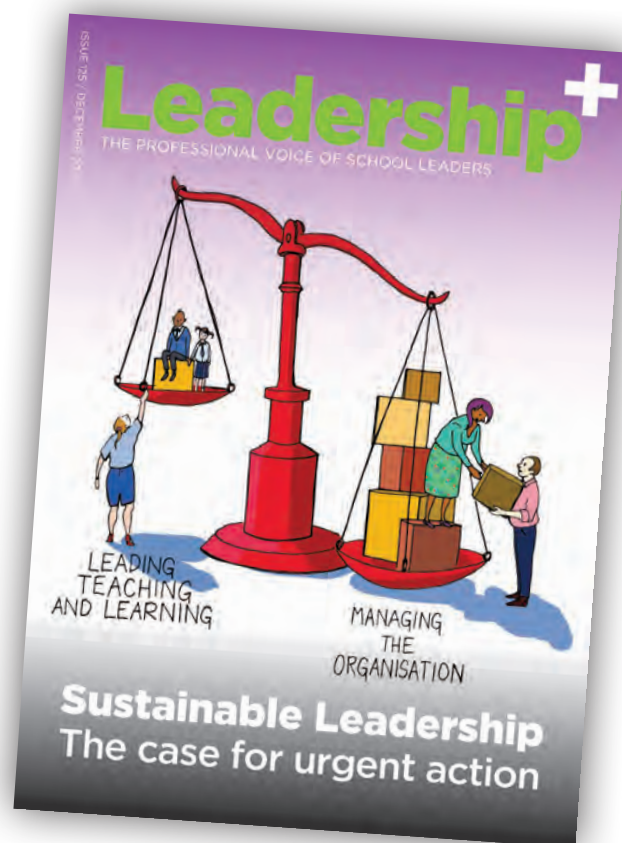
Similar to our position papers, submissions also set out IPPN's views on a particular issue, however they are generally in response to an invitation to contribute a viewpoint or suggestion, for example to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education. We would generally include our key objectives where relevant, as well as responding to the specific issue under discussion.

Over the past year, IPPN has advocated with stakeholders on the following topics:

- Position Paper on School Leaders' Wellbeing - June 2024
- Budget 2025 submission - June 2024
- NCCA re. Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications - June 2024
- DE re. Teacher Supply (revised working paper) - June 2024
- Proposal re. increased Leadership and Management Time in schools - May 2024
- Oide re. Phase 1 of the Small Schools Action Research Project - May 2024
- Oide re. their Strategic Plan - May 2024
- Citizens Assembly on the Future of Education - February 2024
- IPPN Feedback to the DE on the implementation of the Free Schoolbooks Scheme - November 2023
- Working Paper on Teacher Supply - August 2023
- Position Paper - SEN Allocations, Resources & Appeals - June 2023

The full set of position papers and submissions is available in the Advocacy section of www.ippn.ie.

- [Wellbeing Position Paper](#)
- [Working Paper on Teacher Supply](#)



LEADERSHIP+

IPPN publishes five issues of Leadership+ per school year, showcasing members' own research and the work IPPN does on behalf of members as well as bringing external perspectives on matters of relevance to school leaders - researchers, policy-makers, stakeholders, education thought leaders etc. It is circulated to all member schools, associate members, education stakeholders and key academics. Advertising provides an income stream to offset some of the design, print and postage costs.

[LINK Leadership+ 2023/2024](#)

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Direct contact with principals and deputy principals is a vital part of IPPN's work. It helps IPPN to attain insights that will inform our future plans and maximise our impact. Over the past year, IPPN has engaged with members directly in city and county network meetings, at IPPN conferences, in the context of leadership support and the Headstart programme, as well as during school visits by the IPPN President.



RESEARCH

IPPN conducts and commissions research to determine the nature and depth of the issues in primary education, particularly in relation to school leadership and management. The resulting research publications are used both to develop understanding of the issues, challenges and potential solutions among stakeholders, as well as to support school leaders directly in their work.

