



IPPN Annual Members' Report 2020/2021

Tacaíocht, Spreagadh, Misneach
Supporting School Leadership

ippn 
Leading and Learning

*‘Leadership – discovering
and pursuing initiatives
that enhance the quality
of learning and teaching
in the school’*

Towards a Better Future – A review of the Irish school system

Coolahan, Drudy, Hogan, Hyland and McGuinness, 2017.

The research publication was commissioned by IPPN and NAPD

[Link](#)

Contents

IPPN: The Organisation	1
IPPN Structure	2
Local Support Groups	2
County Networks	2
National Council	3
Board of Directors	3
Governance	3
Operations	3
IPPN Staff	4
Strategic Objectives	5
Aims	6
Support and Services	6
Advocacy and Communications	6
Infrastructure	6
Strategic Plan for 2021-2025	7
Advocacy	9
Membership Engagement	10
Areas of Focus	10
Stakeholder Development	11
Submissions	12
Research	12
Social Media	13
GRMA! Day	13
Supports & Services	15
Leadership Support Service	15
Supports for Newly-Appointed Principals	15
Group Mentoring	16
Local Support Group Facilitation	16
E-Scéal	17
Resource Bundles	17
Continuous Professional Development	18
Education Expo	18
Dignity and Respect at Work Project	18
Headstart Programme	19
Mailing Lists	20
Leadership+	20
Online Services	20
www.ippn.ie	20
TextaParent.ie	21
School Suppliers Guide	21
EducationPosts.ie	21
Noticeboards	22
Sub Seeker	22



IPPN's focus from the beginning has been to provide supports and services for school leaders at local and county level, and to represent the views of school leaders in relation to education policy and school leadership nationally.



IPPN: The Organisation

School leadership is both professionally challenging and personally demanding. The Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN) was established in 2000 to address school leaders' professional needs. IPPN's focus from the beginning has been to provide supports and services for school leaders at local and county level, and to represent the views of school leaders in relation to education policy and school leadership nationally. From very humble facilities initially, the IPPN National Support Office has been located in state-of-the-art facilities in Glounthaune, Co. Cork since 2010.

IPPN is the officially-recognised professional body for Irish primary school leaders. 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), education stakeholders including management bodies, unions, education agencies, representative bodies, academic institutions and children's charities, towards the advancement of primary education. The Republic of Ireland has more than 561,000 children attending

more than 3,200 primary schools. IPPN articulates the collective knowledge and professional experience of over 6,100 principals and deputy principals.

❖ IPPN Membership 2020/2021

95% of all primary schools are now members of IPPN. More than 88% of schools in all counties are members and 100% of the schools in Offaly and Longford are members of IPPN.

The Republic of Ireland has more than 561,000 children attending more than 3,200 primary schools. IPPN articulates the collective knowledge and professional experience of over 6,100 principals and deputy principals.



IPPN Structure

IPPN's network of principals and deputy principals is structured as follows:

❖ Local Support Groups

Support groups form the main 'cell structure' of IPPN. Principals' and Deputy Principals' support groups are sustained with the support of local Education Centres. IPPN is working to ensure that every principal and deputy principal has the support of an accessible local support group. We have been working closely with the network of education centres, through their 'umbrella organisation' ESCI, to make this possible and to put in place the necessary structures to make this happen.

In 2020/2021, additional support groups for deputy principals were established, so there are now groups available in most counties. The DE agreed to fund facilitation training and 60 school leaders (Principals and Deputy Principals) have been trained to date and have been assigned to Education Centres to support local groups. See Local Support Group Facilitation under Supports and Services in this document for more details.

❖ County Networks

IPPN facilitates 26 County Networks and each Network meets for up to three Continuous Professional Development events per year. These CPD events are funded through IPPN nationally and are open to all principals and deputy principals of member schools.

In 2020/2021, **32** county network meetings were hosted by IPPN, including the autumn meetings, largely due to the restrictions around the COVID-19 school closures.

Due to COVID-19, IPPN President Damian White and Jack Durkan virtually attended leadership CPD and support meetings hosted by Education Centres across the country to engage with and get feedback directly from school leaders.

❖ National Council

Two school leaders are elected from each of the 26 counties to the National Council to ensure effective communication between County Networks, the Board and the Support Office. The National Council elects a President and officers who form the Board of Directors. In 2020/2021, the National Council met virtually three times. The Council comprises **23** teaching principals, **25** administrative principals and **4** deputy principals.

❖ Board of Directors

The Board is responsible for the strategic direction and overall governance of IPPN. The Board manages the affairs of the organisation through advisory groups established to research and develop IPPN policy.

In 2020/2021, 50% of Board members were administrative principals, 17% were teaching principals, 8% were deputy principals and 25% were not current serving school leaders. Of the latter, two were seconded to the Centre for School Leadership (CSL). The ratio of Board members of Male to Female was 50/50.

❖ Governance

A review of the policies, practices and structures relating to the governance of IPPN was initiated, with the view to maximising the potential of the organisation through ensuring best practice in all aspects of its work. This work is aligned to IPPN's Governance strategy 'To strengthen IPPN's governance structures to ensure efficiency, transparency and accountability at all levels within the organisation'.

The process will involve the exploration of current practices and the policies and procedures which underpin them. A working group was established to look at all of the documentation which sets out how the Company is structured and organised in particular around how the Board, its committees and other groups operate in carrying out their leadership and control responsibilities.

