

# Report of ACCS Continuous Professional Development Programme 2020/2021



**960+**  
Board Members



**40+**  
CPD Events



**6,000+**  
Participants

*“Distance learning is not an accelerator or obstacle of learning. What teachers and leaders do matters, not the medium in which they do it.”*

The Distance Learning Playbook for School Leaders. Fisher, Frey, Smith & Hattie

An announcement was made this morning by the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar TD of the closure of schools, pre-schools and further and higher education settings, for a period until 29 March 2020, to support efforts to contain the spread of Covid-19. This will take effect from 6pm this evening, Thursday 12 March.



“At this point in time the closure is planned for two weeks, from tomorrow until 29 March. The Government, in conjunction with the public health authorities, will keep the situation under ongoing review. Any change to that date will be communicated widely.

“Pupils should take their books and learning materials home with them this evening.

“Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine - we all live in one another’s shadow. If there was ever a time for us to appreciate how closely we are connected, how much what we do matters to others, how much we rely on each other, this is it. This is a time where we all need to work together for the best possible outcome for our students. The support of everyone across the sector is vital, as we all strive to ensure that this threat is dealt with as effectively as possible.”

On 12th March 2020, our lives changed dramatically as COVID-19 became our new reality.

Ironically at the time of the announcement, ACCS personnel were in the Clayton Hotel in Liffey Valley hosting what was to be one of the last in-person CPD events of 2020. Little did we realise this on the day as our delegates rushed back to their schools to deal with what was expected to be a two-week closure. We agreed we would return to the unfinished Dignity in the Workplace training in April when normality was returned. We are still waiting for that normality 10 months later as we come to terms with a new reality.

Of course, there was no manual for managing schools and leading school communities during a pandemic and so, as the schools set about their work, ACCS reviewed its own approach to CPD provision to support these schools. Priorities changed overnight in schools as principals and deputy principals moved to ensuring that connections with their students were sound. While learning experiences were key, there was a new recognition that maintaining wellbeing of staff and students was central to the learning taking place. In some schools supporting families with food deliveries became a weekly normal activity. Across the country schools grappled with the digital divide tangled up in the values divide. Schools revealed themselves as solution focussed communities where stakeholders navigated the new landscape professionally with kindness and compassion.

ACCS in turn, changed its provision of CPD and migrated online overnight. The choice to use the ZOOM platform originally was made in the recognition that it served our need to connect with our schools particularly well. It enabled us to reach out to all school Boards simultaneously, to facilitate formal and informal interactions with our members and to deliver a comprehensive programme of CPD and support to our schools.

In Head Office all members have upskilled in online hosting and delivery of CPD and, going forward we recognise that the capacity to deliver CPD in a blended format is the preferred approach. We sorely miss the in-person events and meeting our member schools and colleagues face-to-face, however we also acknowledge much of our CPD can be delivered directly to people's homes and schools in the online format in a manner which "does the job" very well. Engagement in CPD events has increased significantly since these have migrated online as the cost in terms of travel and time away are no longer factors for consideration in the decision to attend or not. Online events by their nature are shorter and more focussed in terms of content and delivery while at the same time the chat function enables an informal connection and narrative.

As the programme of CPD evolved in this space and we have become more adept with the technology, we have developed more agile ways of connecting with our member schools.

In the beginning of this journey our meetings online were by necessity, factual clarifications, and advice with limited opportunity for interaction with delegates. As we grew more accustomed to this way of delivery, we introduced more feedback opportunities, more conversation and deliberation intervals for delegates.

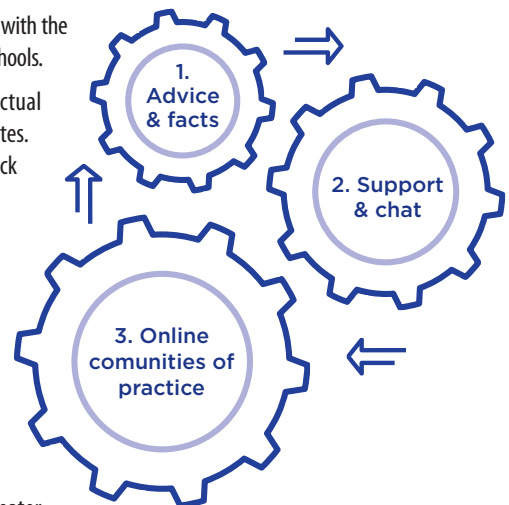
More recently using Microsoft Teams, ACCS has established one forum for schools to share strategies and ideas for the effective facilitation of blended learning and a second forum to support the development of a community of practice in leading Special Needs Education in our schools. These are online spaces for ACCS schools where collaboration and discussion bring a new energy and real opportunities for learning and creativity for participants.