A current focus is on the wellbeing of school leaders, and on the sustainability of leadership roles.

Sustainable Leadership

As part of this project, IPPN commissioned Deakin University to conduct research in 2022, 2023 and in 2024 on Irish School Leaders' Health & Wellbeing (jointly commissioned with NAPD). Results from 2023 were presented in the Sustainable Leadership project Progress Report in November 2023. Results for 2024 will be disseminated through City and County Network meetings and further project updates.

The Role of the Deputy Principal

The need for greater clarity on the role of the Deputy was identified within the Sustainable Leadership report. Accordingly, IPPN has agreed to part-fund a research project being conducted by Maynooth University on the role of the Deputy Principal, as the focus of the research and its findings will have a resonance for the work of IPPN and school leaders. It is anticipated that the research findings will be reported in October 2024.

Small Schools Clustering Action Research Project

IPPN has supported the Small Schools Clustering Action research project through facilitation of two clusters of four schools and liaising with the wider project team through the National Coordinator.

The full set of [research publications](#) is available in the Advocacy section of our website.



Supports & Services

From the National Support Office in Cork, IPPN provides the following supports and services to the 6,000+ principals and deputy principals of over 3,000 IPPN-member primary schools. IPPN members tell us that they place a very high value on this support and are reassured to know that back-up is available to them when and if they need it.

The following is an outline of the work done to support members over the past year:

LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

Professional Guidance

This one-to-one confidential advisory service, provided by a team of skilled experienced principals, offers collegial support and guidance of a non-directive and non-legal nature. The team also answers queries of a factual nature. Feedback from members indicates that this service is very highly valued. From September 2023 to June 2024, the Leadership Support team responded to **2405 queries from 1,226 principals and deputy principals**. Among the topics dealt with, the following were the most common:

- School Policies - Policy Development
- Relationship Management - Interpersonal Conflict/ conflict management
- Parent & Pupils - Disruptive Parents
- BoM - BoM Procedures & Rules
- HR Admin - Absences/Leave

The team closely monitors the issues and queries raised by members and this information is factored into the plans for the development of resources and CPD.

E-scéal

This weekly email bulletin is issued every Thursday afternoon to school leaders. It is a crucial resource for principals and deputy principals, as it is a 'one-stop-shop' providing key and up-to-date information from across the sector as well as planning prompts, professional guidance, circular/information note releases and other important reminders. Members who read their E-scéal every week are assured that they will not miss any key information. 36 E-scéalta were issued during the 2023/2024 school year. Average open rates have increased year on year, with more than two thirds of all IPPN members reading E-scéal each week.

Planning Prompts

Planning Prompts are an integral part of IPPN's weekly E-scéal. They are not intended to be a 'to do' list, but a guide to important areas of possible planning during the following week. The planning prompts may be categorised under certain headings, including Administration, BoM, Curriculum Planning, Policy development and review. IPPN's Planning Prompts are available to download from www.ippn.ie via the 'Resources' tab.

Mailing Lists

The IPPN networking mailing list is one of the most informative and immediate supports available to school leaders, to answer queries encountered on a daily basis. It is a 'closed' mailing lists i.e. this means that the content of the emails is intended for IPPN members only (i.e. Principals & Deputy Principals). This peer-to-peer support community has in excess of 5,500 subscribers. Several million emails were sent during the 2023/2024 calendar year.

Networking developments (noted by staff) – what are they?

The advice@ippn.ie mailing list is for sensitive, confidential and non-generic queries, which are answered offline by members of our Professional Guidance Team as an extension of the Leadership Support service. In 2023/2024, NN queries were raised via the mailing list.

The advocacy@ippn.ie mailing list is for queries, feedback and suggestions relating to IPPN's work representing school leaders' concerns and needs to stakeholders. The queries are reviewed each week and escalated where needed to the senior leadership team and the Advocacy Committee of the National Council.

