



PRINCIPALS' AND DEPUTY PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION CUMANN PRÍOMHOIDÍ AGUS PRÍOMHOIDÍ TÁNAISTEACHA

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2011

PDA President's Message

Colleagues and friends, it is a great privilege for me as President of the Principals' and Deputy Principals' Association (PDA) to communicate with you in this the second issue of our newsletter. Ever since the inaugural General Meeting of the PDA held in Oct. 1969 the PDA has offered the opportunity for members to avail of a network of experienced educational practitioners in Vocational Schools, Community Colleges, Colleges of Further Education and Gaelcholáistí. The PDA also acts as a forum for the expression of principal and deputy principal teachers' views, for professional development and as a confidential support and advice service on work related issues.

Some of the areas of concern for PDA at present include:

- The regular arbitrary increase in the workload of the principal and deputy principal teachers. The PDA is frustrated with third parties deciding on educational policies and practices that have an immediate effect on our working conditions.
- The grave implications of the proposed increase in the pupil teacher ratio in our schools.
- The Further Education €200 levy per participant in PLC courses and the capping of PLC places in our schools and colleges.
- The challenges in our schools and colleges of the proposals of the 'Croke Park' Agreement.
- Cross-sectoral teacher redeployment.
- The recently issued 'Indicative' calendar for the standardised school year 2011-2012.
- The unacceptably severe budgetary constraints in our schools and colleges.
- Moratorium on the appointment of middle management posts.

Congratulations to John McGabhann, whom the TUI executive committee has ratified as the next General Secretary of the union and to whom we extend, at this challenging time for us all, our best wishes for a successful incumbency as General Secretary. John will take over the position from Peter Mac Menamin who will be retiring later in the year and to whom we extend our best wishes for a long, happy and healthy retirement.

The PDA enjoys access through the TUI Executive to our sector's management body, the IVEA. As PDA President I sit on the IVEA Standing Council and the officers of the PDA and the IVEA hold regular meetings exploring issues of concern to both groups. The PDA will represent the views of principals and deputy principals in the sector at every opportunity.

As a group of experienced educational practitioners in Vocational Schools, Community Colleges, Colleges of Further Education and Gaelcholáistí we

welcome every opportunity to liaise with our parents' representatives in the National Parents' Association for Vocational Schools and Community Colleges (NPAVSCC). The PDA has over the years worked closely with the NPAVSCC and our interactions have been professional, enlightening and productive. Congratulations to Jacki O Callaghan on her election as President of NPAVSCC and we look forward to working with parents pursuing our common interests in the future.

The TUI is currently establishing Workplace Committees in each school/centre/college throughout the country. The aim is to modernise the current structures and processes in the TUI, and to make them more accessible, effective and responsive to the needs of the membership. A Workplace Committee will normally be comprised of three to four members and will include the school/college representative. The PDA has agreed a protocol with the TUI to help foster a genuinely co-operative approach between all TUI members i.e. principals/deputy principals and teachers. This will encourage a consensus between all parties in the school/centre/college and will also facilitate the development of task-oriented approaches that are conducive to collaborative working practices and are in the interests of the entire school/centre/college community.

The PDA has set up three working groups of experienced and committed members to address issues in the following areas:

- Further Education Issues. (Contact mary.friel@macc.cdvec.ie)
- Croke Park Agreement (Contact mickdaly2@eircom.net)
- Teacher Induction /Probation (Contact jmcgarrymoore@castletroycollege.ie)

Please forward your views to the contacts listed. Contact details for all PDA area representative and national officers are listed in this newsletter. For full details on the PDA and its work please go to www.tui.ie and follow the link on the home page to the PDA.

The PDA Annual Conference 2011 will take place in White's Hotel Wexford from 16-18 November 2011. We look forward to meeting you all there. There will be opportunities to meet, and share views, with colleagues and to consult on a one to one basis with the President and General Secretary of the TUI.

Michael Daly
President PDA



Michael Daly,
PDA President

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Leadership Challenges within the Vocational Education Sector

The past few years have seen a remarkable drain of experienced leaders from their positions within the Vocational sector and indeed throughout the education system. A number of forces have been at work which have come together to produce a perfect storm with very serious consequences for middle and senior leadership within our schools and colleges.