In June 2020 ACCS carried out a survey of all schools which identified the different ICT platforms in the individual schools. In this way, ACCS can host partners like Microsoft, Wriggle and TARA 365 Learning to share a greater understanding with schools about what they can achieve with the technology which supports a better learning and teaching experience for all stakeholders.

As time moves on, schools have become more adept, and confident in their use of the technology to manage the learning experience so that it is secure and safe for users. Schools very quickly started delivering an emergency response last March focussing on achieving connectivity with all while delivering content and activities to progress learning for all year groups.

In January 2021, the focus has changed again, and the approach is different. Schools highlight inclusion, balance content and learning experiences, manage wellbeing and communication with their stakeholders and have greater confidence in themselves and their systems. Schools are experiencing greater engagement with their students which is testament to the product which they are offering. Schools across the system have used the time since last March while out of school, and in school last term, to upskill staff and students considerably and to work more efficiently with the tools already at their disposal. These tools are necessary, but they are not the important thing. They will change. What is key is the management of the rapid change which we are experiencing right now, and our schools have shown just how ready, and able they are to overcome and manage all the challenges presented.

The CPD schedule presented in 2020 is like no other presented by ACCS and reflects the impact of COVID-19 on our work. Below is a summary/category list of the webinars presented since Convention 2020.



## ACCS CPD Webinars 2020/21

Date	Name	Category/Audience
1. 29th April 2020	The Admissions Policy – Schools’ Briefing	Chairpersons, Secretary BOM, Principals & Deputy Principals
2. 30th April 2020	<b>ACCS Area Meetings</b>	Chairpersons, Secretary BOM, Principals & Deputy Principals (5 separate events)
3. 12th May 2020	Briefing on the Topic of LC Calculated Grades	Chairpersons, Secretary BOM, Principals & Deputy Principals
4. 21st May 2020	Briefing on the Topic of LC Calculated Grades	Chairpersons, Secretary BOM, Principals & Deputy Principals
5. 12th June 2020	DEIS Schools Updates	Chairpersons, Secretary BOM, Principals & Deputy Principals of DEIS Schools
6. 23rd June 2020	Student Voice Webinar	Students and Staff from C&C Schools
7. 25th June 2020	Schools’ Update Briefing	Chairpersons, Secretary BOM, Principals & Deputy Principals
8. 2nd July 2020	Student Voice Webinar	Students & Staff (St. Mark’s CS)
9. 5th August 2020	Return to School – COVID-19 Practical Implications & Summary of Resources & Guidelines	Chairpersons, Secretary BOM, Principals & Deputy Principals
10. Week commencing 10th August 2020	Blended Learning Workshops hosted with H2 Learning	3 x 1 hour Workshops + Follow Up Clinic – ICT Coordinators
11. 17th & 18th August 2020	<b>Induction programme</b>	Newly Appointed Principals and Deputy Principals (2 days)
12. 20th August 2020	“Leading in Uncertain Times” with Dr. Joe O’Connell	Leadership Seminar on Care and School Climate During the Pandemic Chairpersons, Secretary BOM, Principals, Deputy Principals & BOM Members
13. Week commencing 25th August 2020	<b>ACCS Area Meetings</b>	5 separate events Chairpersons, Secretary BOM, Principals, Deputy Principals & BOM Members
14. 3rd September 2020	New Further Education Staff Training	FET – Newly Appointed FE Staff/Coordinators of QQI PLC/BTEI programmes
15. 7th September 2020	<b>Individual Board of Management Training</b> <i>Membership &amp; Governance</i>	BOM Governance Pt 1 Chairpersons, Secretary BOM, Principals and Board Members
16. 8th September 2020	Leadership & Management Posts of Responsibility	Governance in HR Matters Principals, Trustee Nominees on Selection Boards for Leadership and Management Posts and Independent Panel Members

