



Deputy Principals' Conference 2024
Leading together with Purpose

February 8th & 9th 2024
Galmont Hotel, Galway

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Conference Schedule

Thursday, February 8 th	
14.00 – 15.00	Registration & Expo Viewing
15.00 – 17.30	Session I – Conference Opening
	Facilitator: Deirdre Kelly, IPPN President Elect Speakers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Páirc Clerkin, IPPN CEO • Rachel Doogue – Leadership Connections
17.30 – 18.30	Networking & Expo Viewing
19.00	Drinks Reception followed by Conference Dinner
Friday, February 9 th	
09.00 – 09.45	Registration & Expo viewing
09.45 – 11.00	Session II – Focusing on Core Purpose
	Facilitator: Deirdre Kelly, IPPN President-elect Speakers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Louise Tobin, IPPN President • Professor Patricia Mannix McNamara
11.00 – 11.30	Refreshment Break & Expo viewing
11.30 – 12.30	Session III – Seminars
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the Boiler House to Curriculum Leadership - Séamie O’Neill • Planning for & responding to behaviours of concern - Sharon Healy • Restorative Practice – Enhancing a Relational School Culture - Michelle Stowe
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch & Expo viewing
14.00 – 15.00	Session IV – Wellbeing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing of pupils and staff – Áine Fitzpatrick • Wellbeing of self and wider leadership team – Lorraine Dempsey
15.00	Conference Takeaways Selina Carmody, IPPN Board Member / DP Wexford Educate Together Conference close Deirdre Kelly, IPPN President Elect

Conference Facilitator

Deirdre Kelly, IPPN President-elect



Deirdre qualified as a Primary Teacher from Froebel College, Blackrock, Dublin in 1993 and completed a Post Graduate in Trinity College in 1994. Deirdre's experience during her 7 years of teaching in a special school setting in Scoil Eoin, Crumlin, Dublin encouraged her to complete her Masters in Educational Leadership.

Deirdre has taught in both urban and rural locations and has experienced teaching in varying educational contexts. She was appointed as teaching Principal in St Michael's NS in 2004, a 5 teacher rural school located in south County Sligo.

Deirdre is an active member of IPPN. She has served as a National Committee Representative for Sligo for many years, is a trained CSL mentor and is currently facilitating Group Mentoring.

Her commitment to and belief in small schools, recognition of the central role these schools play in rural communities and the significance of supporting principals in these schools will be central to her role as a member of the Board of Directors.

Deirdre was elected IPPN President-elect in June 2023 and will serve as president from September 2025 to August 2027.

Session I – Speakers

Páirc Clerkin, IPPN CEO



Páirc is the Chief Executive Officer of IPPN. He was educated in St. Vincent's CBS Primary and Secondary Schools, Glasnevin, and obtained his teaching degree from St. Patrick's College. His first teaching post was in St. Francis Xavier SNS, Dublin 15. In 2001, Páirc was appointed as the founding Principal of St. Patrick's National School, Diswellstown in Dublin 15. He served initially as a teaching principal, and in 2003 became an administrative principal, following rapid expansion of the school. His sixteen years of experience as principal, close collaboration with his principal colleagues in Dublin 15 and his engagement with IPPN over a number of years heightened his appreciation and understanding of the complex challenges faced by school leaders in their diverse educational settings.

Páirc was an active member of IPPN Dublin for several years and served as chairperson from 2007 to 2010. In 2009, he was elected to the IPPN Board of Directors, and was appointed Treasurer in 2015. He presented a number of workshops at IPPN annual conferences and delivered CPD modules at IPPN County Network meetings, also representing IPPN on the 'Education Matters' editorial team. During his tenure on the Board, Páirc initiated a pilot project to ascertain the feasibility of remote fulltime administrative support for a cluster of teaching principals of small schools. He has also contributed to IPPN publications and submissions to the DES and Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Social Protection on a number of topics. Páirc was appointed as CEO of IPPN in 2017.

Rachel Doogue



Rachel is a Leadership and Team Coach who every day appreciates the privilege of facilitating her clients to do their very best thinking. Rachel has worked with over 60 Principals and 15 School Leadership Teams as part of the highly regarded School Principals and Team Coaching Programme run by the Centre for School leadership. Rachel is a Time to Think Facilitator runs the Transforming Meetings™ programme across the post primary and primary sector. Rachel believes great leadership is something you find inside of you by being more of, not less of, yourself. Rachel is committed to supporting leaders and teams overcome discomfort and relish the challenge of achieving growth in an environment of high public scrutiny and complex stakeholders. Prior to working as a coach Rachel worked for SHL, a global leader in the assessment and development of people at work.