❖ Operations

In addition to the core work undertaken by IPPN staff as outlined above to support school leaders in their leadership and management role, IPPN staff also worked behind the scenes to run internal systems and processes, link in with service providers to keep online services running, plan events, develop capacity; recruit, induct and train staff; attract and maintain commercial income to fund vital services, handle invoicing and payments, and all of the other responsibilities any organisation must undertake to run smoothly.

In 2020/2021, IPPN staff provided additional supports during school closures and the transition back to school. Suffice to say that, as is the case in schools, our staff members are our best asset, and our team continuously seeks to improve how IPPN operates in support of our members.

In 2020/2021, 50% of Board members were administrative principals, 17% were teaching principals, 8% were deputy principals and 25% were not current serving school leaders.



Our Staff

In 2020/2021, this was the IPPN team:



Páirc Clerkin
Chief Executive Officer



Damian White
Deputy CEO



Nora Peters
General Manager



Jack Durkan
Leadership Support Manager



Geraldine D'Arcy
Advocacy & Communications Manager



Jennifer McCarthy
Operations Manager



Donal Kerins
Leadership Support



Rachel Hallahan
Principal Information Officer



Sarah McNamara
Textparent & Education Expo Sales



Jackie O'Reilly
Supports & Services



Jacqui Ahearne
Accounts



Sinéad Coakley
Business Development



Maeve O'Mahony
EducationPosts.ie



David Buckley
PA to CEO/President



Susan Forde
Front of House



Strategic Objectives

IPPN has four strategic objectives to achieve its vision and mission:

- ❖ To strengthen its Network by harnessing the capacity and capability of school leaders
- ❖ To maximise IPPN's impact and ensure that school leaders' experience is central to education policy by continuing to build collaborative relationships with key stakeholders
- ❖ To ensure IPPN supports and services are enhanced to reflect the needs of today's school leaders
- ❖ To continue the ongoing work in achieving its primary organisational goals.

We want to ensure IPPN supports and services are enhanced to reflect the needs of today's school leaders





Aims

Our stated vision is *Empowered Leaders; Inspired Learners* and our mission is to support and advocate for exemplary school leadership - *Tacaíocht, Misneach agus Spreagadh*. IPPN's goals centre on the task of leadership across a spectrum of issues and activities:

❖ Supports and Services

- ❖ To provide all school leaders with a continuum of high quality personal and professional development, support, advice and guidance, in order to maximise the learning outcomes of every child
- ❖ To promote collegiality and professional dialogue and the sharing of best practice throughout the network of school leaders.

❖ Advocacy & Communications

- ❖ To provide leadership to all school leaders
- ❖ To positively influence education policy
- ❖ To be the trusted voice for children and their learning.

❖ Infrastructure

- ❖ To be financially secure and independent, providing the human and financial resources to maintain our Supports & Services and Advocacy needs
- ❖ To diversify funding sources for long-term organisational sustainability.

To provide all school leaders with a continuum of high quality personal and professional development, support, advice and guidance, in order to maximise the learning outcomes of every child



Strategic Plan for 2021-2025

Over the past 15 months, IPPN undertook a process of engagement in collaboration with Accenture to define our strategic priorities for the five-year period 2021-2025.

Our approach included consultation with:

- ❖ IPPN members, through 318 responses to our online survey
- ❖ IPPN staff and Board members, through 28 one-to-one interviews
- ❖ External stakeholders in the education sector, through 24 one-to-one interviews.

During this process, IPPN also facilitated design thinking workshops with IPPN staff, advisory groups and Board members. IPPN would like to thank its members, staff, Board members, advisors, and those external education stakeholders who contributed to defining our ambitious 5-year strategic priorities.

Five primary strategic priority areas were identified for IPPN for 2021-2025 during this process:

1. Sustainable Leadership
2. Professional Learning for Leadership
3. Member Engagement
4. Communications
5. Governance..

As we progress from a period that required the development of new ways of working in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, our defined strategic priorities will assist in ensuring IPPN proceeds in a proactive and strategic direction. IPPN recognises the importance of continuing to adopt new technologies

and of embedding innovation in our work to assist in effectively communicating with and supporting our members and stakeholders. Utilisation of technology and innovation will underpin IPPN's delivery within each of the five strategic priority areas identified.

The implementation of IPPN's strategic priorities will be led by the IPPN Support Office team led by the CEO and overseen by IPPN's Board of Directors.

During this process, IPPN also facilitated design thinking workshops with IPPN staff, advisory groups and Board members.





Advocacy

IPPN also supports school leaders by advocating 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 '*Empowered Leaders; Inspired Learners*', as well as our key objectives (outlined above under '*Strategic Objectives*'), and specific issues and concerns that relate to particular cohorts of our members - schools led by teaching principals, special schools, DEIS schools, one-teacher schools, among others. As a professional body, IPPN is precluded from involvement in industrial relations matters but works closely with the other education partners to highlight all issues of concern to school leaders and advocate for those prioritised to be progressed.

IPPN has worked closely with INTO, CPSMA (on behalf of Management bodies), NABMSE and NPC in seeking support in areas of shared priority, particularly since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020. IPPN advocated for school leaders with education partners and the DE in almost daily briefings and working group meetings during this period, and provided continuous bulletins and updates to members, all of this done while working remotely and in addition to all of the other services and supports provided. On a number of occasions, IPPN engaged

directly with the Minister to progress issues of critical importance to schools.