LEADERSHIP SUPPORT GROUPS

As the name suggests, IPPN was founded as a network with its underpinning principle being that the wisdom of the collective can inform and enhance the practice and experience of the individual. In this respect, local Leadership Support Groups have proven to be the most effective form of support available to school leaders (principals and deputy principals).

Whether organised informally at local level or facilitated through an Education Centre, each Leadership Support Group has its own dynamic and its own characteristic spirit. Attendees at meetings of these groups can expect support, collegiality, dialogue and empathy from fellow school leaders. It is IPPN's stated ambition to provide a Local Support Group for every school leader in the country who wishes to take part in one.

An audit of support groups was commenced in June 2024. This will assist in identifying areas where new/expanded support groups are required. Two new online support groups for deputy principals have been established; one for deputy principals in special schools, the other for those whose role is administrative.

IPPN is looking specifically at how to promote the importance of the role of the local support group for the sustainability of the leadership role and for the wellbeing of the school leader. Feedback from members indicates that participation in a local support group is a key support to them in their professional role, and a support which significantly reduces role isolation and its consequential impact. Membership engagement on this and many other issues will continue to be a key focus of the IPPN President during the next school year.

In the 2023/2024 school year, a review of resource bundles was undertaken. The Child Protection Resource Bundle was updated to take into account the most recent information.

RESOURCE BUNDLES

IPPN Resources Bundles are where school leaders will find the answers and supporting documentation relating to the most common queries school leaders encounter in the day-to-day management of their schools. These comprehensive resources are produced in an easy-to-use, interactive e-publication format and hosted on ippn.ie.

In the 2023/2024 school year, a review of resource bundles was undertaken. The Child Protection Resource Bundle was updated to take into account the most recent information. Other resource bundles will be updated during the 2024/25 school year.

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

From September 2023 to August 2024, IPPN hosted many local, regional and national CPD events for school leaders with over **2,500** school leaders participating at regional and national events and members attending local IPPN County/City Network Meetings across the 26 counties.

These CPD events provided an opportunity to hear fresh thinking from leading figures in education and other sectors, participate in stimulating workshops and to network with colleagues.

Autumn City/County Network Meetings

There is an annual meeting of IPPN members held in each city/county network in September or October, bringing key updates, information on the 'hot topics' and offering support to members. It is an opportunity for members to meet your fellow principals and deputy principals. There is also an opportunity to become more involved with IPPN by

representing your county at National Council level. Louise Tobin, IPPN President & Páirc Clerkin, IPPN CEO, Deirdre Kelly, IPPN President-elect, Brian O'Doherty, Sustainable Leadership Project Co-Ordinator and Jack Durkan, Supports & Services Manager visited each county in Autumn 2023. We had over **934** members register to attend their local meeting. During these meetings, members of the National Council were elected to our new City/Council structure with specific roles:

- Advocacy & Communication
- E-Services
- Professional Development.

Other IPPN CPD Events

- **Principals' Conference 2023** - this event took place at the INEC Gleneagle, Killarney from Wednesday, November 15th to Friday November 17th. 905 principals attended the event, which was fully booked.
- **Deputy Principals' Conference 2024** - this event took place in Galmont Hotel, Galway on Thursday, February 8th and Friday, February 9th with 400+ members attending this event, which represents an increase of 5%. This conference also was fully booked.
- **Co-Leadership, Core Purpose - Shared Learning Day** - this was a pilot event with our National Council and their leadership partners hosted in the Killeshin Hotel in March 2024.
- **Ciall Ceannaithe online summer course, hosted in July 2024** - 408 teachers, principals and deputy principals participated. Designed for current and aspiring leaders, this course is reviewed and updated annually.



Education Expo

Education Expo brings together principals and over 120 companies providing supports and services to schools under one roof during the IPPN annual principals' conference, and again at the deputy principals' conference. The IPPN Principals' Conference 2023 took place in the INEC Killarney in November 2023. The Deputy Principals' Conference 2024 took place in The Galmont Hotel, Galway in February 2024. Both events were sold out and hosted a wide range of national and international companies over two days.

