

ACCS

Newsletter Nuachtiris

Cumann na Scoileanna Pobail is Cuimsitheacha Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools

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ACCS Convention 2014

Theme: "Fás agus Forbairt – Let's Grow"



Left to right: Mr. Ciarán Flynn (General Secretary ACCS), Mr. Martin Hanevy (Assistant Secretary General DES), Mr. Neil Ward (Minister's Advisor DES), Mr. Malachy Molloy (President ACCS), Mr. Seán Ó Foghlú (Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills), Ms. Eileen Salmon (Assistant General Secretary ACCS) and Mr. Alan Wall (Principal Officer).

The 32nd ACCS Annual Convention was held in The Malton Hotel in Killarney from the 27th-29th of March. We are happy to report that the Convention on the theme of "Fás agus Forbairt – Let's Grow" was a great success. The feedback from delegates was very affirming and in particular the nature of the presentations and the quality of the speakers were positively commented upon by many. The presentations covered a number of diverse areas which all looked at various aspects of the changes that are happening in Education and explored ways in which we can effect positive change. As an organisation we were very interested in relating such changes to the ACCS Strategic Plan and felt that all speakers addressed this for us and affirmed us in our work in schools. Delegates were also given the opportunity to contribute to the debate on the implementation of the plan through a Plenary Workshop held on Friday afternoon. In particular a greater emphasis on exploring the synergy between individual schools and ACCS arose from the work of delegates in the workshop. The detailed feedback will be considered by the Executive and the other relevant sub-committees over the coming year.

In the course of the AGM business the difficulties being experienced by Boards of Management and Principals were clearly articulated in both reports from ACCS officers and sub-committees and also in motions from schools. The cumulative effects of cut-backs in addition to the harrowing year experienced by schools with the fall-out from the Haddington Road Agreement process has had a lasting effect on schools. While the economic indicators are now more positive schools need greater re-assurance that these positives will feed back into a return of necessary resources to schools at all levels. Delegates all received a copy of the Middle Management proposals recently presented to the Minister for Education and Skills. This detailed proposal is the result of joint work between the JMB and ACCS and will form the basis for future discussion on this important area of our work. The proposal was well received by delegates. On a positive note Ms. Eileen Salmon was confirmed as the General Secretary elect

and an informal presentation was made to Eileen to acknowledge her new role. ACCS will shortly appoint an Assistant General Secretary and we wish the new team well for the challenging times ahead.

Delegates were also involved in the business of the organisation, the election of the 2014/2015 Executive, considering motions to influence ACCS policy, hearing reports from the Secretariat and the Executive on their work since the previous Convention in 2013 and re-electing Mr. Malachy Molloy as President of ACCS for another year. We welcomed Mr. Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills who addressed the conference in the absence of the Minister. Delegates welcomed the revised format of the exchange between the President and the DES officials. The Q & A format for discussion with the DES was well used and left delegates much better informed on the issues being discussed.

Our time spent at Convention was busy and productive and we thank all those who supported us in our endeavours, including our advertisers and exhibitors but especially our main sponsors Microsoft, PCI, EMS Copiers and Unique Publishing.

Our delegates and guests were also treated to a magnificent exhibition of music, song and dance by pupils from Scoil Phobail Bhéara and Boherbue Comprehensive School at the pre-reception and at the ACCS Banquet. A special thanks to the two Marys, the school Principals, their students and teachers for all the obvious hard work they put into preparing for the event.

Following on from the Convention the newly elected ACCS Executive will concentrate its work on the Strategic Plan with the new team in place. Community and Comprehensive schools Board members are particularly aware of the need to continue to modernise the output from our schools and to concentrate on supporting change, innovation and development through this important work.

This was the fourth time that Mr. Malachy Molloy addressed Convention as ACCS President. Mr. Molloy warmly welcomed the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills, Mr. Seán Ó Foghlú and other DES officials who accompanied him, Mr. Martin Hanevy, Mr. Alan Wall and Mr. Neil Ward. This year, following discussions with the Minister and officials, an open forum was agreed for this session enabling greater interaction through questions, answers and discussion with DES officials to hear, listen and tease out issues.