To reflect and capture the voice and experience of the school leader in our advocacy work, IPPN seeks to consult widely with principals and deputy principals through member engagement with county networks, the National Council and the Board, as well as through the education centre network, directly at IPPN events, and through research projects (see Research below).

IPPN's leadership team sought to highlight the issues and challenges facing schools from a school leadership perspective through radio interviews, both national and local, as well as providing input to national newspaper journalists.

We have raised our concerns with the Department and other education agencies about the issues around communication with schools and with the consultation processes undertaken to work with education partners to provide input to policy and other matters. In most cases, there is very limited time provided to education partners to review and provide feedback. We have sought an approach which allows for forward planning and adequate time to consult with our members - to give school leaders a stronger voice and an ability to influence education policy. A Communications group has been convened by the Department to progress these matters and it is hoped that there will be improvements from early in the next school year that will be meaningful to schools and to the education partners as we seek to advocate on members' behalf.

It is worth noting that IPPN membership is funded directly through membership fees paid by school boards of management. IPPN is accountable to the Oireachtas and is regularly invited to hearings on matters involving school leadership.

Membership Engagement

For obvious reasons, almost all engagement with members has happened remotely over the past school year. The President and members of IPPN's Leadership Support team have attended Zoom meetings and webinars with school leaders hosted and supported by IPPN (Autumn meetings in each county) and by education centres all across the country, and continue to do so.

IPPN's leadership team sought to highlight the issues and challenges facing schools from a school leadership perspective through radio interviews, both national and local, as well as providing input to national newspaper journalists.

IPPN is working to ensure that every principal and deputy principal has the support of an accessible local support group. We have been working closely with the network of education centres, through their 'umbrella organisation' ESCI, to make this possible and to put in place the necessary structures to make this happen.

We established a working group between the two organisations to scope out what was needed to set up sustainable support structures in every county and catchment area of each Education Centre. It was decided that, in order to succeed, we would undertake to provide training in facilitation.

60 facilitators have completed their four-week training course with HR expert Paul Dicker and have been assigned to Education Centres. There will be several trained facilitators in each county available to facilitate support group meetings.

IPPN will administer the scheme through the Support Office. For more information, see the section on 'Local Support Groups' under Supports & Services below.

Areas of Focus

Elsewhere during the 2020/2021 school year, our advocacy work focused on the following aspects of school leadership and management, in line with our strategic priorities:

- ❖ **COVID-19 – reopening and keeping schools open**
Providing supports needed by schools and school leaders to lead and manage during the ongoing crisis, and advice and guidance needed by school leaders to safely keep schools open.



❖ **Small schools**

The establishment of a two-year action research project on the clustering of small schools in rural areas. The initial planning group was chaired by Prof. Anne Looney, Executive Dean of DCU, working in conjunction with the Department, INTO, CPSMA and the General Synod Board of Education of the Church of Ireland. Six project clusters of small schools will be formed, two in Galway, and one in each of Donegal, Kerry, Wicklow and Waterford, consisting of between three and five schools per cluster. The clusters will be supported by part-time local coordinators sponsored by the education partners, working with a national coordinator under the guidance of a steering group. As an integral part of the project an evaluation will take place and a final report, including analysis of scalability of actions undertaken, will be compiled.

❖ **Teaching Principalship**

Sanctioning at least one leadership and management day per week for teaching principals continues to be a top priority and was the key item in our Budget 2021 submission and engagement with stakeholders.

❖ **Sustainable leadership**

IPPN engaged further with key stakeholders to look at how this project would bolster and support the sustainability of primary school leadership, which will be progressed over the next 2-3 years and will focus on

- Effective school leadership & core purpose
- Preparation for Leadership
- Recruitment of school leaders
- Time and space to lead

- Sharing and supporting leadership
- Governance.

❖ **Special Education**

IPPN has worked with officials in the DE, NCSE and NABMSE to progress and address issues relating to SEN, including the new SNA allocation model, SET allocation for developing schools and the critical issues specific to the special schools' sector during the pandemic.

❖ **Other Issues**

A number of other key matters were discussed with key stakeholders, including:

- Appointment of Administrative Principals in schools with 2 or more special classes - with the DE
- School placement / teacher supply - with the Teaching Council
- Leadership in education, and the new draft primary curriculum framework - with the NCCA
- CSL middle leadership and 'stages of leadership' projects, and all of its other initiatives, as IPPN is a partner in CSL along with the DE and NAPD
- Gaeltacht education - with the DE
- Digital strategy - with the DE
- Development education.

❖ **Stakeholder Development**

Over the course of the year, IPPN continued to build positive, collaborative relationships with the key stakeholders in education, to ensure that the challenges, concerns and opportunities relating to primary education and school leadership were fully understood. This approach helps when key policy and



IPPN has worked with officials in the DE, NCSE and NABMSE to progress and address issues relating to SEN, including the new SNA allocation model, SET allocation for developing schools and the critical issues specific to the special schools' sector during the pandemic.

funding decisions are being made, as the needs and concerns of school leaders are more likely to be taken into consideration. The best example of this is the collaboration in relation to keeping schools open and the resources needed by schools to safely do so. There is no doubt that these were provided because the key stakeholders were in agreement as to the approach and the priorities.

Close collaboration with our post-primary counterpart NAPD and international school leadership associations has also reaped rewards, in deepening our understanding of alternative approaches and policy developments. Alternative approaches and policy developments.