## ACCS CPD Webinars 2020/21

Date	Name	Category/Audience
17. 8th September 2020	PLSS Training for Further Education Providers	FET - Responsibility for Uploading PLC/BTEI Data to the Programme Learner Support System (PLSS)
18. 23rd September 2020	The Middle Leadership Team in Challenging Times Workshop	ACCS Middle Leaders Cohort 2
19. 25th September 2020	Schools' Update Briefing	Chairpersons, Secretary BOM, Principals & Deputy Principals
20. 29th September 2020	<b>Induction Programme</b> <i>Teaching &amp; Learning</i>	Follow Up Webinar 1 Newly Appointed Principals and Deputy Principals
21. 5th October 2020	<b>Individual Board of Management Training</b> <i>State Claims Agency &amp; FSSU</i>	BOM Governance Pt 2 Chairpersons, Secretary BOM, Principals and Board Members
22. 15th October 2020	Leading Special Education Needs	Seminar for SENCos on Assistive Technology Principals, Deputy Principals and Special Needs Coordinators involved in Special Education Needs
23. 20th October 2020	<b>Induction Programme</b> <i>Care and Management of Students</i>	Follow Up Webinar 2 Newly Appointed Principals and Deputy Principals
24. 2nd November 2020	<b>Individual Board of Management Training</b> <i>The Employer &amp; HR Issues in School</i>	BOM Governance Pt 3 Chairpersons, Secretary BOM, Principals and Board Members
25. 10th November 2020	ACCS DEIS Webinar	Governance & Sharing Best Practice from DEIS Schools School Principals, Deputy Principals, HSCL and Relevant Coordinators in DEIS Schools
26. 24th November 2020	<b>Induction Programme</b> <i>Learning from other Leadership Teams</i>	Follow Up Webinar 3 Newly Appointed Principals and Deputy Principals
27. 7th December 2020	<b>Individual Board of Management Training</b> <i>Curriculum &amp; Care of Students</i>	BOM Governance Pt 4 Chairpersons, Secretary BOM, Principals and Board Members
28. 7th January 2021	ACCS Schools Reopening Update & Briefing	Chairpersons, Secretary BOM, Principals & Deputy Principals
29. 14th January 2021	Leading Special Education Needs*	Seminar for SENCos on Assistive Technology Pt 2 Principals, Deputy Principals and Special Needs Coordinators involved in Special Education Needs

## ACCS CPD Webinars 2020/21

Date	Name	Category/Audience
30. 15th January 2021	Managing & Leading the Learning Environment Remotely (TARA 365 Learning)	Chairpersons, Secretary BOM, Principals & Deputy Principals

## Other ACCS CPD Events hosted with partners

Date	Name	Category/Audience
31. 6th October 2020	Blended Learning Forum – Developing a Community of Practice for ACCS schools **	Principals, Deputy Principals, ICT Coordinators and Digital Planners in School
32. 20th October 2020		
33. 10th November 2020		
34. 19th January 2021		
35. 20th January 2021	Creating an Inclusive Classroom with Office 365	Teachers Leading AEN in Schools
36. 20th January 2021	Parents' Guide to Microsoft Teams	Parents/Guardians
37. 27th January 2021	Resources for Remote Teaching and Learning using Office 365	Classroom Teachers and Special Needs Assistants Working with MS Teams and One Note
38. 27th January 2021	Assessment & Technology in Google Schools. ***	Classroom Teachers and Special Needs Assistants Working with Google Suite
39. 28th January 2021	Student Voice Webinar	Students and Staff from C&C Schools
40. 3rd February 2021	Effective Remote Teaching and Learning Using Office 365	Classroom Teachers and Special Needs Assistants working with MS Teams and One Note

\* *Planned SENCo Forum Events in 2021: March/April/May (Dates to be advised) (89 members)*

\*\* *Planned Blended Learning Forum Events in 2021: 9th Feb/9th March/13th April/11th May. (78 members)*

\*\*\* *Google training for schools with TARA 365 Learning (Dates to be advised)*

We believe that the ACCS schedule of Continuous Professional Development represents a comprehensive and wide-ranging programme which focuses on building *'expert, inspired and passionate school leaders at all levels'* and establishing best practice in governance in our schools. This year in response to the COVID-19 crisis, ACCS has widened the range of participants, reaching out to all stakeholders in schools including parents/guardians and building collaborative online spaces for teacher leaders and students for the first time.



The in-service programme includes three events which are referenced separately in other reports in the handbook. These are the In-School Management Conference which takes place in late Autumn, the Education Conference scheduled for April/May and the ACCS Annual Convention which is scheduled for March each year each of which directs and informs the work of the ACCS Secretariat. Additionally, the FESU, DEIS Sub-Committee and SEN Sub-Committee reports detail their relevant events separately also.