Mr. Malachy Molloy, President ACCS.

The President stated that the past year has been one of mixed fortunes in Community & Comprehensive schools.

ACCS had previously welcomed changes envisaged in the Junior Cycle Reform leading to the new JCSA (Junior Cycle Student Award). We expressed concerns in relation to the timing, training and resourcing of same. Thankfully, following talks in January, the DES agreed to a more gradual introduction of subjects, extending the timeframe by two years, additional training and planning days will be provided and the DES is committed to fully resourcing the new JCSA.

Other welcome initiatives include Literacy & Numeracy, School Self-Evaluation and Anti-Bullying Procedures. Mr. Molloy insisted that these initiatives must be properly funded and resourced if their potential is to be achieved.

The President acknowledged and thanked the Minister and DES officials for their work in limiting educational cuts in the last budget at a time of austerity. Managements, including ACCS, campaigned for the retention of the PTR, at the previously reduced level, and are happy to acknowledge that educational spending was maintained in Budget 2014. "We look forward to the time when cuts end and restoration begins, hence my question last year: Can we establish a forum to address educational provision post austerity?"

The restoration of The Summer Works Scheme and the Assistant Principal posts to a minimum level in schools were also acknowledged.

The moratorium on posts of responsibility in our schools over the past number of years has reduced the capacity of schools to cope with important functions within the school while simultaneously burdening the Principals with additional responsibilities. Realising that, as the proverb puts it, it is 'Better to light a candle than curse the darkness' ACCS & JMB have closely examined the immediate and long-term effects of the moratorium on our schools and put forward a set of proposals entitled "A Proposal for Management Structures for Post-Primary Schools" to address the deficit arising from same. ACCS looks forward to positive and active engagement with the DES and educational partners in relation to these proposals.

The President outlined the concerns of ACCS regarding the Admissions Bill, principally the restriction on acquiring valuable information on students prior to enrolment and the proposed changes to the Section 29 process whereby the Principal will decide on whether a student gains admission to the school and the appeal will be heard by the Board of Management against the Principal's decision. "We fail to see any justifiable reason for not having relevant information about a potential enrolment either in the interests of the individual or the school generally. In addition to the fact that the proposed changes to the Section 29 process are a further increase of workload on the school

Principal, it changes the relationship between the BOM and Principal. The appeal process must be open, transparent and clearly independent and objective. We acknowledge the engagement of the Minister on both of these issues at our recent meeting."

The President asked Mr. Ciarán Flynn, General Secretary of ACCS to give a brief overview of the Strategic Plan of the organisation for the years 2013 – 2016.

In welcoming our new and newly proposed schools in Ballinamore, Ballymakenny, Skibbereen and Celbridge, Mr. Molloy referred to the DES position announced by Minister Cannon at 2013 Convention that no new Community schools will be established in the absence of a Single National Denominational Patron body. "Where a Community school model becomes a possibility we want an assurance that it will not be prevented by un-necessary road blocks and that some interim arrangement can be put in place to enable a Community school to proceed." Mr. Molloy outlined a potential solution to the 'road block' in the form of an entity which could become part of the process in bidding for new Community & Comprehensive schools and which would replace any existing Religious Trustee where they wish to withdraw from any of our existing schools. This would be an interim solution which would eventually lead to the changes proposed by the Minister and ensure that Trustees in our schools are both available and engaged as required under the Education Act.

The President thanked the ACCS General Secretary who is retiring in August 2014. "Our outgoing General Secretary, Ciaran Flynn's association with ACCS goes back over 20 years. For the past 8 years, as General Secretary, he had a pivotal role in guiding, advising and growing the Community & Comprehensive sector. Your guidance, wise considered advice and genuine friendship at all times have been a source of inspiration to us all. On behalf of the ACCS Executive, those with whom you interacted as General Secretary, and on my own behalf we say thank you for a job well done."