❖ Submissions

Submissions set out IPPN's views on a particular issue. They are generally in response to an invitation to contribute a viewpoint or suggestion, for example to the Joint Oireachtas Committee (JOC) on Education and Skills.

During the 2020/21 school year, IPPN prepared formal submissions on the following topics:

- ❖ **National Disability Authority re. consultation with persons with disabilities** (NDA, Aug 2021)
- ❖ **Education for Sustainable Development Strategy to 2030** (DE, June 2021)

- ❖ **NCSE Strategy 2022-2026** (National Council for Special Education, May 2021)
- ❖ **Evaluation of Remote Teaching and Learning** (ERTAL) (DE Inspectorate, May 2021)
- ❖ **Digital Strategy for Schools** (DE, May 2021)
- ❖ **Bullying in Schools and the Mental Health Impact** (JOC, Feb 2021)
- ❖ **Inter-agency Good Practice Guidelines for Schools on Supporting Students with Autism** (Special Education Section of the DE, Nov 2020)
- ❖ **Supporting the Safe Provision of Schooling** (DE Inspectorate, Nov 2020)
- ❖ **Statement of Strategy 2021-23** (DE, Nov 2020)
- ❖ **Guidelines on the use of reduced timetables in schools** (DES, Oct 2020)
- ❖ **Ensuring schools are open in a manner which is both safe and sustainable** (JOC, Oct 2020)
- ❖ **Pre-Budget Submission for 2021** (DES, Department of Finance and Department of Public Expenditure & Reform, Oct 2020).

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

Click here for a link to these publications. [LINK](#)

❖ Research

IPPN conducts and commissions research to determine the nature and depth of the issues at stake 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.

In recent years, IPPN has undertaken research in relation to special schools and the particular health and safety issues in one-teacher schools, as well as the perspectives of our deputy principal cohort on school leadership and management. A current focus is on the wellbeing of school leaders, and on the workload of school leaders, teaching principals in particular. Further work is planned on these issues as part of our Sustainable Leadership project, which was initiated in 2021.

In late 2020/early 2021, IPPN collaborated with Drs Jolanta Burke and Majella Dempsey of Maynooth University (MU) to survey school leaders in relation to their physical and mental health. The resulting report - based on the input of 861 primary school leaders - highlighted key issues to be addressed, and provides evidence to support the anecdotal information we have known for years - that there is a



crisis among school leaders in relation to their health and wellbeing. The report has been used to advocate for strengthened supports for school leaders and will influence our advocacy and CPD priorities in the coming years, as part of our 2021-2025 strategic plan.

You can access the MU report here. [LINK](#)

IPPN also surveyed members in early 2021 to gauge the level of confidence in reopening in the face of escalating numbers of COVID cases. Within 20 hours, more than 2300 responses were received. The survey results were included in our letter to the DE in relation to the proposed reopening of special schools and those with special classes as well as the resumption of remote learning.

In addition, school leaders were asked to provide input on a number of topics relating to submissions sought by external organisations such as the DE, Inspectorate, NCSE and others, as noted under *Submissions* above. We very much appreciate the input provided by each and every member to these consultations.

IPPN has undertaken a number of significant research projects over the years, the results of which have been published in formal reports, which are available to members in the Advocacy section of our website www.ippn.ie.

Click here for a link to these publications. [LINK](#)

❖ Social Media

There was a significant increase in proactive use of IPPN's social media platforms (Twitter and LinkedIn for IPPN, and Facebook and Twitter for EducationPosts and the Education Expo), as it is a useful channel to share key information from education stakeholders, and to let members and other stakeholders know about key IPPN events, submissions and other activity.

The IPPN Twitter account now has over 8,000 followers, while LinkedIn has c. 600. The Twitter handle is @IPPN_Education and the LinkedIn account is simply 'IPPN'. Your weekly E-scéal will always be your 'one-stop-shop' for key information but social media is useful for up-to-the-minute news in the sector for those who like to engage with it.

❖ GRMA! Day

One campaign that stands out during the past school year was the GRMA Day on 11th December 2020. IPPN and NAPD collaborated with the National Parents Councils and the Irish Second Level Students Union in saying 'go raibh maith agaibh!' or GRMA! to our school leaders, teachers, SNAs, ancillary staff, school transport services, custodial services, students, student leaders and mentors, and all involved in the huge ongoing effort to ensure our children are safe and cared for as they enjoy their day at school. The value of keeping schools open for our students in terms of their educational, developmental and wellbeing needs cannot be understated.





ippn · 

CONFERENCE 2020

BACK TO
THE FUTURE

2020 Vision



Supports & Services

From the National Support Office in Cork, IPPN provides the following supports and services to the 6000+ principals and deputy principals of over 3000 IPPN-member primary schools. IPPN members tell us that they value knowing that the back-up and support is there when they need it.

❖ Leadership Support Service

This one-to-one confidential advisory service, provided by a team of skilled serving and retired principals, offers collegial support and guidance of a non-directive and non-legal nature. The team also provides a Professional Guidance service, answering queries of a factual nature. From September 2020 to August 2021, the Leadership Support team responded to 4,082 queries from 1,630 principals and deputy principals. Among the topics dealt with, the following were the most common:

- ❖ School policies linked to COVID-19
- ❖ HR administration – particularly absences/leave
- ❖ Posts of Responsibility
- ❖ Recruitment
- ❖ Parents & pupils – parental complaints, custody & access

- ❖ Relationship management - interpersonal/conflict management.

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.