HEADSTART - SUPPORT FOR NEWLY APPOINTED PRINCIPALS

The Headstart programme encompasses supports for newly appointed and acting school leaders on appointment and throughout their first year (particularly those who have not yet had the opportunity to engage with Misneach). The emphasis is on developing personal engagement between the school leader and IPPN. Email communication provides regular CPD presentations, useful articles

and materials relevant to the newly appointed principal's leadership role throughout the year. This encourages school leaders to engage with one-to-one, group mentoring and local support groups, as well as providing opportunities for conversations and reflection on leadership to influence a positive culture of sustainable leadership.

The challenge when developing programmes such as Ciall Ceannaithe and other CPD is to strike a balance between management and leadership, and in supporting the sustainability of the role from the outset, through a structured service. During the past year, a series of recordings was developed in relation to mandatory school policies and links sent to all newly appointed school leaders in addition to fortnightly emails focused on sustainability of the role as well as personal and professional development key messages. Headstart will be developed and expanded during the 2024/25 school year with the provision of a further series of recordings. The Headstart team works closely also with the E-scéal team in providing professional guidance as identified through IPPN's Member Engagement Project.

IPPN identifies and makes contact with newly appointed principals on an ongoing basis throughout the year, to ensure they are supported from the very start of their leadership journey. Principals are increasingly being appointed at various times throughout the school year. There has also been a noticeable increase in the number of acting principals, both in short and long-term positions. Therefore, the need for immediate and continuous support throughout the year, through the lens of sustainable leadership, is an IPPN priority. Headstart will develop and expand these services over the next number of years.

Plans for the future of Headstart include the extension, on a phased basis, of its supports to deputy principals, middle leaders and emerging leaders, in line with the recommendations of IPPN's Sustainable Leadership Report.

GROUP MENTORING

During the 2023/24 school year, 28 mentor groups were established to support 214 principals in their second year of leadership.

IPPN and NAPD organised a CPD event specifically for Group Mentors to be held in conjunction with the Oide Shared Learning Day in the Sheraton Hotel, Athlone, on April 23rd 2024. The Oide SLDs are presently the only occasions for Group Mentors to come together face-to-face. IPPN and NAPD co-delivered training for new group mentors at the beginning of June.

Group mentoring for Deputy Principals - Pilot project

IPPN is currently conducting a pilot project in relation to the provision of Group Mentoring for newly appointed Deputy Principals. The pilot consists of four DP Groups, based in Blackrock, Kilkenny, Ennis and Mayo Education Centres. IPPN feels strongly that the same induction supports provided to newly appointed principals should be made available, as of right, to newly appointed deputy principals.

ONLINE SERVICES

lppn.ie

A major website redevelopment project has been initiated, with the first stage (scoping) completed. A key priority for the new website is compatibility with the various mobile device platforms, as well as a complete restructuring of how resources are accessed, to facilitate easier and quicker searching by members. The National Council e-Services Committee was instrumental in developing the new website. It is anticipated that it will be launched in 2024.

EducationPosts.ie

The following developments were completed in 2024.

Online Application Portal

The Online Application Portal was launched in 2023, and has been used by over 200 Primary and Post Primary schools to advertise over 350 school leader and teacher vacancies since its launch. The portal facilitates the acceptance of applications

Plans for the future of Headstart include the extension, on a phased basis, of its supports to deputy principals, middle leaders and emerging leaders...



online using integrated Standard Application Forms or uploaded custom application forms. The portal functions in accordance with the Department of Education Information Note TC 0005/2023. These developments aim to reduce the administration and paperwork associated with recruitment.

The integrated Standard Application Form on the Portal has been amended in line with the recently updated Standard Application Form.