Guided by the ACCS Strategic Plan Mr. Molloy urged delegates to go forward as the theme of the Convention said "Fás agus Forbairt" to grow, develop and expand the unique model of education that is the ACCS Community & Comprehensive sector.



Delegates listening to Presidential speech.



Open forum with DES officials.

Towards a better Education System for all in Ireland

Speaker: Professor Brian MacCraith

Professor Brian MacCraith, President, DCU addressed delegates at the ACCS Annual Convention. The topic of the presentation was 'Towards a better Education System for all in Ireland'.

During the course of his presentation Professor Brian MacCraith outlined the purpose of education. He believes that education is the

core to any prosperity we aspire to. Brian quoted from a survey in the Irish Times in 2013 on 'Vital Signs – important issues affecting quality of life'. Participants in the survey had 119 options to choose from in deciding the most important influences on having a good quality of life. The top four influences were all to do with education: the quality of education; literacy levels; early childhood education; university and third level education. Eight of the top ten influences were around education. Irish people value education. It is a unique and distinguishing aspect of Irish people.

Brian described the kind of society that we are preparing our students for as "connected, globalised, knowledge-based, ageing, developing, urbanised". Eighty percent of Irish people have a smart phone, Ireland is the most globalised country in the western world, our economy is knowledge-based rather than manufacturing, there is rapid development in economies throughout the world with 8 of the 10 fastest growing economies in the world being in Africa (China has moved into Kenya according to Brian), and eventually 90% of the Irish population will live in 8 urban centres in the country.

In his quest to find out what kind of graduate would be ideal to enter the Irish workforce Brian visited 73 CEOs in Ireland to ask about the quality of Irish graduates. There was remarkable consistency in the responses he got saying that companies are not getting the quality of graduates that is needed for their organisation. One CEO was very blunt in his comment: "A first class honours nerd is no good to my organisation". In order to flourish, "Generation 21" need to be rounded graduates. They need to be innovators, good communicators, problem solvers, be aware of the world around them, have leadership skills and realise that learning doesn't stop, it's lifelong. These attributes are what are required worldwide, not just in Ireland.

Ireland needs an education strategy with a system-level view of what we want to achieve for all our students to ensure all stages of the education continuum act coherently with common purpose. We don't have this yet. "The greatest problems in education happen at points of transfer", according to Brian. When children move from early childhood to primary, from primary to second level and from second level to third level problems arise because there is a lack of coherence in our approach to education across



Left to right: Mr. Ciarán Flynn (General Secretary ACCS), Ms. Eileen Salmon (Assistant General Secretary ACCS), Mr. Malachy Molloy (President ACCS) and Professor Brian MacCraith (President, DCU).

different levels. "Surely it should be relatively straightforward to agree on the overall outcomes desired from our education system and align these objectives at every stage along the education continuum?"

So how do our students learn today? Young people coming into school today have never known a world without Google! Rote learning is

out of phase with reality. Students engage with information in a radically different way today. They learn best as active participants rather than passively. Peer-to-peer engagement is hugely beneficial to their learning. Brian stated that "the future of learning is blended". It is a mixture of face-to-face and online. The information is there for students to access, but they need to move from information to knowledge to wisdom. The teacher is "a curator of quality content" emphasising the skills of how students assess quality of information.

Brian quoted psychologist Lauren Resnick who said in 1990: "What you assess is what you get; if you don't test it, you won't get it." This quote captures exactly what happens with assessment in Ireland. Assessment drives both learning and teaching behaviour. Brian maintains that most students take seriously only those topics that are assessed regularly in exams and that teachers feel pressurised to "teach to the test". He believes that we need to implement more sophisticated and innovative assessment modalities at all levels in education. In particular, the Junior and Senior Cycles at second level merit immediate attention and it is logical to begin this process at Junior Cycle. "If we wish to foster the development of particular attributes in our students we must start assessing those attributes using state-of-the-art methodologies."