❖ Supports for Newly-Appointed Principals

Throughout the school year IPPN identifies and supports all new appointments to principalship. IPPN remains in contact with the newly appointed principal during their first year. They are offered the opportunity to avail of a call with a member of our Leadership Support Team.

Newly appointed principals are made aware of the Misneach programme and advised to make contact with PDST to ensure they can be included in the Misneach programme.

They are also advised to make contact with CSL to avail of one-to-one mentoring. In addition to CSL mentoring, IPPN offered support to over 270 new school leaders in the 2020/2021 school year. On completion of one-to-one mentoring, they transfer over to IPPN group mentoring for the following school year.

Once IPPN is aware of a retirement or a vacancy for the role of principal, we ensure that information is provided to the incoming principal about the various supports available to them, such as one-to-one and group mentoring.

❖ Group Mentoring

Group mentoring was introduced in April 2017 by NAPD and IPPN as both organisations consider mentoring to be a key component in the induction of newly-appointed school leaders. Quality leadership support and participation in professional learning communities (networks) are essential to the development and continued effectiveness of school leaders.

Group Mentor Training has been provided by the IPPN Leadership Support Team to over 100 Principals since the introduction of the project. In the school year 2020/21, 38 of these Group Mentors supported 226 School Leaders in their second year of principalship.

These were geographically organised into 38 groups, each supported by a group mentor and holding five meetings during the school year. Most groups also supported each other through platforms such as WhatsApp.

Feedback and evaluations from mentees during the past year has been very positive, with the mentees expressing their appreciation of the service and how it gave them renewed confidence, space and time for reflection and specific goals and plans to address various aspects of their work.

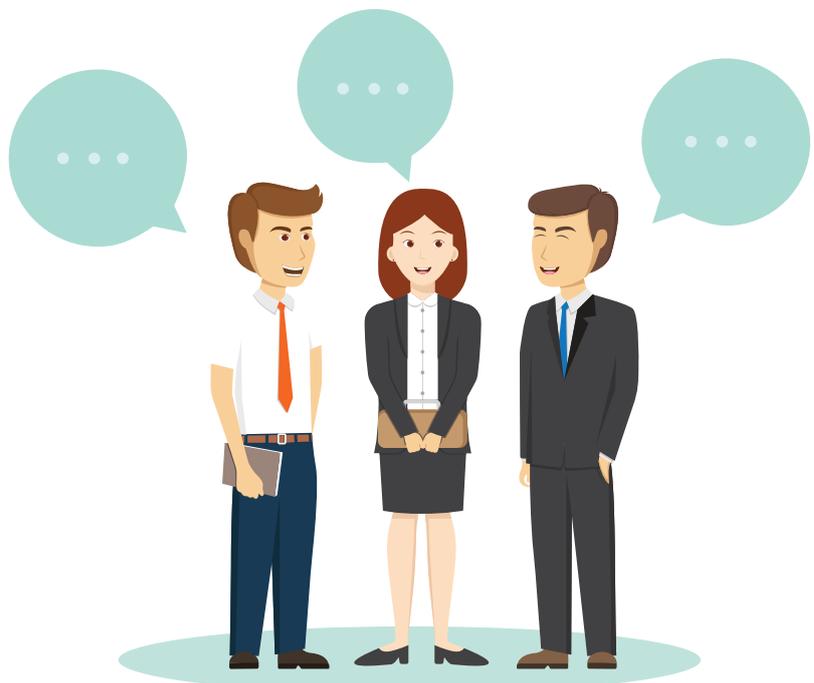
We also engage with principals who are retiring to let them know about opportunities to get involved in IPPN projects and to stay in touch with what is happening in the education sector.

❖ Local Support Group Facilitation

In early 2021 IPPN, working closely with ESCI, developed a project which has the ultimate aim of providing a facilitated support group for every school leader who wishes to join one. While there are existing local support groups (LSGs), they do not exist in every area.

The DE has agreed to provide funding for facilitation training and CSL has endorsed the project as one with enormous potential for the support of school leaders. A Steering Committee has been established with representatives of IPPN, ESCI, DE and CSL. Damian White and Donal Kerins represent IPPN on the Steering Committee.

In early 2021 IPPN, working closely with ESCI, developed a project which has the ultimate aim of providing a facilitated support group for every school leader who wishes to join one.



The Education Centre Directors and the local IPPN County Committees together assess the needs within their own area and seek to establish new Local Support Groups where they are required.



To date, 60 school leaders (principals and deputy principals) have been trained as facilitators. The training is conducted over four weeks by Paul Dicker and the facilitators are then assigned to Education Centres.

The Education Centre Directors and the local IPPN County Committees together assess the needs within their own area and seek to establish new Local Support Groups where they are required. The facilitators assist the new group and will chair the meetings until it becomes established. These meetings will include an element of CPD, discussion of local issues as well as an element of social interaction. The IPPN Leadership Support Team can provide guidance and resources for the CPD element, if required.

The project has identified over 120 existing Support Groups. Many of these have been in existence for many years, including one in Kilkenny which has been holding regular meetings for over 40 years. The project will offer facilitation training to these groups also, should they wish to avail of it.

❖ E-Scéal

This weekly electronic bulletin is the crucial 'one-stop-shop' providing all the key information school leaders need to know - current issues within the education sector, professional guidance, FAQs, circular releases, as well as topical issues relating to leadership and management. Our links with education stakeholders ensure that IPPN is kept informed at the earliest opportunity of key developments, enabling us to pass that information to our members. Members who read their E-scéal every week can be assured that they won't miss any key information.