Session II – Speakers

Louise Tobin, IPPN President



Louise has been principal of St. Joseph’s Primary School in Tipperary Town since 2009. She previously worked for a year with School Development Planning as a facilitator, and for a further year with the Primary Development Service for Teachers as an advisor, during which time she completed post-graduate studies in School Planning. Louise worked in Grange NS, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary for 20 years, and was Acting Principal there for 2 years. She has experience as both teaching and administrative principalship.

Louise was the Tipperary representative on the IPPN National Council since 2017 and subsequently served on the Board of Directors for 5 years (Chairperson for 2 years). Louise has been a very strong advocate for schools in areas of disadvantage, seeking extra resources under the DEIS scheme. Louise is on the DEIS Advisory Group.

- Other areas of interest for Louise in her Presidency are:
- Further development of the Local Support Group Project
- Membership engagement to include Newly Appointed Principals

Louise has a strong interest in school planning as a powerful means of promoting school effectiveness and development. She was elected IPPN Deputy President/President-elect in June 2021 and serves as president from September 2023 to August 2025.

Patricia Mannix McNamara (UL)



Patricia is currently Head of the School of Education in the University of Limerick. She began her career as a post primary school teacher before completing her PhD in the examination of supervisory relationships from a critical theory perspective. Patricia teaches courses on leadership, teacher professionalism, research methods in Ireland and abroad at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Session III - Seminars

From the Boiler House to Curriculum Leadership

Presenter: Séamie O’Neill

The principal is responsible for the instruction provided to students in schools. This seminar will enable principals to examine their role as leaders of curriculum in their schools, through the lens of agency and curriculum.

Séamie O’Neill



Séamie Ó Néill is Head of Education and Director of School Placement in the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education. He began his career as a primary school teacher, having graduated from St Patrick’s College, Drumcondra. He subsequently served as Principal of Queen of Angels Primary School in South County Dublin before joining Froebel College of Education in 2001, where he gained extensive management and leadership experience as a member of the Froebel College Board of Governors. In this role, he chaired the Academic Council and co-ordinated the Strategic Planning and Development Workgroup.

Within the Froebel Department, Séamie’s role as Head of Education is to provide academic leadership, with a strong focus on the strategic development of the Department, in line with its mission statement in the context of the transition to Maynooth University in 2013. He has been to the fore in the development of the reconceptualised B.Ed. programme and in the design of the Master’s of Education (Research in Practice) programme. He was programme leader of the B. Ed. programme for a period of eight years.

His outside interests include hurling and hurling.

Planning for & responding to behaviours of concern

Presenter: Sharon Healy, NCSE Behaviour Specialist

Taking account of the guidelines that are due to issue to schools - *Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations* – this session will explore how schools can better support children who experience challenge in this regard. The session will also explore what schools can do to prevent crisis situations from developing but also how to respond to such situations when they do.

Sharon Healy, NCSE Behaviour Specialist



Sharon Healy is an advisor supporting schools in the areas of behaviour, autism and inclusion. She is involved in the design and delivery of a variety of NCSE seminars supporting teachers in inclusive leadership, play-based interventions and preventative approaches to behaviour, as well as supporting schools who are setting up new autism classes.

Seconded from St. Catherine's NS in Dublin 8, Sharon has been teaching since 2005. She is passionate about active and inclusive approaches, good relationships and regulation. In her role as Senco, preventative and early intervention programmes were key to a successful SEN programme. She presented on the topic of whole class regulation at Féilte in 2020. She has been Deputy Principal since 2017 and has supported newly appointed principals and deputy principals in inclusive leadership at Misneach in 2021 and Tánaiste in 2022.

Sharon completed her post-graduate studies in Inclusive and Special Education in UCD in 2018. She has a strong interest in play-based learning and her subsequent Masters research in UCD focussed on supporting students inclusively through play. She is also a mum to three boys and carer to their three pet gerbils.

Restorative Practice – Enhancing a Relational School Culture

Presenter: Michelle Stowe

In this seminar, we will look at living the key tenets of the restorative philosophy as a vehicle to enhance a school culture where our values and actions match! Here we will explore the importance of relational thinking, relational practices and relational language within a school community. Participants will leave with some practical tools to bring to life on their return to school ...and beyond.

Michelle Stowe



Michelle is an educator at heart and the Founder of Connect RP. Michelle supports schools in growing a restorative culture that puts people and relationships at the heart of a learning community.