Brian believes that one of the major problems of advancing our education system is that we have no national centre of expertise in assessment. Another major problem is in the area of the education of teachers. "Teachers should be emerging at the cutting edge of education." Brian believes in the transformative aspect of teacher education and his own university is pushing forward to solve these twin problems. By 2016 DCU will be a secular university incorporating St. Pat's Drumcondra, Mater Dei and the Church of Ireland College of Education, providing a better education for teachers across early childhood, primary, post-primary and third level education. DCU will also be the Irish Institute of Education with research centres in several areas of education including one in Assessment.

Delegates found Professor Brian MacCraith's presentation inspiring and enlightening and look forward to a time when our schools have the resources and training to implement the changes that are needed in our teaching and learning.

School to Business and Beyond Speaker: Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh

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Left to right: Mr. Ciarán Flynn (General Secretary ACCS), Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, Mr. Malachy Molloy (President ACCS), An tÚas Tomás Ó Nídh.

Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, Dean of UCD Lochlann Quinn School of Business and UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School presented on the topic of “School to Business and Beyond” at the ACCS Convention.

Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh explained to the delegates that he wasn't coming to complain about second level education, but to thank our schools for the great work they are doing. Ciarán gave us a very interesting overview of the work of the Business Schools in UCD. Both the UCD Business School, which is now 100 years in existence, and the MBA which is celebrating its 50th anniversary (the first MBA in Europe) are innovative and international. “The Irish economy depends on internationalisation” according to Ciarán. With a strong overseas programme that is developing leadership in companies, Ciarán's vision of the financial leader of the future is a much broader role than merely making money. “We don't want students who only want to make money. We want students who want to make a better world.”

Ciarán referred to Robert J. Schiller's book ‘Finance and the Good Society’. Schiller describes how finance has historically contributed to the good of society and how society can once again harness the power of finance for the greater good. “We need to envision new ways to re-channel financial creativity to benefit society as a whole.”

What next in business education? Ciarán spoke about the strong employment opportunities that exist in business for our graduates. “Our power is soft power.” The type of education that is relevant is a re-envisioned one that links business with society, builds a relationship between business and citizens. Ethics in business is crucial, though difficult to teach and assess! “We need to think about creating a cadre of students who will attract sustained foreign investment.” Business analytics and digital marketing are central to this education. We need to learn how to scale our indigenous industry. We have more than enough start-up companies in Ireland according to Ciarán, but we need to know how to internationalise business, i.e. expand outside Ireland.

Ciarán outlined some facts about Ireland and business. Nine out of ten of the biggest computer companies in the world have their European headquarters in Ireland. Ireland produces enough food to feed 40 million people! We are very strong internationally in finance. With aviation finance, 55% of the aircraft leased in the world are leased from Ireland. It is essential for a successful economy in Ireland that we keep the best students in Ireland and attract the best international students into Ireland.

What do businesses want from our graduates? Firstly they want technical competence. “Trust is the coin of the realm.” It is essential that our graduates know what they are talking about. “They need to know something about something. Interdisciplinary skill comes later.” Secondly our graduates need to have communication skills. They need to be able to talk about what they know. They need writing skills to be able to make professional presentations. Ciarán believes that

students of all ages should be regularly assessed in communication skills and should be given constructive feedback. “Immerse them in communication. If they are unsuccessful it's no harm. Learning is very often about failure. The important thing is how you react to failure.” Thirdly, our students/graduates should have a good attitude, a good work ethic. How to teach attitude? “Place students in an experience they're not used to... inculcate a culture of openness to new experiences.” An immersion in a work setting is the best kind of experiential learning, especially in a setting where some are not carrying their weight, are not accepting responsibilities. “We can teach ethically, but teaching ethics is very difficult.”

While Ciarán recognised that the current Leaving Certificate examination placed too much of an emphasis on assessment, he credited the broad range of the Leaving Certificate curriculums. However he believes that other experiences outside the classroom are essential to the student experience. “Have a go at something new: (a) find out you're good at it or (b) that you can cope with it. Both create great confidence.” All our students are comfortable with technology. At the moment we don't teach in the way students learn. We need independent learners. Ciarán gave as an example the way a student would be recruited into an accountancy firm. “The trend in Ireland used to be ‘who you know’. Then the firms started recruiting graduates; it was ‘what you know’. Now the trend is ‘who you are!’” Employers want graduates who are there for other people. Ciarán is very complimentary about our young people. “Young people have great social awareness.”