Summer Programme Portal

In March, EducationPosts.ie launched the 'Summer Programme Portal' to facilitate schools sourcing staff for the school-based summer programme. The portal allowed Job Seekers (including Teachers, SNAs, Students etc.) to complete a form stating their location, occupation, availability per week, and experience. Schools viewed and filtered the entries by location, occupation, dates and experience, and contacted Job Seekers directly. Over 70 Special Schools had priority access to the portal, which was expanded to all registered schools by May (+1,500 schools). By mid-June, over 1,400 Job Seeker notices were live on the Summer Programme Portal.

Special Schools Student Teacher Placement

In April, the 'Special Schools Student Teacher Placement' role was announced by the Department of Education. Recruitment for this role was facilitated by the creation of a new vacancy category on EducationPosts.ie. One free credit was provided

to each of the Special School accounts registered on the Summer Programme Portal. This free credit enabled the schools to advertise the new role within their school.

Noticeboard Developments

The 'Home-Based Summer Programme Noticeboard' was re-launched in June, allowing Teachers and SNAs to post their availability for parents to view. Parents also had the option to create notices seeking Teachers and SNAs for home-based Summer Programme support. By mid-June, there were almost 150 notices on this noticeboard from Parents, Teachers and Special Needs Assistants.

Sub Seeker

Sub Seeker is an online service within EducationPosts.ie that facilitates the short-term recruitment of teachers registered with the Teaching Council by primary and post primary schools. Sub Seeker continues to grow, with over 16,000 users now registered.

In March of this year, a number of updates were made to Sub Seeker to improve user experience, and increase location accuracy. Mandatory school closure dates were integrated into Sub Seeker, allowing schools to send offers and substitute teachers to accept work further into the future. In late June, teachers can set their availability and receive offers of work for late August.

TextaParent.ie

TextaParent is a fast, reliable and cost-effective way for schools to contact parents and staff. In the 2023/24 school year, over 5 million individual text messages, along with over 1 million 'push notifications' sent via the app, were delivered to parents and staff.

A new feature to collect permission slips was added to TextaParent.ie in 2023, allowing schools to send out and receive permission slip via a URL link.

School Suppliers Catalogue

The School Suppliers Catalogue was distributed to all member schools in August 2024 and is available on our website www.ippn.ie as an e-publication. It is a valuable resource to primary school leaders and will provide them with a comprehensive list of quality school suppliers.



A new feature to collect permission slips was added to TextaParent.ie in 2023, allowing schools to send out and receive permission slip via a URL link.



Governance

In 2023/24, IPPN continued to build on the governance review work completed in 2022/23, which included:

- moving from 26 county networks to 31 city/county networks
- expanding the National Council's membership from 52 to 93 representatives
- ensuring that the National Council has a clearly defined role in impacting on the advocacy, supports and services of IPPN through the work of its committees
- ensuring a broad skillset on the Board of Directors
- separating the roles of Chairperson of the Board and the President
- clearly defining the role of the President
- enhancing the senior leadership structures of the organisation
- revising and simplifying IPPN's electoral procedures.
- to the senior leadership capacity within the organisation
- the appointment of an Independent Director to the Board of Directors who has specialist expertise in the areas of governance, risk management and compliance
- the establishment of a Governance & Risk Committee by the Board of Directors.

NATIONAL COUNCIL AND ITS COMMITTEES

It is the responsibility of each member of the National Council to:

The following steps were taken in 2023/24 to further enhance governance practice and structures in the organisation:

- the appointment of a Deputy CEO who will take up the role in September 2024 and add

- ensure effective two-way communication between the National Council and the City/County Networks and Local Support Groups
- represent the key professional issues, concerns and needs of the member's City/County Network to the Board, National Council and its Committees and Working Groups
- assist the Board of Directors and National Council in developing IPPN policy
- attend the Annual General Meeting of the Company

We are indebted to our 93 National Council representatives, each of whom serves on one of the three committees of the National Council, for their commitment and contribution to the work of IPPN.

