

A ROADMAP TO SUSTAINABILITY – Next Steps

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Following the formal publication and launch of the IPPN report *Primary School Leadership: The Case for Urgent Action - A Roadmap to Sustainability*, we are very much in the distribution and raising awareness phase of the project. All who were in attendance at the principals' conference in Killarney have received a hard copy of the report, and all members received an email with a link to the epublication.

It was also of crucial importance that we ensured that all relevant partners and stakeholders received a hard copy of the report as well as access to the digital version. To that end, we compiled a distribution list which, among others, identified all relevant personnel within the DE, the various education stakeholders, the HEIs, and the various schools of education as well as our colleagues in other professional bodies in Ireland and internationally.

We are also taking a strategic approach to the implementation phase of the project in order to ensure we get maximum buy-in with regard to the recommendations in the report. We are targeting those recommendations that can be progressed by IPPN, in the first instance, in order to build momentum, while also meeting with relevant stakeholders to pave the way for progress on the recommendations that relate to more systemic issues.

We will continue to promote engagement with the report and we strongly encourage you to share the report with your Leadership and Management teams and your Boards of Management in order to cultivate a deeper understanding of the experience of the practice of primary school leadership.

Planning has already begun for the rollout of the second year of the Deakin Health and Wellbeing

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research. You may recall that this is a specific piece of research that we commissioned in partnership with our sister organisation at post-primary level – the National Association of Principals and Deputies (NAPD). The focus of the research project is on the occupational health, safety and wellbeing of school leaders in Ireland in response to concerns that the increasing complexity and workload demands of school leadership roles are impacting on the health and wellbeing of Irish school leaders.

As anticipated, the data gleaned from year one of the research was sobering and added greatly to the analysis of the current reality of school leadership in the sustainable leadership report. It highlighted that the incidence of burnout, stress and depressive symptoms among Irish primary school leaders, was almost double that of the healthy working population and more than double for sleeping troubles and cognitive stress.

Also notable was the fact that the scores for burnout, stress, sleeping troubles, depressive symptoms, somatic stress and cognitive stress, have all increased since the last study undertaken in 2015. Given the increased scores for negative health and wellbeing outcomes, and the increased sources of stress scores reported in the 2022 data, it is clear that the current reality of primary

school leadership in Ireland is taking a significant toll on the health and wellbeing of our school leaders, and that the situation is getting worse. This is something that needs to be tracked over time and this year's research study provides an important opportunity to do just that. The window of opportunity for you to engage with the survey will be from mid-February to late March and, as always, the higher the participation level, the more persuasive the data will be. We will share more details in relation to the research project with you via E-scéal.

Finally, in the last edition of *Leadership+*, I flagged the formation of our newly expanded National Council and the three committees of the Council that will have a direct impact on the work of IPPN. The focus of those committees is:

- Advocacy and communications (submissions, position papers, publications)
- Professional learning for leadership (CPD, leadership support)
- E-services (including ipppn.ie, TextaParent, networking, Sub Seeker, EducationPosts.ie).

The new National Council and its committees met for the first time on Saturday, 3rd December. Each committee discussed potential priority areas to progress in the coming year. When such priorities are agreed, working groups will be formed to progress the work on the identified priorities. Feedback on this work will be provided at the National Council meeting in March and we will keep members updated via E-scéal and *Leadership+*.

[LINK](#)

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