

# 2007-2008 - at a Glance



President – Larry Fleming

The beginning of the 2007 / 2008 school year saw the introduction of the On-Line Claims System (OLCS), an electronic means of making school returns to the DES. IPPN played a key role in the development and roll out of this new initiative. The OECD report “Improving School Leadership” was published in late 2007 and was significant in that it outlined clearly the growing international recognition of the importance of school leadership.

A media report that Principals would be central to performance management of staff under the terms of the social partnership agreement, “Towards 2016” caused a stir at this time also. This saga finally culminated in the issuing of Circular 60/09 to all schools outlining procedures relating to Section 24 of the Education Act 1998.

IPPN played a central role in highlighting the issue of water charges for schools under the EU Water Framework Directive in December 2007. Following an IPPN presentation to a Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education, a government climb-down saw the introduction of an interim levy based on the number of pupils in the school.

The long-awaited Benchmarking 2 Report was released in January 2008. IPPN’s submission “Investing in School Leadership” seemed to have borne fruit as Principals were identified as the only group in the entire education sector deemed deserving of a pay increase. Incidentally, this increase never materialised.

Conference 2008 saw IPPN call on the government to significantly increase the annual capitation grant to

schools as many schools were increasingly dependent on fundraising. IPPN was also active at this time in highlighting the steady and destructive increase in commercialism in schools, in addition to bringing concerns relating to governance and management of schools to national prominence.

Perhaps one of IPPN’s greatest achievements during the 2007/08 school year was establishing EducationPosts.ie as Ireland’s foremost education vacancy advertising website following on the long-awaited decision of the DES to allow for web-based advertising of school vacancies from Jan 1st, 2008.

## Continuous Professional Development

### Principals’ Conference 2008

**Theme:** ‘A Time for Fresh Thinking’

**Facilitator:** Anton Savage

**Venue:** Ireland’s National Event Centre (INEC), Killarney

**Date:** 31st January to 2nd February 2008

**Speakers:**

President Mary McAleese; Minister Mary Hanafin, TD; Cardinal Seán Brady; Caoimhe Máirtín; David Ruddy BL; Professor Tom Collins, Larry Fleming & Seán Cottrell.



President McAleese addresses IPPN Conference

### Deputy Principals’ Conference

**Theme:** ‘Two Heads are Better than One - Sharing the Leadership Role’



Larry & Caoimhe



David Ruddy

**Date:** May 19th & 20th 2008

**Venue:** Carlton Shearwater Hotel, Ballinasloe, Galway

**Speakers:** 220 Deputy Principals attended the conference, which was structured into three seminars:

- Fiona King - SEN – Pupil withdrawal vs. In-class support
- Pat Goff and Larry Fleming - Inclusion – Policy & Practice
- Angela Lynch – Building Professional Relationships.

### Mentor Training

Held in April and May 2008, these seminars looked at mentoring and its importance for the newly-appointed Principal, explored issues mentors may have encountered and looked to IPPN's plans for the new school year.

### Online Summer Course

Over 300 people participated in three online courses facilitated during July and August 2008:

- Bullying - Prevention and Counteraction
- Dealing with Challenging Behaviour
- Ciall Ceannaithe for Newly Appointed Principals
- The Principal and The Law (in collaboration with Coláiste Mhuire, Marino).

### Challenges/Press Releases

- **Sep 2007** – Vacant Principal Posts
- Reclaim the Summer Campaign
- **Oct 2007** – Establishing New Boards of Management
- INTO re. Principals' Working Conditions
- **Dec 2007** – Water Charges
- **Jan 2008** - New water charges - schools still cash-starved
- **Jan 2008** – Benchmarking Recommendations & Implications for Principals
- New trends among children
- Still waiting for the revised ISM Circular...
- **Feb 2008** – Principals losing confidence in Minister for Education
- Unfair pressure to open Autism Unit
- NPC/IPPN Survey of Parents Funding of Schools / The Myth of Free Education - Parents Speak Out
- Underfunding of Schools' Operational Costs
- **Mar 2008** - Autism Provision - Not so Special
- Tesco exploits 7 years of ICT funding neglect by Government
- Underperformance in primary schools
- **Apr 2008** – DES consulted Principals on Review of GAM and putting the curriculum on a statutory basis

- **Jun 2008** – Religion in Schools.

