

IPPN President's Report

2019-2020 At a Glance

President – Damian White

Key milestones, challenges, projects

- In March 2020, the **global COVID-19 pandemic** upended life as we knew it, and forced schools to pivot overnight to remote learning and deal with the fallout of significant teacher, SNA and pupil absences
- Maynooth University conducted **research on the impact of the pandemic on schools** and on pupils – with IPPN and NAPD - in May 2020, with follow-up research in December 2020
- A **celebration of 20 years of IPPN** – at the principals' and deputy principals' conferences
- From September 2019 to August 2020, the **Leadership Support team** responded to over 2,600 individual queries of principals and deputy principals. In July and August alone, well over 400 calls and emails were dealt with, a time that is usually relatively quiet.
- As a consequence of the COVID-19-related closure of school buildings, IPPN brought forward our plans to develop a **series of webinars** on relevant topics for school leaders. With our first 'Sustainable Leadership' series, over 2500 school leaders registered and participated in our first three webinars on the topics of Governance, Recruitment and the Reopening of Schools.
- **Sub Seeker** - the online service within EducationPosts.ie that enables primary and post-primary schools to find qualified teachers for substitute teaching in selected counties - was launched. It helped substitute teachers find over 800 temporary positions and over 4,200 substitute teachers registered with the service during its first year.

Continuous Professional Development

Principals' Conference 2020 – A celebration of 20 years of IPPN

Theme: 2020 Vision: Back to the Future

Facilitator: Anton Savage

Venue: Citywest, Dublin

Keynote Speakers:

- Páirc Clerkin, IPPN CEO
- Damian White, IPPN President
- Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General, DES (for Minister for Education & Skills Joe McHugh TD)
- Dr Karen Edge, Reader, UCL
- Viv Grant, Executive Coach and Director of Integrity Coaching
- Dr Joan Kiely, Dean of Education at Marino Institute of Education
- Professor Pádraig Ó Duibhir, Deputy Dean of the DCU Institute of Education
- Brian O'Doherty, IPPN Deputy President

Leadership Pathways

- Year 1 School Leaders: Creating the Space to Lead – Establishing your Credibility as a School Leader
- Year 2 School Leaders: Creating the Space to Lead – Establishing Needs and Priorities for you and your school
- Years 3 – 5 School Leaders: Creating the Space to Lead – Developing Leadership Capacity in your School Community
- School Leaders 6+ years in leadership role – Sustainability and management of self in your Leadership Role

Seminars

- A Legal Update for Schools 2020 - David Ruddy
- Close the Word Gap: Oral Language and Vocabulary Development - Julieanne Delvin
- Communication for Leaders: The X and 'Y' Factors - John White
- Middle Leadership - Colm Ó Tuathail and Ciara Gaughan (PDST)
- Preparing the ground for a Dignity in the Workplace Policy for your school community - Ann Ryan
- Coping with grief and loss in the 21st century Irish Classroom - Carmelita McGloughlin

- Engaging parents in primary schools - a collaborative strengths-based approach - John Sharry, Parent Plus
- PrincipalMeet 2020 - Gerard Ruane
- Power of Nurture and Nurturing Schools - Susan Gibney, Blackrock Ed. Ctr
- Reducing and Managing Behaviour that Challenges - Edel Horan and Elisha Foy, NCSE
- Reducing ICT Infrastructure related stress in primary schools - Tom Lonergan & Deirdre Redmond PDST
- Seeds of Success: A constructive approach to school gardening - Dr. Paddy Madden
- The shape and direction of primary curriculum change - Patrick Sullivan and Arlene Forster, NCCA
- Using PIEW to manage your school's priorities - Finbarr Hurley & Maria Tully
- Working with Pupils with High Functioning Autism (HFA) in the Primary School - Dr. Michele Dunleavy, MIC.

Deputy Principals' Conference 2019

Theme: Sustainable Leadership – Challenges & Opportunities

Venue: Citywest

Facilitator: Brian O'Doherty, IPPN Deputy President

Speakers:

- Páirc Clerkin - IPPN CEO
- Adam Harris - CEO Aslam
- Bernard McHale - PDST
- Joe McHugh - Minister for Education and Skills
- Damian White - IPPN President
- Karen Belshaw - Stress Management Ireland

Seminars

- Dr. Joan Kiely, Marino Institute of Education
- Dr. Déirdre Kirwan – Intercultural Inclusion
- Angela Lynch (IPPN), Anne Tansey (NEPS), Áine Fitzpatrick (IPPN) – Wellbeing

