

# Report of DEIS Sub-Committee 2020/2021

Members: **Paul Fiorentini, President, Mary Jackson, Chairperson, Antoinette Nic Gearailt, Frances Neary, Rachel O'Connor, John Murphy, Frank Moran, Maeve Sweeney, Valerie Maher, Kieran Golden, Catherine O'Sullivan, Áine O'Sullivan, Assistant General Secretary ACCS and John Irwin, General Secretary ACCS.**

The work of the Sub-Committee this year focused on supporting ACCS DEIS schools with issues which arose in schools around engagement, wellbeing, ICT etc., by communicating and sharing best practice, sharing information and providing clarification on guidance from the Department of Education and Skills and Department of Social Inclusion on the various initiatives.

In March, the focus of the work was to support engagement with students in DEIS schools during the period of school closure. This was a particularly challenging period for many students, especially for those without access to adequate IT equipment or suitable facilities for study. Schools were asked to share practices and experiences around strategies to support continuity of learning, the organisation of school meals, staying connected with vulnerable students, resources and other areas of concern. Best practice was established and shared, increasing engagement among students who were not participating in online learning for whatever reason. Exemplars of best practice were also shared with the DES and contributed to their guideline documents.

## ACCS Webinars:

ACCS invited all DEIS schools to Webinars on Friday 12th June and November 10th, 2020.

The Webinar on June 12th was facilitated by ACCS and was presented by personnel from the Inspectorate, the DES and Social Inclusion. Its focus was on rationale and delivery of the DEIS Summer programme for Post Primary Schools.

The Webinar on November 10th was organised by the ACCS DEIS Sub-Committee and addressed three key areas with presentations from a number of our DEIS schools. Presentations were made on DEIS Governance (Ardee CS and Carndonagh CS), Blended Learning (St. Kilian's CS and Ramsgrange CS) and Student and Staff Wellbeing (Trinity Comprehensive and Holy Child CS). Breakout rooms gave participants an opportunity to highlight issues, best practice and to identify topics for consideration at future meetings.

All presentations from this seminar are available on [www.accs.ie](http://www.accs.ie).

## DEIS Developments at National Level:

**Refined Identification Model:** Members of the DEIS Sub-Committee attended meetings and webinars on the Refined Identification Model for DEIS and made submissions to the Social Inclusion Unit, DES, as part of the consultation process. The final outcome of this process is not yet published.

There was also participation in the consultation process for the **TUSLA Corporate Governance Plan 2021-2023**.

**DEIS Grant:** The 2020/2021 DEIS grant was issued to schools in May instead of September to support the ongoing work with targeted students.

**ICT Funding:** The impact of the 'digital divide' became especially evident in DEIS schools during periods of remote teaching and learning. Additional funding was allocated to all schools in May 2020 and in December 2020 to address this digital divide. DEIS schools received an additional allocation to address the specific needs of students who did not have access to appropriate digital devices to support their engagement in learning.

**School Meals:** Guidance was issued in March to schools participating in the school meals programme on the provision of food packs for families during lockdown. The School Meals budget was again used during the DEIS summer programme to provide meals for participants.

**DEIS Summer Programme:** A framework and funding for this programme was made to all DEIS schools to address the needs of those who were at risk of significant disengagement or of dropping out of school. The rationale, purpose and guidance on running the programme

was set out in the supporting documents.

The ACCS DEIS Sub-Committee continues to support our DEIS schools and the focus of work in the short term in 2021 is on DEIS Planning in schools.

In conclusion, I wish to acknowledge and commend the commitment and dedication shown by school personnel in DEIS schools during the pandemic. I wish to thank members of the DEIS Sub-Committee for their active engagement and for their ongoing support and finally, to thank John Irwin and the ACCS Secretariat for all their support in hosting events and assisting in the work of the Sub-Committee.

**Mary Jackson,  
Chairperson.**