During the 2020/2021 school year, 40 E-scéalta were issued.

❖ Resource Bundles

IPPN Resources Bundles are a one-stop-shop where school leaders will find the answers, supporting documentation and reading materials 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 ipn.ie.

The concept of the "Live Resource Bundle" was developed in response to COVID and its effect on schools. These Resource Bundles are constantly updated with the latest relevant information for members. The information is catalogued for easy access. School Leaders are taken to their chosen topic from the Contents page quickly via hyperlinks. When a live Resource Bundle becomes too large and outdated, a new one is created. The original is still available to members on the website.

During the 2020/21 school year, two Live Resource Bundles were published: -

- ❖ Returning to School in the aftermath of COVID-19 (Mar20- Sep 20)
- ❖ Keeping the School safely open during COVID-19 (Sep20 - Jun21).

These were replaced in late August 2021 with a new Live Resource Bundle entitled '**COVID ar Scoil 21/22**'.

In 2020/2021, the following Resource Bundles were developed

- ❖ Admissions Issues
- ❖ Communications - *The Lifeblood of Leadership*
- ❖ Sharing the Leadership - *DP (Open Competition)*
- ❖ Pupils with Behaviours of Concern - *Challenging Relationships in the School Community*
- ❖ Dignity at Work



The following were reviewed and updated:

- ❖ Absences and Leave
- ❖ Distributing the Leadership - *Appointing API, APII and DP(Internal)*
- ❖ Child Protection.

❖ Continuous Professional Development

From September 2020 to August 2021, IPPN hosted many local, regional and national CPD events for school leaders with over **2,200** school leaders participating at regional and national events and members attending local IPPN County Network Meetings across the 26 counties.

These CPD events offer an opportunity to hear fresh thinking from national and international figures in education, participate in stimulating workshops and to network with colleagues.

Other examples of CPD events organised by IPPN during the year:

- ❖ **Autumn meetings in each county** – due to the COVID restrictions, these were held virtually for the first time, which enabled members who had not previously been able to attend to do so. The CPD element this year was school leaders’ wellbeing.
- ❖ **Annual Principals’ and Deputy Principals’ Conferences** –we held our first fully virtual conferences during the school year, with over 500 members attending each event. Significant investment was made in the online platform elements and ensuring the quality of the events was as high as ever. Feedback about both events was very positive and will inform planning for virtual events in 2021/22.

- ❖ **‘Ciall Ceannaithe’ online summer course** in which more than 270 teachers and school leaders participated - This course is continuously reviewed and updated and this year new topics included were Sustainable Leadership and Dignity in the Workplace.

We share our CPD calendar using the CSL CPD Calendar tool. [LINK](#)

❖ Education Expo

Education Expo, Ireland’s largest trade event for schools, brings over 140 companies and 1,200 principals under one roof over two days of IPPN’s Annual Principals’ Conference. There is a full range of exhibition opportunities available at Education Expo from trade stands to advertising and merchandise branding.

IPPN’s Principals’ Conference 2020 held in Citywest Hotel, Dublin hosted IPPN’s largest Education Expo to date. Our Education Expo for 2021 was an online virtual event with a host of seminar sponsors and a virtual interactive exhibition hall.

❖ Dignity and Respect at Work Project

The Dignity and Respect at Work (DRaW) project aims to

- ❖ provide a comprehensive Resource Bundle on Dignity at Work
- ❖ promote the development of a Dignity at Work Charter and Policy in all schools
- ❖ work with other organisations to develop a common Dignity at Work Charter for all school workers – teachers, SNAs, ancillary staff, school leaders etc.

- ❖ develop and provide CPD and resources, as required, to meet the aims of the project.

A seminar was designed and delivered on the topic of creating a culture of Dignity and Respect at Work for the annual principals' conference in May 2021. This seminar consisted of three presentations on

- ❖ how school leaders can optimise the school's workplace environment for staff
- ❖ the procedures which are currently in place for dealing with staff conflict and other issues and
- ❖ the practicalities of leading a staff to develop their own Dignity at Work Charter and Policy.

A Toolkit has been developed, entitled *Dignity and Respect in the School Workplace - a Handbook for School Leaders*, consisting of

- ❖ An overview presentation with voiceover
- ❖ 4 Resource Bundles
 - Part 1 - Dignity and Respect in the School Workplace
 - Part 2 - Meeting the Basic Human Needs in the School as a Workplace
 - Part 3 - HR Scaffolding in the School as a Workplace
 - Part 4 - Developing your own DRaW Charter and Policy
- ❖ 6 PowerPoint Presentations to enable school leaders, or outside facilitators, facilitate the development of a DRaW Policy and Charter for their own School Workplace
 - Session 1 - The Why
 - Session 2 - Preparing the Ground
 - Session 3 - Getting Real
 - Session 4 - Values and Vision
 - Session 5 - Challenging Issues
 - Session 6 - Harvest Time
- ❖ 2 Templates
 - Template DRaW Charter
 - Template DRaW Policy.

❖ Headstart Programme

Initially, Headstart comprised a one-day seminar for newly-appointed principals (NAPs) beginning their role, held in late August, and was a means to inform the NAP of IPPN Supports and Services, give essential information and walk them through the first month in their new role. With Misneach beginning in August, IPPN joined with PDST to outline its S&S and provide an introduction to the help available through IPPN, with PDST delivering the first session of its induction programme. It avoided duplication in this particular area.