- Dr. Eemer Eivers - ICT in Primary Schools
- Finbarr Hurley and Maria Tully - PIEW Model

Ciall Ceannaithe Online Summer Course

More than 220 teachers and school leaders completed the course

Advocacy

Our **advocacy** work focused on the following aspects of school leadership and management, in line with our strategic priorities:

- **Small schools** – presentation at DES symposium, establishment of working group on small schools chaired by Prof. Anne Looney, Executive Dean of DCU
- **Teaching Principalship** - presentation to Joint Oireachtas Committee, top priority in our Budget 2020 submission and engagement with stakeholders
- **COVID-19 remote learning and transition back to school** – supports needed by schools and school leaders to lead and manage during the crisis, resources needed by schools to reopen safely for the new school year – presentation to the Special Oireachtas Committee, participation in briefings and working group meetings, various submissions
- **Sustainable leadership** – IPPN started a discussion with key stakeholders to look at the sustainability of primary school leadership, which will lead to a number of strands of work in the coming years
- **Special Education** – IPPN has worked with officials in the DES and NCSE as well as with NABMSE, to progress and address issues relating to SEN, including the designation of schools for new special classes, the new SNA allocation model, and the serious issues specific to the special schools’ sector
- Other issues discussed with key stakeholders included:
 - Homelessness
 - The proposed Student & Parent Charter and its implications for schools
 - School Completion Planning
 - Racism.

Press Releases

- 12th June 2020 - IPPN call for clear guidance for the delivery of Summer Provision programmes and the reopening schools
- 30th March 2020 - School Meals during COVID-19 closures - IPPN / INTO Joint Statement
- 12th March 2020 - IPPN and NPC Joint Statement on School Closures due to COVID-19 measures
- 4th February 2020 - Budget 2020 Has Failed Primary Schools
- 4th February 2020 - IPPN's response to the publication of the Student and Parent Charter
- 1st October 2019 - IPPN Submission re. Budget 2020: 1. Minimum of One Leadership and Management Day per Week for Teaching Principals, 2. Restore middle leadership posts in all primary schools.

Submissions

During the 2019/20 school year, IPPN prepared submissions on the following topics, among others:

- Budget 2020
- Draft national standards for children's social services
- Oireachtas Procedures
- DES Statement of Strategy 2019-2021
- Revised procedures relating to Section 29 appeals
- Tusla Corporate Plan 2021-2023.

Research

A current focus is on the wellbeing of school leaders, and on the workload of school leaders, teaching principals in particular.

In the 2019/2020 school year, IPPN surveyed members in relation to the following key issues:

- COVID-19 school closures and practice in schools – March/April and follow-up in late May 2020
- IPPN strategic review
- A range of topics was covered in a pre-conference survey in early 2020, including:
 - Path to principalship
 - SEN in mainstream schools
 - Issues and challenges in Irish-medium schools
 - Homework policy

- Irish exemptions
- Formation of new Boards of Management.

Small cohorts of school leaders were asked to provide input on a number of topics relating to submissions sought by external organisations such as the DES, Inspectorate, Tusla and HIQA, in relation to the following:

- HIQA Draft National Standards for Children’s Social Services
- Section 29 appeals procedures
- Guidelines on the Continuity of Schooling, and
- Full Reopening of Schools after COVID-19 Closures.

Publications

- *Leadership+* - Issues 110 - 114
- *Annual Members’ Report* – published in September 2020
- *A Guide to IPPN* - updated in September 2020
- *Left to their own devices: Trends in ICT at primary school level* - Dr Emer Eivers

2020-2021 At a Glance

President – Damian White

Key milestones, challenges, projects

- 95% of all primary schools are now members of IPPN
- From September 2020 to August 2021, the **Leadership Support team** responded to 4,082 queries from 1,630 principals and deputy principals.
- 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. By the end of the school year, there was at least one support group in each education centre for both principals and for deputy principals.
- 38 trained **Group Mentors** supported 226 School Leaders in their second year of principalship.
- 60 facilitators completed their four-week training course and have been assigned to Education Centres. There are now **trained facilitators in each county** available to facilitate support group meetings.
- **Dignity and Respect at Work** – a significant project was initiated 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 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.

- IPPN undertook a process of engagement with members, education stakeholders and IPPN staff to define our **strategic priorities for the five-year period 2021-2025**. 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.