Ciarán gave delegates much food for thought in his presentation, encouraging our schools to continue to support the development of students in academic, social and ethical spheres.



Presentation to Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, Dean of UCD Lochlann Quinn School of Business and UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School by Mr. Ciarán Flynn.

How can business help to shape the school of the future?

Speaker: Mr. Tony Donohoe

The final speaker of the Convention was Mr. Tony Donohoe, Head of Education and Social Policy in IBEC. He continued with the theme of the relationships between the needs of the business world and skills of our students. Tony spoke about the importance of having a fulfilling career, quoting Sigmund Freud who stated that “love and work are the keys to a good life”. IBEC, no more than anyone else, can’t define the jobs/work of the future. Twenty years ago everyone was predicting a shorter working week and more leisure time! Tony guessed at some occupations based on possible needs in 20 years’ time. The jobs in the future included a ‘Pharmaceutical Enhancer’, who would work at developing drugs to increase cognitive abilities; An ‘Experimental Food Developer’ who would work at developing sustainable food sources; A ‘Recycling Enforcer’ and finally a ‘Galactic Refuse Collector’ removing space junk from orbit!

Tony reminded delegates that our students will be around in 2070 and we need to educate to develop the minds of the future with changing skills requirements including Soft Skills, Generic Skills, Holistic Skills. He quoted Howard Gardner’s five minds of the future as follows:

1. The Disciplinary Mind: a mind that can master major schools of thought and skills, who can manage information.
2. The Synthesizing Mind: a mind that has the ability to tap into ideas from different disciplines and bring them into a coherent whole.
3. The Creating Mind: a mind with the capacity to uncover and clarify new problems, questions and phenomena.
4. The Respectful Mind: a mind that has the awareness of and appreciation for differences among human beings and human groups.
5. The Ethical Mind: a mind that seeks to fulfil responsibilities as a worker and as a citizen.

Tony indicated that there was no difference between education values and business values. Both seek to “cultivate the mind”. ACCS values as indicated in the Strategic Plan can only be realised with the reforms that are central to our education system. Our teaching profession is very much in need of a changed structure for career development. Teachers should be rewarded for good performance by promotion. Promotion should not be “time-based increments”. Teacher CPD (continuous professional development) is mostly related to curriculum change. The TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) strategy showed our teachers as fourth from bottom in developing themselves. Tony is very positive about the “huge, exciting opportunities” presented by the new Junior Cycle Framework, seeing the Key Skills lining up very well with Howard Gardner’s Five Minds, but despairs that it will take until 2022 to be fully rolled out. Tony was very clear about the literacy and numeracy failures in our education system. In international comparisons Ireland was firmly in the middle of the chart for competencies in literacy and numeracy. “In the under 25 year category we performed pretty badly as well. We need to pursue improvements in literacy and numeracy relentlessly.”

Our students are graduating at third level without the skill sets that are needed for successful careers. Ireland has the highest progression rate to third level in Europe, but one of the highest rates of youth unemployment in Europe. How can business influence Education Policy? By participating in



Mr. Tony Donohoe, Head of Education and Social Policy in IBEC and Mr. Ciarán Flynn, General Secretary ACCS.

a campaign for “an Ireland that works” according to Tony. Key features of this campaign are:

- Investing in the future: Education spending has to be increased. Business has to keep driving this home.
- We need to define skills that are needed into the future. The curriculum being taught in schools has to be relevant.
- Education must be viewed as a continuum from early childhood to lifelong learning.
- Continuous Professional Development for teachers has to be about what is taught and how it is taught. “The how is very important”.
- We need to build partnerships between education and business. Presently these partnerships are “disjointed initiatives”. “Unless business can get involved in initiatives that can be mainstreamed there isn’t sufficient return for the investment.”
- School leadership must be supported. Principals are being asked to lead a reform agenda with insufficient skills.