### Research/Policies

- Oct 2007 – Reclaim the Summer
- Nov 2007 – Commercialism in Schools
- Dec 2007 – Water Charges
- Jan 2008 – Pre-Conference Survey and Principals' Views on School Funding
- Feb 2008 – NPC/IPPN Survey of Parents Funding of Schools
- Mar 2008 – Principals' Issues
- Mar 2008 – Autism Survey
- May 2008 – Summer Works Scheme
- June 2008 – Religion /Role of the Church in School Governance
- July 2008 – Autism Survey.

### External Relations

- Nov 2007 – IPPN attended the Conference 'Education: whose Business is it anyway?', part of the Campaign for Commercial Free Education at Trinity College, Dublin

### Publications

- Boards of Management - A Framework for Good Practice (a revision of the original document published in 2003)
- Ciall Ceannaithe – Sound Advice and Borrowed Wisdom for Newly Appointed Principals (Updated)
- Leadership+ issues 40 - 45
- Principal's Information Management System (PIMS).



*Human rights are at the heart of the work of IPPN. Not only is it an invaluable resource for primary Principals, it demonstrates a deep commitment to the right of every child in the country to access a quality education. Whether it is lobbying against education cutbacks, or for accountability in child protection, children's rights are at the core of their message. The Irish education system needs organisations like IPPN.*

**Colm O'Gorman, Executive Director,  
Amnesty International Ireland**

# 2008-2009 - at a Glance

## President – Larry Fleming

The 2008 / 2009 school year was a challenging but exciting year which saw IPPN engaging in a number of major projects including the planning for a brand new Support Office and the commissioning of a Schools Resourcing Project. Further work was completed on a study of School Governance and a number of on-line courses for Principals and teachers were developed and delivered.

This school year saw a sizeable contraction in the level of resourcing available to schools. The 'An Bord Snip Nua' recommendations identified areas within the education system which were to be targeted for cutbacks. As a consequence, IPPN was instrumental in the formation of the National Alliance for Primary Education. This Alliance consisted of representatives of unions, management and professional bodies committed to the preservation of funding for frontline services in Primary education.

The fall-out from the publication of the Ryan and Murphy reports into clerical and institutional child abuse brought the issue of child protection into the public consciousness in 2008 / 2009. A severe budget in December 2008 led to IPPN presenting a 10-point plan for system reform to the Minister of the day, Mr. Batt O'Keefe, TD, at the Conference 2009 in Killarney. This

conference was also significant in that IPPN and the National Parents Council (Primary) began work on establishing closer links which culminated in the publication in 2010 of a joint document on protocols for effective school/parent association partnership.

## Continuous Professional Development

### Principals' Conference 2009

**Theme:** 'Primary Education – Who Pays?'

**Facilitator:** Olivia O'Leary

**Venue:** Ireland's National Event Centre (INEC), Killarney

**Date:** 29th to 31st January 2009

**Speakers:**

- Minister for Education & Science, Batt O'Keefe TD
- Sr Stanislaus Kennedy, President, Focus Ireland
- David McWilliams, Economist and Broadcaster
- Jim Spinks, Director, All Across the Line
- Áine Lynch, CEO, National Parents' Council (Primary).
- Larry Fleming, IPPN President
- Seán Cottrell, Director IPPN.