## Individual Board of Management In-Service – a changed approach

ACCS facilitated this training across all schools over four one-hour webinars which were recorded and are available in the Members section of the ACCS website [www.accs.ie](http://www.accs.ie) for members of Boards in Community and Comprehensive Schools. These, along with the training video on BOM meetings, are particularly useful and relevant to newly nominated members of Boards. The areas covered during the in-service focus on the governance function and oversight which is required by a Board of Management in its work. This includes topics such as the Legislative Framework, Child Protection, Health and Safety Financial Guidelines, Care of Students, Curriculum, Planning and Evaluation and New Developments in Education. Feedback from the webinars this year was in general positive although a small number of participants would have liked more time to explore some topics in greater detail.

ACCS has facilitated some individual Board Training sessions in addition to these events on invitation from a newly formed Board. These sessions are shorter and are used to highlight areas of interest to the individual Board. This dedicated in-service is very beneficial for the Board and for ACCS as it gives us an opportunity to meet with new Board members in a more intimate arena and gives Board members an opportunity to discuss issues that pertain to them.

## Induction of New Principals & Deputy Principals – a revised programme

ACCS hosted its two-day Induction Programme for all newly appointed Principals and Deputy Principals on the Zoom platform in August 2020. Materials were sent to schools of all the participants and the materials were amended to reflect the changed nature of the in-service. The programme was divided into the initial session which took place over a day and a half and was followed by three other events scheduled across the first term. Topics included School Governance, GDPR and Data Protection, Child Protection, Care and Management of Students, Restorative Practice, Workplace Relations, the role of the FSSU in our schools and new Developments in Education. ACCS wishes to acknowledge and thank James Duignan & Eileen Gildea, Glenamaddy CS, Eithne Coyne St. Mark's CS and Antoinette Nic Gearailt ACCS Executive for their support in the programme this year.

## ACCS CPD Programme Evaluation

ACCS evaluates the programme operating an evaluation form system for all participants at each in-service. The evaluations consistently show a very high satisfaction rating and are used by ACCS to amend and develop materials and, where necessary, to add new seminars as required. In reviewing the programme, we recognise that there are some events which, because of the content and methodology employed in the workshop, are not particularly appropriate to the online space, e.g., Dignity in the Workplace workshops. Below is a representation of the evaluations and a selection of comments from participants across the programme this year.

**The Breakout Rooms were really good today, I felt comfortable talking in small groups. You have it mastered. Keep up the excellent work. A little more time needed to complete the pre webinar work you set us. Super session, extremely interesting and picked up lots of ideas. Would be great to have an optional facility for the groups to stay in touch.**

TeachNimble Blended Learning Program

**Thanks a million Anne Marie, Áine and John – really useful and informative. Thanks once again to all the team. This presentation covers all the most important points and is a great resource to have for future reference.**

Leadership and Management  
Posts of Responsibility

**Many thanks, very practical and helpful, as always. Thanks to all in ACCS for the very informative presentation. Thank you everyone, we much appreciate your information and support. Challenging times ahead, but we'll all get there especially with your ongoing help. Brilliant as usual. Well done guys. Thanks.**

The Implementation of the Roadmap  
for Full Reopening of Schools

**An excellent session. Really have a thorough understanding of QQI Assessment techniques and tutor role after attending this Zoom session. Thanks for all your hard work, guidance and advice and for getting us through June assessment and re-commencing our PLC provision this September. Catherine thank you. You have been brilliant. What would we do without you!**

New Further Education Staff Training

**Based on your experience of the induction programme over the 2 days, do you intend re-engaging in the remaining sessions planned for later in the term?**

**14**  
Yes

**0**  
No

**0**  
Maybe

**I really found the interactive chat with panellists so interesting especially the people who are specialists in their field e.g., Antoinette yesterday was so informative and knowledgeable.**

**I think seeing and hearing about a topic is way more valuable and entertaining than reading all about it esp. after a long day.**

**Love James' wise words so empathetic. Plenty of food for thought! Thank you everyone.**

Induction of Newly Appointed Principals and Deputy Principals

**The ongoing support and encouragement is so important for us all. Great to know what is going on elsewhere. Clear information so you know you're not missing something important. Thank you.**

**I'm a board member not a teacher, it was a really good session – Covid guidance and Q&A were very clear. Excellent as usual. Well done on your continued hard work.**

ACCS Area Meetings

**Well done on the first online event – great job – informative and engaging.**

**A very nice pace and a great overview of key topics for the governance of BOMs. Reinforces previous learnings.**

**Encourage more queries via chat. Set the time to 90 minutes as it is important not to rush what ye are talking about. I'll happily take extra time to find out as much as possible.**

**A well-paced excellent webinar. Mile buíochas & Beir Bua.**

**Well done. Very informative and useful. Maith sibh.**

**Excellent, so much detail but so well presented and clear. It really makes it so manageable and approachable. Well done to Anne Marie and Head Office.**

