

Report of ACCS In-School Management Task Group and Conference 2017

Members: Ms. Antoinette Nic Gearailt, President ACCS, Mr. Denis Ring, Chairperson
Ms. Frances Boner, Ms. Ceola McGowan, Ms. Majella Morrison,
Mr. Willie Culkeen, Ms. Anne Smyth, Ms. Brid Ní Annracháin,
Ms. Bernie Heffernan, Mr. Joseph Sweeney, Mr. John McKennedy,
Ms. Áine O’Sullivan, Assistant General Secretary & Mr. John Irwin, General Secretary.

The main task of the In-School Management (ISM) Task Group is to organise the annual In-School Management Conference. This year’s Conference took place in Farnham Estate Golf & Spa, Cavan the 30th November and 1st December 2017. The theme of this year’s conference was “Changing Dynamics” and this was chosen to highlight the significant changes which are taking place in Irish education currently and indeed to pay tribute to the fact that this year has seen a substantial change in terms of the expansion of many of our in-school management/leadership teams.

The conference was very well attended with more than 180 delegates attending the two-day event. ACCS President, Ms. Antoinette Nic Gearailt, welcomed all delegates and formally opened the Conference before calling on the Chairperson of the ACCS In-School Management Sub-Committee, Mr. Denis Ring, to introduce the theme of the conference and to outline the plans for the two-day event.

The plenary session “Professional Collaboration” was introduced and chaired by Ms. Anne Smyth, Deputy Principal, St. Wolstan’s CS and this presentation was delivered by Ms. Phil Fox, Head of Initial Teacher Education and Induction, The Teaching Council who addressed the conference on the concept of “building collaborative cultures in schools”.

Following this presentation, four very different workshops were presented concurrently.

Workshop A. “Creative Approaches to Embedding Wellbeing in First Year.” was facilitated by Ms. Majella Morrison, Deputy Principal of Ballyhaunis Community School. The workshop explored ways of embedding the principles of wellbeing in curricular areas while highlighting the relevant key skills and statements of learning.

Workshop B. “Using School Self Evaluation to support the Junior Cycle Framework” was facilitated by colleagues, Ms. Mary Sheehan and Ms. Elaine O Donnell from John the Baptist Community School. The workshop highlighted in a clear and coherent way how one school has used the SSE process to strategically plan for, implement and monitor changes which are provided for in the vision of the Junior Cycle Framework.

Workshop C. “Embedding Global Citizenship in Junior Cycle” was facilitated by Ms. Mary Mc Carthy of WorldWise Global Schools who presented on the theme of Global Citizenship in our schools and the importance of educating for an Equal World.

Workshop D. “Building Collaborative Approaches & Reflecting on Learning to Learn” was facilitated by Ms. Caroline Toole, Deputy Principal and Mr. Alan Mynes, Principal of Ballymakenny College. The school based initiative which was shared in the workshop contrasted performance appraisal and collaborative practice outlining how the process of collaboration in a school context can be nurtured and developed with the right culture and the correct amount of support.

As is traditional the Gala Dinner afforded the opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of retiring Principals and Deputy Principals to their schools and the ACCS. This year there were five recipients; Mr. Denis Corry, Principal of Gort Community School, Ms. Amy Talbot, Deputy Principal, Gort Community School, Mr. Gay McManus, Principal, Dunmore Community School, Ms. Mary Jones, Principal, John the Baptist Community School and Ms. Patricia McDonagh, Principal, Pobalscoil Íosa, Malahide. On the evening Ms. Antoinette Nic Gearailt, President ACCS, and Mr. Paul Fiorentini, Vice President ACCS, presented the retirees with the traditional ACCS lamp.

On Friday morning, Mr. John Irwin, General Secretary, presented a session on the changes in the legislation on Child Protection Procedures and how these will impact life in our schools. The presentation was very well received by delegates who appreciated the succinct and clear approach with which the presentation was delivered.

This was followed by the Open Forum which afforded delegates an opportunity to consider and discuss current issues raised at the Area Meetings.

The final session of Conference was an inspirational presentation by Mr. Joe Schmidt, Head Coach of Ireland Rugby Team who spoke about the importance of the work of school leaders, the value this work brings to society and the unique position which is held by school leaders in terms of how positively they can influence the futures of young people.

Feedback from delegates was overwhelmingly positive in terms of venue and content of presentations and workshops. Delegates also welcomed the opportunity to network with colleagues from other schools. This year ACCS used the ISM Conference as an opportunity to check in with the newly appointed Deputies whom we first met in this role at the Induction in-service in August 2017 and to take a moment with them to evaluate their first few months on the job.

The ISM Task Group would like to thank General Secretary, Mr. John Irwin, and his team in the secretariat of ACCS for their support in organising the Conference.

The following people were re-elected to the In-School Management Task Group 2017/18

- Connacht: Mr. Willie Culkeen & Ms. Majella Morrison
- Dublin: Mr. John McKennedy & Ms. Bríd Ní Annracháin
- Leinster: Mr. Joe Sweeney & Ms. Anne Smyth
- Munster: Mr. Denis Ring & Ms. Bernie Heffernan
- Ulster: Ms. Frances Boner & Ms. Ceola McGowan

*Mr. Denis Ring,
Chairperson.*