Finally, Tony reminded delegates that education was a preparation for a life of work. “It should be good work, of excellent quality, with plenty of responsibilities, engaging the worker.”

Stop press!



Congratulations to Mr. John Irwin, who has recently been appointed to the position of Assistant General Secretary of ACCS.

Resolutions carried at Convention 2014

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- ACCS calls on the DES to give careful consideration to the Middle Management proposals presented jointly by ACCS and JMB. ACCS believes that the workload on Principals is both unfair and unsustainable and the proposals are realistic requirements to enable Principals to take on their role as leaders of teaching and learning.
- ACCS calls on the DES to consult directly with the school management bodies to ensure that the implications of the proposed School Admission Bill are fair to students and operable for schools. ACCS asks that the appeal mechanism be reviewed as it places the Principal in an invidious position in respect of the Board of Management and could be divisive. ACCS asks that a mechanism be found to enable the sharing of vital information with the school before final commitments on admission have to be made.
- ACCS calls on the DES to realistically review ongoing financial support for the provision of IT in schools so that it is sustainable, not sporadic. The advent of Junior Cycle reform requires such a provision urgently.
- That ACCS requests that the Minister of Education & Skills, the Secretary General of the Department and the Chief Inspector issue a memorandum to all sections of the Department and Inspectorate stating to all concerned that in their dealings with schools they take cognizance of the lack of appropriate middle management structures and the consequent impact this has on the demands placed on senior management.
- That ACCS requests that the Department of Education & Skills rescind the direction whereby neither Principals nor Deputy Principals can be replaced if absent for up to three months.
This is proposed on the grounds of Health & Safety, given that such a direction indicates total lack of understanding of the roles and demands placed on senior management in a 21st century school.
- Iarann an rún seo ar Chumann na scoileanna Pobail agus Cuimsitheach (ACCS) cás ar leith a dhéanamh leis an Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna chun go mbeidh ar chumas scoileanna beaga múinteoirí buan a ligean ar saoire sos gairme.
- That the position of Programme Co-ordinator be sanctioned automatically for re-appointment upon becoming vacant. This position should not be affected by embargos that may be in place.
- That ACCS calls on DES to allocate Guidance Counselling posts to schools (ex quota basis).
- That the ACCS calls on the Minister to revise the terms of the current moratorium on appointments of Posts of Responsibilities, in schools to include the replacement of Assistant Principal Posts, where the loss of such a post occurs as a result of an appointment to a Deputy Principal or Principal Post.
- That ACCS requests that the National Council for Special Education and the Department of Education and Skills maintain the existing provision of educational supports and the visiting teacher service for the blind / visually impaired and deaf / hard of hearing students.
- That ACCS requests the Teaching Council to provide appropriate registration for students in initial teacher education to enable them to undertake paid substitution in their placement school.
- That ACCS seeks from the DES an urgent review of the embargo in replacing the second Caretaker in the case of retirement. This review should involve consultation with the Health & Safety Authority and the State Claims Agency.
- That ACCS requests that the Department of Education and Skills provide CPD for senior management and administrative staff to support the implementation of the Post-Primary Online Database (P-POD)

Executive 2014 – 2015

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Mr. Derek Lowry

Mr. Máirtín Ó Conghaile

Convention Banquet



Thank you presentation to Principal and staff of Scoil Phobail Bhéara.

The Convention Banquet took place in the Malton Hotel on Friday night, March 28th, 2014. It was attended by a large complement of delegates and guests representing all of the partners in education. Dr. Padraig Kirk thanked ACCS on behalf of the guests.

At the pre-banquet reception, students from Boherbue Comprehensive School entertained guests and delegates to a lovely musical recital.