**Very informative and enjoyable. As it is impossible to remember everything that was included, it is great to be able to come back to this resource in the future if necessary.**

**Very Informative. Very comprehensive look at the role of Board. As chair of the Board, while all the info is excellent, it can be a little overwhelming – but great to know ACCS are there with support and advice if needed.**

Individual Board of Management Training



Thank you for such a positive and energetic evening... very much appreciated. Great technical expertise, with the breakaway groups and smaller discussion groups... managed to replicate, in a small way, the casual conversations that we would have had over a coffee or lunch – many thanks to all. Really enjoyed it.

Simply being able to share ideas with other schools is priceless. Miss that in so many ways.

Sincerest appreciation for a very informative and fulfilling webinar. A real highlight in September.

Thank you for the opportunity to reflect on what is going well in our schools. Lovely evening and we got some great ideas. Many thanks.

Brilliant two hours, thank you ACCS, Joe and all that helped to put this together. Brilliant reminder that we are all in this together and that working together we will come through the 'fog'.

Thank you for a very positive thought-provoking evening. Looking forward to the next webinar.

Thanks very much for giving us the opportunity to connect with other schools. We have middle management meeting tomorrow and I hope to give some feedback to staff, reassuring them that all schools have the same issues and remind them that we are all in this together.

Middle Leaders Cohort 2.  
"The Middle Leadership Team in Challenging Times Workshop"

A really, really good session. Deirdre, Dorothy and Antoinette were excellent. Thank you to all involved.

The presentation by Deirdre Madden was excellent. This was one of the best CPD events I ever attended. Thank you to all involved.

Excellent presentations which are immediately useful. Thank You.

Very well presented. The event was very beneficial. The information on assistive technology was very helpful and also, very reassuring when RACE was discussed. Thanks very much for organising such an event.

Well done to everyone involved. The most practical, informative, and well-paced webinar that I have attended and like most, I have attended a good few recently! Having a network of people involved in SEN and organised meetings is such a super idea. I would love to be part of this. Issues like no access to computers in classroom etc can create problems.

Special Education Needs Webinar

Virtual was great - more on Attendance measures if possible.

It was a busy but worthwhile schedule. Maybe an opportunity to share best practice and simple ideas from all schools. We would love to hear what other schools are doing under all strands and maybe they may like to hear ours. Perhaps allow a little more time in breakout groups as sharing information is important to DEIS coordinators who work alone in their schools. All really good.

Great to see areas that are working and not working for people. Great balance between Planning and Actions. Thanks for all the research and preparation.

Good to see the work other school are doing and very affirming on our own practice.

DEIS Webinar



At the time of writing this report in January 2021 the following in-services have yet to take place. We have no doubt in this new landscape there will be other events to be included in the schedule as we manage the evolving needs of our schools and the system.

1. Teacher Allocation and Redeployment (Date to be confirmed with DES)
2. Data Protection Workshop (25th March)
3. State Claims Agency (28th April)
4. The Middle Leadership Team – Cohort 1 “Check-in” (April 21 – date to be confirmed)
5. ACCS Area Meetings (June 2021)

ACCS wishes to acknowledge the significant work involved in the administration of the in-service programme throughout the year and to express heartfelt thanks to Debbie Riordan, Elaine Mooney, Eileen Diver and David Cahill in Head Office for all their hard work setting up events, preparing, recording, editing materials and liaising with schools. Their attention to detail in this regard is meticulous ensuring that preparation for each event is completed to the highest possible standard for the benefit of all participants.

ACCS acknowledges the support and assistance of the ACCS Sub-Committees in facilitating relevant and useful CPD and in particular, wishes to thank Paul Thornton and Catherine O’Sullivan for their work in hosting online events throughout the last 12 months and expresses gratitude to both of them for their patience and professionalism.

Finally, ACCS acknowledges and expresses gratitude and thanks to Paul Fiorentini, President ACCS who has given his time and has been available for all of the CPD events listed in the schedule above. Paul has given extensively to support the planning, the preparation of materials and the delivery of the CPD programme. His welcoming words at the beginning of each webinar set the tone.

***John Irwin,  
General Secretary.***

***Áine O’Sullivan,  
Assistant General  
Secretary.***

***Anne Marie Dillon,  
Director of Human  
Resources.***

***Hilary Treacy,  
Data Protection  
Advisor.***

***Catherine O’Sullivan,  
Director of ACCS/JMB  
Further Education  
Support Unit.***