The intention of Connect RP is to facilitate, nurture and empower those seeking to grow relationships through empathy and connection, embodying and modelling the restorative philosophy and its everyday relational practices.

Her work involves co-creating implementation pathways that move beyond a 'train and hope' model and instead grow sustainable and robust relational cultures that serve all stakeholders and distribute leadership. Check out www.connectrp.ie to find out more.

Session IV – Speakers

Áine Fitzpatrick



Áine is the principal of Mary, Mother of Hope SNS. A native of Dublin, Áine graduated from St. Patrick's College of Education in Drumcondra in 1991. Áine worked as a teacher in St. Francis Xavier Senior National School, Castleknock from 1991 to 2005. She joined the staff of Mary Mother of Hope School in 2005 and was appointed deputy principal in 2008. Áine recently moved into the role of principal in her school.

Áine was the SEN co-ordinator for the school for many years and completed a diploma in Special and Inclusive Education in Dublin City University. She also has an interest in inter-culturalism and completed studies in Minority Ethnicities and Minority Languages in Irish Education in St. Patrick's College in 2008. Áine has presented workshops with Féilte, NEPS and IPPN. She has been actively involved with IPPN in promoting the role of the deputy principal and in the promotion of wellbeing. Áine facilitates the Dublin West Education Centre Deputy Principal Community of Practice Support Groups.

Mary, Mother of Hope National School opened in 2001 in Littlepace, Dublin 15. This was a new school on a greenfield site in a rapidly-growing urban development on the outskirts of Dublin. Over the years, the school and the surrounding community have grown and undergone dramatic change. In 2008, the school split into junior and senior schools. Approximately 40% of the pupils in the school are from newcomer backgrounds.

Lorraine Dempsey



Lorraine is an experienced educational leader who has been Principal of St. Patrick's National School in Wicklow Town since 2019. St. Patrick's is an Urban DEIS Band 1 school with special classes, previous to this she worked as a teaching principal for 8 years in Ballyoughter National School. This has given her a valuable insight into both the teaching and administrative principal role.

Lorraine embarked on her journey in education, graduating from Mary Immaculate College in Limerick in 2001. Armed with a passion for teaching and a commitment to enhancing the educational experience for students, she began her teaching career as a classroom teacher in Clongeen National School. Over the years, she gained invaluable experience in the classroom, honing her teaching skills and deepening her understanding of pedagogy.

However, her passion for education extended beyond the classroom, and she pursued further academic and professional development. She successfully completed a Master of Science in Primary Science Education, demonstrating her dedication to advancing STEM education in primary schools. Another notable achievement in her career is being one of the first graduates of the Postgraduate Diploma in School Leadership (PDSL).

Beyond her role as a principal, Lorraine is also a trained and active CSL mentor with the Centre for School Leadership, providing guidance and support to fellow educators on their leadership journeys. She also tutored with Hibernia College of education and also has a strong interest in special education. One of Lorraine's key priorities as an educational leader is advocating for the wellbeing of both principals and teachers.

In understanding the challenges and pressures that come with educational leadership and emphasising the importance of maintaining a balanced approach to leadership, Lorraine believes in setting boundaries and fostering a deep understanding of the need for balance in this demanding job.

With a wealth of experience, a commitment to excellence, and a passion for the wellbeing of both educators and students, Lorraine continues to make a significant and positive impact on wellbeing. Her recent journey on Operation Transformation brought to the fore the difficulties and challenges many fellow leaders are experiencing and the struggles of the job.

It has opened the discussion on the sustainability of leadership in primary education.

Education Expo Directory

Education Expo is an excellent opportunity to visit a wide range of school suppliers. Please take the time to visit the exhibiting companies at this year's Deputy Principals' Conference outlined in the list below. The support of exhibiting companies helps IPPN to deliver our CPD events.

Exhibitors

ABC School Supplies
Aladdin Schools
Cornmarket
Creative Schools
Daly Exercise+
Databiz Solutions
Early Intervention Tools Ltd
Edco - The Educational Company of Ireland
Educational Research Centre
Folens
Gill Education
GL Assessment
GreenIT
Green-Schools Ireland / An Taisce
Ille Service (Irl) Ltd
IT Systems Limited
Lafayette Photography
Let's educate
My Little Uniform
Nexus
Our Fundraiser School Lotto
Outside The Box Learning Resources Ltd
Parenting and Technology Institute (PATI)
PC Peripherals
School Fitness Ireland
Schoolcomputers.ie
The Heritage Council
VaughTEC Ltd
Wriggle Learning
Zeeko