Following the meal, our President paid tribute to the dedicated work of the ACCS Trustees Mr. Kevin Meehan (RIP), Sr. Eileen Randles and Br. Denis Minehane over the past thirty years. The role of Trustee is not a requirement under the Companies Acts and our remaining two Trustees have now retired. A presentation was made to Sr. Eileen, Br. Denis and Mrs. Bríd Meehan, widow of Kevin Meehan in acknowledgement of their generous contribution to our organisation.

Our delegates and guests were then treated to a wonderful exhibition of music, song and dance by students from Scoil Phobail Bhéara.



Mr. Ciarán Flynn, Sr. Eileen Randles, Mrs. Bríd Meehan, Br. Denis Minehane with Mr. Malach Molloy.



Dancers from Scoil Phobail Bhéara.

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- The Irish Times, Dublin 2.
- The Teaching Council, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.
- Total Import Solutions, Cork.
- Trinity College, Dublin 2.
- Wriggle, Dublin 12.
- VSware, Dublin 3.



Ms. Antoinette Nic Gearailt receives a prize from EMS Copiers Ltd of a Samsung Galaxy Tab



Mr. Brendan Carroll from PCI Ltd presents the Paddy Hickey Memorial Trophy to Mr. Dermot Healy, Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine.



Workshop on ACCS Strategic Plan

On the Friday afternoon of Convention, a plenary workshop was held on the ACCS Strategic Plan. This was chaired by Mr. Pat McKenna, who is Chairperson of the ACCS Identity and Promotion Sub-Committee. Ms. Eileen Salmon, Assistant General Secretary, made a presentation on Strategy 2 of the Plan, 'Promoting the Community and Comprehensive School as Models of the Schools of the Future'. To date the sub-committee, with the support of Newmarket Consulting Ltd has produced an Identity document, a Vision for Education document and a Communications Plan. These were explained to delegates and then, in round table discussions, delegates were asked for feedback on the documents and plans produced. This feedback will be invaluable to the sub-committee going forward. Another part of the workshop was to view a video that ACCS is in the process of producing with the intention of it being an aid to schools for events such as Open Night. Very insightful comments were made regarding the video and these will inform the sub-committee on how to progress with this aspect of its work.



Delegates engaged in round table discussion at workshop.

A Proposal for Management Structure for Post-Primary Schools



Present at the Launch of the Proposal for Management for Post-Primary Schools, L to R: Fr. Paul Connell, President JMB, Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn, T. D., Mr. Tony Lee, Chairperson, Mr. Malachy Molloy, President ACCS, and Mr. Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General DES.

Delegates at the ACCS Convention received a copy of the Middle Management proposals recently presented to the Minister for Education and Skills. This detailed proposal is the result of joint work between the JMB and ACCS and has been developed on the basis of a new and more relevant middle management structure being introduced into post-primary schools.

The proposals contained within the document will give schools a flexible system of middle management which will support schools in processing the dynamic changes envisaged, while moderating the overall costs to the education system.

The introduction of such a structure does not eliminate the urgent need to appoint additional personnel, with an appropriate skillset, to undertake the ever-increasing levels of administrative work which are now part and parcel of post-primary schools.

ACCS and the JMB look forward to a realistic engagement with the Minister, officials in the Department of Education and Skills and the other education partners on the detail of the proposals.

These proposals set out a five-tier graded middle management structure to complement the senior management

team in addressing locally identified school needs. The focus is on shared leadership utilising a flexible management structure that provides for distributive leadership with meaningful accountability and a path for career development.

Based on the identified needs of the school and utilising the allocated points, the BOM will have flexibility and autonomy to select the posts, and the level and number of posts, most appropriate to the needs of the school.

Duties of post-holders will be decided by the BOM, in collaboration with the Principal, following a period of consultation.

Post advertisements will specify the tier, role and responsibilities and will be filled by interview, focused on the appropriate skillset for the post, in accordance with the process outlined in circular 42/2010.

These proposals embody a number of principles – local level decision making on recruitment and structure of middle management; local flexibility in managing same, provision of career development and mobility options, ensuring greater accountability while at the same time creating opportunities for senior management to prioritise teaching and learning.