1. Advocacy & Communications

The Advocacy & Communications committee of the National Council directly impacts the advocacy work of IPPN. The committee informs and shapes IPPN's engagement on relevant issues with the education stakeholders.

2. Professional Development

The Professional Development committee of the National Council directly impacts and shapes the professional development opportunities that IPPN designs and delivers. The committee's work ensures that the CPD that members need and want is delivered to every member who wishes to avail of it.

3. E-services

The Professional Development committee of the National Council directly impacts and shapes the web services supports that IPPN offers to members. The committee's work ensures that those services do what members need them to do in terms of functionality and accessibility.

The committees referenced above were formed with a view to ensuring that National Council members are more involved in, and directly impact, the work of IPPN. They are chaired by members of our Board of Directors and are supported by the relevant key personnel from our Support Office staff.

Each of the committees establishes a priority area of focus, which is then progressed by a working group of the committee.

The list of current National Council members is available on ipn.ie under the About Us menu.

[Click here for an online list of current National Council members by county](#)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND ITS COMMITTEES

IPPN's Board of Directors has the principal responsibility for the governance of the organisation; to achieve its mission and the legal accountability for its operations. This means that, as a group, the Board is in charge of establishing a clear organisational mission, forming the strategic plan along with the oversight and evaluation of the plan's success.

Its current membership is listed below.

	Board Members	Role	Capacity
1	Catriona O'Reilly	Chairperson	Elected
2	Deirdre Kelly	President-elect	Elected
3	Linda Dennehy	Treasurer	Elected
4	Bryan Lynch		Elected
5	Catriona Donohue		Elected
6	Diarmuid Hennessy		Elected
7	Diarmaid Moore		Elected
8	Selina Carmody		Elected
9	Eileen Pike		Elected
10	Finbarr Hurley		Co-opted
11	Brian Bowden		Co-opted

IPPN Board of Directors

IPPN SUPPORT TEAM STAFF

In 2023/2024, these are the IPPN team members who led and implemented all of these projects:



Páirc Clerkin
IPPN CEO



Louise Tobin
IPPN President



Nora Peters
General Manager



Brian O'Doherty
Deputy CEO



Geraldine D'Arcy
Advocacy & Communications Manager



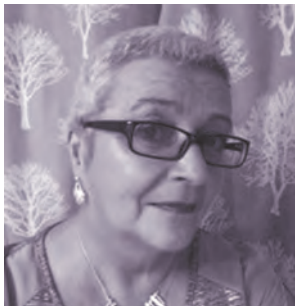
Jennifer McCarthy
Operations Manager



Jack Durkan
Supports & Services Manager



David Buckley
PA to CEO/President



Jackie O'Reilly
Supports & Services - Headstart and Retired Members



Jacqui Ahearne
Accounts



Sarah McNamara
TextaParent and Education Expo



Sinéad O'Mahony
Education Expo & Leadership+ Advertising



Maeve O'Mahony
EducationPosts.ie



Susan Forde
Front of House



Linda O'Brien
Front of House

The Leadership Support Team is supported in its work – in handling professional queries, group mentor training, development of local support groups and other projects - by a small number of highly-experienced **Susan Forde** **Linda O'Brien** who have an in-depth understanding of the pressures and challenges faced by members and who have been trained in facilitation and call handling.





CONTACT US

We are keen to hear from school leaders and any other stakeholders who share our vision for primary education. You can contact us through one of the media below.

General Enquiries

☎ +353 21 4824070

☎ 1800 21 22 23

✉ info@ippn.ie

🌐 www.ippn.ie

in @IPPN 🐦 @IPPN_Education

IPPN National Support Office

Glounthaune

Co. Cork

T45 P406

More information about IPPN and the supports and services we offer to school leaders is available on our website www.ippn.ie.

Charitable Status

IPPN is a non-profit organisation and a registered charity with CHY number 17221