Sr. Stanislaus Kennedy



Olivia O'Leary,  
Conference Facilitator

### Deputy Principals' Conference

**Theme:** 'Special Education – Implementing Best Practice'

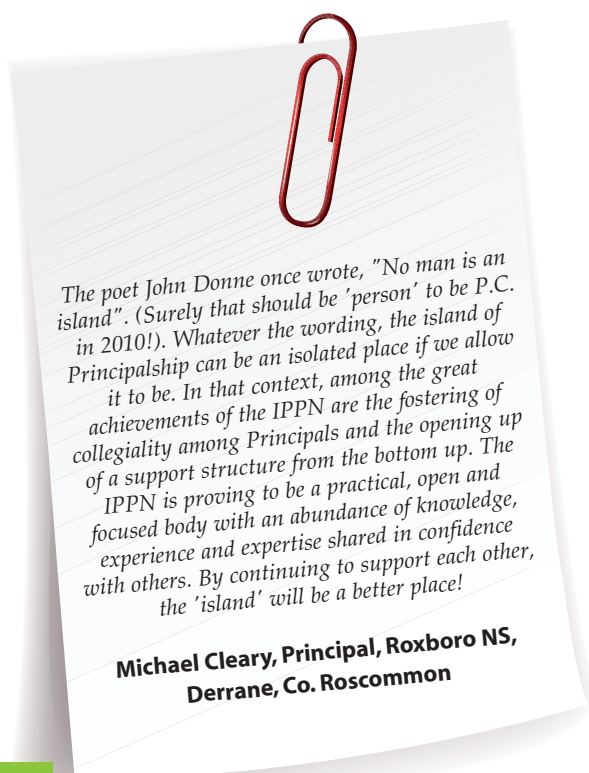
**Venue:** Glenroyal Hotel, Maynooth

**Speakers:** Jim Jordan of the NCSE; Madeline Hickey of the SESS; Seán Gallagher of PPDS; Ann Marie Sheehan of NEPS; Anita Prunty, St Patrick's College.

300 Deputies gathered in Maynooth for their first overnight IPPN event.

### Your School & The Law

Seminars were run in Cork and Galway in November 2008, in Dublin (February and March 2009) and Sligo



(March 2009) with a total of 430 attending. Speakers included Ian O’Herlihy of Mason, Hayes & Curran; Shay Bannon; Emer Woodfull, BL; Denise Brett, BL; Dympna Glendenning, BL; and David Ruddy, BL and Principal of Talbot NS, who also acted as seminar director.



David McWilliams steps into Seán’s shoes, having left his own in Dublin

### Professional Briefings for Principals

Briefings were held in Mayo and Donegal in September 2008 and were attended by over 280 Principals. These briefings included presentations by IPPN as well as the following organisations on their current supports and services being provided to schools:

- HSE - Child Protection and Child Guidance
- DES Inspectorate - the WSE and The Principal and NQTs
- NCSE - the role of the SENO
- Medmark - Fitness to Teach and the Teachers’ Occupational Health Service
- SESS
- SPHE.

### Pre-Retirement Course

Over 60 Principals gathered at Portlaoise Parish Centre on Saturday 16th May and Saturday 6th June 2009 for a series of workshops relating to dealing with the changes retirement brings, financial & tax planning as well as personal planning for retirement. Cornmarket Group Financial Services presented on pension and other benefits, taxation as well as social welfare entitlements.

### Online Summer Courses

Four online courses completed by over 320 people were facilitated by IPPN Executive Committee members during July and August 2009.

1. Bullying – Prevention & Counteraction
2. Challenging Behaviour
3. Ciall Ceannaithe for Newly-Appointed Principals
4. Managing Special Needs Assistants – Promoting Best Practice.

### Challenges/Press Releases

- **Oct 2008** - National Alliance for Primary Education
- Reaction to Budget 2009
- Education Bailout
- **Nov 2008** - NEWB Strategic Plan
- **Dec 2008** - Bullying Questionnaire
- **Jan 2009** - Are education agencies really working?
- School resourcing – Jim Spinks



Minister O’Keeffe addresses Conference

- Public Service Reform
- **Feb 2009** - Primary Principals Appalled at Dismantling of Special Classes
- Closing of Classes for Children with MGLD
- Public Service Levy
- **Mar 2009** - Day of Action
- High Court Backs School & Overturns Section 29 Decision
- **May 2009** – Principals raise Child Protection issues with Barry Andrews, TD
- Mass exodus of Principals will create leadership crisis
- Louise O’Keeffe Supreme Court ruling bad for Boards of Management
- **July 2009** – Schools face bankruptcy/shredded by An Bord Snip Nua.

### Research/Policies

- Autism Units
- Rates of Application for Principalship
- Sep 2008 – IPPN Services (phone)
- Nov 2008 – Budget 2009 Survey
- Dec 2008 – Bullying Questionnaire
- Jan 2009 – School Resourcing research
- Jan 2009 – Pre-Conference Survey
- Mar 2009 - Submission on School Transport
- Mar 2009 – Bullying of Principals (Paul Stephens)
- Apr 2009 – Child Welfare (part of pre-Conference 2009 survey)
- May 2009 – Secretarial Support (part of Principals’ Issues Survey 2008).

### Publications

- Leadership+ issues 46 to 51
- Principal’s Information Management System (PIMS)
- Ciall Ceannaithe – Sound Advice and Borrowed Wisdom for Newly Appointed Principals (Addendum).