Headstart now encompasses all the supports to school leaders

- ❖ *on immediate appointment* (particularly those who have not yet had the opportunity to engage with Misneach). There is a well-structured successful communication schedule operating for the past number of years with the emphasis on developing personal engagement between the NAP and IPPN. The Leadership Support Team provides support in the form of professional guidance and factual information through a dedicated email and phone contact
- ❖ *IPPN will throughout the first year*, provide bespoke CPD in the form of podcasts, seminars and informal support meetings online with the Leadership Support Team and includes
 - ❖ the review and redevelopment of the Ciall Ceannaithe online summer course, to reflect the changing needs of school leaders and becoming the hub for follow-on CPD, reflecting key leadership messages
 - ❖ engaging with stakeholders such as CSL, PDST, NCCA and others to avoid duplication and identify the gaps in the provision of supports to IPPN members in their first year as school leaders. These supports are also available to Acting Principals and Acting Deputy Principals
 - ❖ promoting one-to-one, group mentoring and Support Groups to NAPS
 - ❖ facilitating focus groups to provide feedback on the issues and concerns of NAPs
 - ❖ providing opportunities for conversations and reflection on leadership to influence a positive culture of sustainable leadership
 - ❖ engagement with the Middle Leadership Working Group.

Initially, Headstart comprised a one-day seminar for newly-appointed principals (NAPs) beginning their role, held in late August, and was a means to inform the NAP of IPPN Supports and Services, give essential information and walk them through the first month in their new role.



❖ Mailing Lists

IPPN's mailing lists are among the most valued supports available to members. They are 'closed' mailing lists i.e. the emails are for principals and deputy principals who are members of IPPN.

The most popular mailing list is 'networking', which facilitates a peer-support community. It has almost 4,000 subscribers. Millions of emails were sent during the 2020/2021 calendar year.

A new temporary out-of-hours mailing list **covid@ippn.ie** was set up in September 2020 for school leaders concerned about COVID-19 outbreaks and the urgent management of same. This service was provided at evenings and weekends by the IPPN president and CEO through to the end of the school year and was very well received and appreciated by members. More than 250 members utilised the helpline between September 2020 and May 2021.

The **advice@ippn.ie** mailing list is for sensitive, confidential and non-generic queries, which are answered offline by members of our Leadership Support Panel as an extension of the Leadership Support service.

There are also mailing lists dedicated to cohorts of our members e.g. teaching principals, newly-appointed principals, deputy principals, DEIS schools, special schools, and those with Autism classes, as well as county mailing lists which are used for more local information.

❖ Leadership+

The professional journal for principals and deputy principals, *Leadership+* is issued to members throughout the year. It offers a wide range of articles of relevance to school leaders, including practical hints and tips, professional guidance, research summaries, information on new procedures and forthcoming events, as well as thought-provoking and lighter pieces. In the calendar year 2020/2021, four issues of *Leadership+* were published. The February 2021 issue - an important special issue on the topic of Special Educational Needs - was not posted to schools until March, as members could not access their school buildings during COVID-19 school closures. There was no April issue due to the delay in issuing the previous issue. Consequently, the May/June issue was a bumper 44-pager.

A complete archive of all 118 issues published to date is available online. The key benefit of the epublication is the ability to provide direct online links to more information on relevant source websites, as well as resources such as templates and sample policies. It is accessible on all devices and fully searchable to easily find a particular word or phrase.

Engagement with the epublications increased significantly during the past year. It is hoped that members will engage further with the epublication version in the coming years.

You can access the archive for the year here: [LINK](#)
Leadership+ 2020/2021

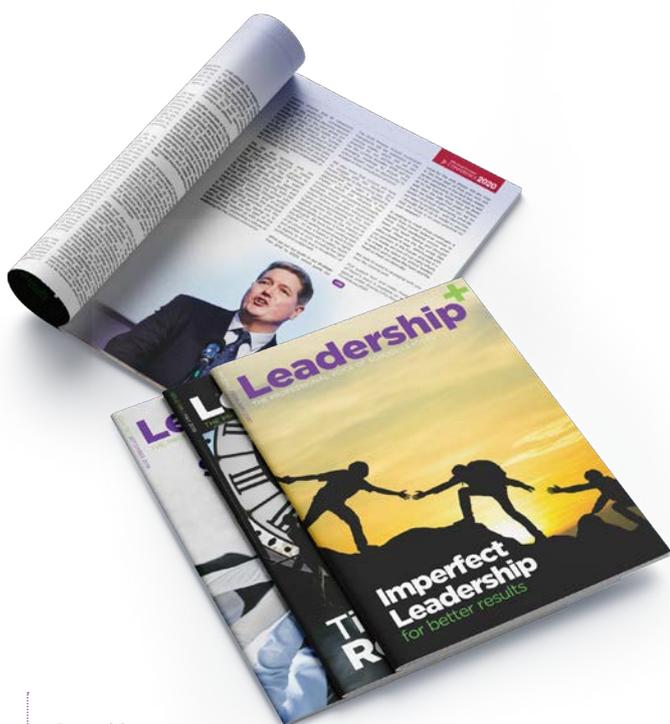
❖ Online Services

www.ippn.ie

Our website **www.ippn.ie** provides a wealth of resources, sample policies, templates, publications, research, information updates and education news, including 'resource bundles' which collate all relevant information and professional guidance about specific topics into one easy-to-use document.