Continuous Professional Development

Principals' Conference 2021

Theme: *Leadership for an Imperfect World*

Facilitator: Anton Savage

Venue: Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, this was a virtual event, held online

Speakers:

- Páirc Clerkin, IPPN CEO
- Damian White, IPPN President
- Dr Jolanta Burke and Dr Majella Dempsey, Assistant Professors, Maynooth University - School leader health and wellbeing research
- Teresa Griffin, CEO of the NCSE - NCSE Supports, what's next in SEN
- Norma Foley TD, Minister for Education
- John Kiely, Limerick Manager
- Steve Munby, author of '*Imperfect Leadership*'
- Norah Patten, Irish aeronautical engineer
- Brian O'Doherty, IPPN Deputy President.

Leadership Pathways

- Year 1 School Leaders: Creating the Space to Lead – Establishing your Credibility as a School

Leader - Angela Lynch with Jack Durkan

- Year 2 School Leaders: Creating the Space to Lead – Establishing Needs and Priorities for you and your school - Paul O'Donnell with Donal Kerins
- Years 3 – 5 School Leaders: Creating the Space to Lead – Developing Leadership Capacity in your School Community - Finbarr Hurley with Ann Ryan
- School Leaders 6-12 years in leadership role: Lifting the Spirit – Renewing the Enthusiasm - Anne Fitzpatrick, PDST associate with Catriona O'Reilly
- School Leaders 12 years + in leadership role: Re-energise, Rejuvenate, Recreate your Leadership - Anna Mai, and Máire Ní Bhróithe - CSL

Seminars

- Money Matters - Brian O'Doherty
- Admission to Schools Act 2018 - Mairéad O'Flynn
- Implementing GDPR in the school - Donal Kerins
- Principalmeet 2019 - Dara Glynn
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections – An Overview, DES Inspectorate
- Preparing the ground for a Dignity in the Workplace Policy for your school community - Ann Ryan, with Pádraig McCabe and Michael Maher
- Restorative Practices - Richie Walsh, with Niamh Fowler
- Embedding digital technologies into teaching, learning and assessment - Michael McNamara
- Mindfulness in Schools - Secrets to a Happy Brain - Máire Rodgers Coyle
- Priorities for Teaching Principals - Shane O'Donnell, with Jack Durkan
- A Creative School – Leading Provision in Arts Education - Dr Leo Kilroy
- The Art of Middle Leadership - Anna Mai Rooney and Enda McGorman
- From the Deserted Village to the Alt School. Where are we now? - Gerard McHugh
- Special Schools Membership Engagement Project - Claire O'Donovan

Deputy Principals' Conference 2020

This was IPPN's first fully virtual event, courtesy of the pandemic. We were delighted that 391 deputy principals attended, the highest attendance since sub-cover was rescinded by the

Department in 2012.

Speakers:

- Damian White – IPPN President
- Prof Finn O Murchú - Conversations on middle leadership in primary schools
- Dr Niall Muldoon and Dr Naomi Masheti - Inclusion & Diversity
- Prof Pádraig Ó Duibhir - Irish language education
- Mary McGrath and Camilla Marks, NCSE - Allocation model and practical guidance for school leaders on managing SEN in schools; Lead behaviour specialists and service to schools

Online Summer Course

More than 270 teachers and school leaders completed the course. This course is continuously reviewed and updated and this year new topics included were Sustainable Leadership and Dignity in the Workplace.

Advocacy

During the 2020/2021 school year, our advocacy work focused on the following aspects of school leadership and management:

- **COVID-19 – reopening and keeping schools open**
- **Small schools – A two-year action research project on the clustering of small schools in rural areas** was established. Six projects clusters will be established, with 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. The Department, INTO, CPSMA and the General Synod Board of Education of the Church of Ireland are working together
- **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.

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

- Special Education
- 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.

Press Releases

- 29th March 2021 - Primary school representative bodies raise concerns regarding support allocations for children with additional needs
- 14th October 2020 - Budget 2021 – IPPN calls for urgent clarification re. funding for Teaching Principals
- 16th September 2020 - School leaders need support from inspectors, not more checklists

- 28th July 2020 - IPPN welcomes plans for the full reopening of schools and seeks further clarity on a number of key issues

Submissions

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).

Research

- 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](#).

- 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.

Publications

- Resource Bundles were published in relation to:
 - 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
 - Returning to School in the aftermath of COVID-19 (Mar20– Sep 20)
 - Keeping the School safely open during COVID-19 (Sep20 – Jun21)
 - COVID ar Scoil 21/22 (August 2021)
- [Leadership+](#) - Issues 115 – 118
- [Annual Members' Report 2020/2021](#)