



School Governance

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1 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE:

School Governance is an over arching concept encompassing two distinct issues:

- The ethos of the school as determined by the patron as it applies to religious education and faith formation
- The management and leadership capacity provided for the competent and sustainable functioning of the school on a day-to-day basis

While both are determined by the School Patron, the challenges presented in relation to a schools management capacity are different from the issues concerning religious instruction and faith formation.

IPPN represents the professional interests of over 6000 Principals and Deputy Principals. Reporting to Boards of Management, the Principal with the assistance of the Deputy Principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of all aspects of the school. IPPN 's membership is involved in leading schools with a variety of patronage models, including Roman Catholic, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist, Muslim, Jewish, Educate Together, An Foras Patrúnachta, VEC and an increasing number of diverse models. IPPN holds no ideological position and respects the validity of all Patrons equally.

1.1 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION & FAITH FORMATION:

- IPPN supports the right of all parents to have their children educated in a school of their choice where their beliefs are catered for and respected.
- IPPN supports the teaching of religion in schools.
- IPPN supports and welcomes the involvement of parents and parish clergy with the teachers in both the teaching of religion and the preparation of children for sacraments and other liturgical events. This should be a shared responsibility that is parish based, community focused and school supported. In the case of Catholic schools, the '*Do This in Memory of Me*' programme, that was developed in the Diocese of Ossary, is a model for three-way partnership giving parents a more meaningful role and involvement particularly towards sacramental preparation.
- IPPN recognises and supports the many denominational schools that have been inclusive and welcoming of diversity and particularly acknowledges the contribution of the Catholic Church in this regard. Any new Governance model must continue to respect the needs and diversity of minority as well as majority groupings through ethical, values based instruction.

1.2 MANAGEMENT CAPACITY:

- IPPN supports a governance model which will deliver effective management capacity to schools and will provide positive practical support for the Principal who is the day to day manager of the school. IPPN's motto is based on the belief that quality leadership enables quality teaching and learning.
- IPPN believes that if schools are to fulfil their function in providing appropriate learning opportunities for the children in their communities, it is imperative that there is an appropriate, competent and sustainable management capacity in place. This management capacity applies equally to all Patronage models.

- IPPN believes that Principals – both administrative and teaching - have in effect become subsumed by administration and management to such an extent that their capacity to perform their function as 'Principal Teacher' or 'Príomh Oide' is being severely curtailed.
- IPPN wishes to contribute to the enhancement of school leadership so as to reverse the alarming reduction of applications for the post of Teaching Principal over the past decade conscious of the fact that such a trend, if allowed continue, will have unimaginable consequences for the quality of school leadership in the longer term.

IPPN believes that in order for the current Board of Management structure to be empowered to carry out a true Governance function, many managerial elements in relation to finance, legal, human resources, plant maintenance and construction issues should be carried out by appropriately qualified and competent professionals. This Governance function would attend to such matters as ethos, aims, general policy, strategic goals, direction while relating with the Principal/Deputy Principal and the In-School Management team.

IPPN agrees with Archbishop Diarmuid Martin that *"The story of the evolution of ethos, management & governance of our schools is an open ended book"*....and that the Primary ethos of a school is an Educational one.

IPPN is committed to working with all concerned to build on the past while meeting the challenges of the future.