We are redeveloping the website to streamline communication with members and facilitate faster access to the many resources available on the site.

[LINK](#)



TextaParent.ie

TextaParent is a fast, reliable and cost-effective way for schools to contact parents and staff. In the 2020/2021 school year, over 6 million text messages, along with over 1 million 'push notifications', were delivered to parents and staff.

LINK

HSE Return to Education Facility Parental Declaration and the Staff Return to Work Form

The HSE Return to Education Facility Parental Declaration Form and the Staff Return to Work Form are the latest enhancements to the TextaParent service, both now available on all TextaParent accounts. The form can be sent to parents and staff via SMS or email. This link is individual to each school's TextaParent.ie account and submission of the forms is recorded on the school's TextaParent report history.

Over 36,000 forms were submitted before between April and Jun 2021

Two-Factor Authentication

A two-factor authentication for all TextaParent Accounts was activated on Monday, 12th April 2021. This is an important security measure that adds a second layer of protection in addition to TextaParent accounts. Each profile set up on the account has been asked to verify their mobile number. Once verified, you will not be asked again unless you use another browser (or you clear all cookies) or you change your mobile number. If you are accessing your TextaParent account from a home laptop, etc., you will be asked to verify the mobile number again.

School Suppliers Guide

Due to the impact of COVID-19 and the lack of face to face events and Expo opportunities during 2020, IPPN published a School Suppliers Guide. This resource provides school leaders and their staff with a comprehensive list of quality school suppliers for the start of the school year to aid in their planning for the year ahead.

The 'School Suppliers Guide' is distributed to all member schools in early September as a printed publication and will also be available on our website www.ippn.ie as an e-publication.

EducationPosts.ie

EducationPosts is Ireland's longest-established and most widely used website dedicated to education recruitment.

In the 2020/2021 academic year, there were over 15 million page views on the website, and 13,500 vacancies advertised across all education sectors. EducationPosts.ie is supported by one full-time IPPN staff member.

LINK

The HSE Return to Education Facility Parental Declaration Form and the Staff Return to Work Form are the latest enhancements to the TextaParent service, both now available on all TextaParent accounts.



Noticeboards

In July 2020, the 'Summer Provision Noticeboard for Teachers/SNAs' was created to assist teachers and SNAs to source Summer Provision roles. This noticeboard was also made available in summer 2021.

In response to the announcement of the In-Person Supplementary Programme for pupils with complex needs during school closures, EducationPosts.ie launched a new noticeboard in February 2021. The 'Supplementary Programme Noticeboard' was used by Teachers and SNA's to advertise their availability for the programme. Parents or guardians then used the noticeboard to search for suitable candidates.

Sub Seeker

Sub Seeker is an online service within EducationPosts.ie that enables primary and post-primary schools to find qualified teachers for substitute teaching in selected counties. It helped substitute teachers find almost 3,000 temporary positions since launch. The number of registered substitute teachers has increased by 60% since the last report. At the time of writing, almost 8,000 substitute teachers are registered on the service.

Updates made to Sub Seeker during the 2020/21 school year include:

- ❖ Schools can review a teacher's profile (availability, experience, qualifications and other relevant information) before offering a substitute position
- ❖ Schools can see the history of their searches and the substitute teachers they have employed
- ❖ Data security – the system is GDPR compliant
- ❖ All teachers are validated against the Teaching Council database so schools can be assured they are registered
- ❖ Teachers can substitute in both primary and post-primary schools
- ❖ Teachers can mark themselves available to substitute at both primary and post primary levels at the same time. This has led to an increase in available teachers on the system for schools.
- ❖ The number of available days on a teachers' calendar was increased from six days to ten days to allow schools to search for substitute teachers after school holidays. Teachers can now mark themselves available ten days in advance, and schools can complete searches for teachers further into the future.

- ❖ A Sub Seeker button was added to the homepage of EducationPosts.ie to allow quicker access to the platform for both schools and teachers.
- ❖ Schools can offer substitute vacancies to multiple teachers at once through the platform, the first teacher to accept the position will be successful.
- ❖ Teachers can now withdraw an accepted offer in exceptional circumstances, such as when the school does not reply to teachers' requests to cancel the work.
- ❖ Schools can now distinguish between Primary and Post Primary PME student teachers on Sub Seeker.

LINK

Sub Seeker is an online service within EducationPosts.ie that enables primary and post-primary schools to find qualified teachers for substitute teaching in selected counties. It helped substitute teachers find almost 3,000 temporary positions since launch.



“The Centre for School Leadership (CSL) actively advocates for the importance of school leaders being involved in system leadership.

Engagement with stakeholders in the system who support school leaders in their daily work is essential for sustained system improvement and the attainment of better outcomes for pupils.

Being aware of these supports, actively using them to improve their practice, having access to the reassuring successes of other schools and other leaders, understanding that everyone faces similar challenges, and being informed of upcoming changes and policy initiatives, places school leaders in a position of readiness which depletes stress and ensures a better sense of control for principals who work in busy daily schedules.

CSL supports recognised stakeholders in the Irish system who ensure that school leaders have the support, information, assurance and the social-professional space that they need to sustain their energy, enthusiasm and positivity for the role.”

The Centre for School Leadership



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

info@ippn.ie

www.ippn.ie

[@IPPN_Education](https://twitter.com/IPPN_Education)

IPPN National Support Office
Glounthaune
Co. Cork

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 registered charity with CHY number 17221.