By mid-July 2011 over 70 deputy principals and 90 principals, well in excess of 10% of the entire cohort of the country's second level principals, had opted to leave their posts. Additionally, there is considerable evidence of disappointingly low numbers of applicants for some advertised posts. This loss of leadership expertise has also been accompanied by the moratorium on the appointment of Posts of Responsibility. All of this represents a not inconsiderable challenge to the effective functioning of our second level system not to mention the erosion of promotional opportunities for teachers.

The role played by representative bodies such as PDA should not be underestimated. The Annual Conference offers an excellent opportunity to address a range of leadership issues. Area meetings give a forum to local members to discuss the challenges they face and to engage in valuable support opportunities. PDA with its national executive and nationwide network is well placed to work co-operatively with PDST and others to ensure that its members' needs are being met. The IVEA delivers the highly successful *'Programme in Instructional Leadership'* - a very welcome development over the last few years.

In the current very challenging climate the need to support those who currently lead and manage our public sector schools is crucial. It is also vital that processes and structures are in place to ensure that we will have an ongoing supply of well qualified and motivated leaders. PDA views this support as the key challenge we face in education as we make our way through the current economic crisis.

Príomhoidí Scoileanna Lán-Ghaeilge ar an Airdeall

Tá príomhoidí iar-bhunscoileanna lán-Ghaeilge de chuid na gCoiste Gairmoideachais ar an airdeall i mbliana de bharr an múr ciorraithe atá buailte ar an earnáil gairmoideachais go ginearálta le cúpla bliain anuas. Le linn 2010/2011, rinne An Roinn Oideachais & Scileanna cinneadh an acmhainn de mhúinteoir amháin ex-quota a bhaint de bhunscoileanna lán-Ghaeilge, rud a ghearr circa 50 post WTE ón gcóras bunscoileanna. Tá moltaí ag teacht ó fhoinsí áirithe sa Roinn Oideachais & Scileanna go ndéanfaí an rud céanna i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge dara leibhéal amach anseo.

Ní mór a thuiscint go bhfuil 36 den 58 coláiste lán-Ghaeilge faoi choimirce na gCoistí Gairmoideachais in Éirinn. Is scoileanna beaga a bhformhór, cuid mhór díobh bunaithe ó 1995 i leith. Tá brú damanta ar a leithéid de scoileanna beaga aon rogha ábhar réasúnta a chur ar fáil, fiú leis an acmhainn den mhúinteoir lán-Ghaeilge amháin in-situ. Caithfear cuimhniú go bhfuil ar an meán, líon réasúnta teoranta scoláirí roinnte amach thar chúig nó sé scoil-bhlíanta éagsúla. Tá brú go háirithe ar na hábhair colaíochta agus praiticiúla dá bharr seo.

Nuair a chuirtear na moltaí mar atá tuairiscithe sna meáin, in éineacht leis na laincisí atá curtha ag Roinn Oideachais & Scileanna ar bhunú scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge dara leibhéal nua, is cinnte go n-airfónn an earnáil iar-bhunoideachais lán-Ghaeilge faoi bhrú nach beag faoi láthair. Ní áirítear anseo na buillí éagsúla atá i ndiaidh scoileanna gairmoideachais ach go háirithe a lascadh le ciorraithe sa choimhneas múinteoirí / scoláirí, LCVP buailte agus roinnt mhaith scoláirí PLC gan aitheantas, gan acmhainní, á n-iompair ag scoileanna na gCoistí Gairmoideachais, scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge san áireamh.

A FURTHER EDUCATION PERSPECTIVE

The Further Education (FE) sector is one of the many success stories of the VEC system over the last two decades. Schools and colleges have developed innovative courses in response to local and national needs. Many courses were and continue to be developed to meet the needs of industry and provide school leavers and adults returning to education with educational opportunities and relevant employable skills that are not provided by the traditional third level sectors. Some courses in the FE sector offer alternative pathways to degree courses, outside the CAO points' system.

Over the years the FE sector has developed good practices in the delivery of quality assured courses. This is as a result of the professionalism of the teachers, their flexibility to develop and deliver courses which meet the current needs and which appeal to prospective students. As the structure and requirements of these courses differ significantly from the traditional second level programmes, there have been calls for changes to the way FE colleges operate. The McIvor report which was commissioned by DES and which documented what the sector required in order to provide the best possible service to the students was something that all FE staff would have welcomed. Unfortunately the recommendations were never implemented and this, coupled with the moratorium on posts of responsibilities, the additional 33 hours and the new €200 PLC government levy, are making things particularly problematic for our FE sector.

For example, an appropriate and flexible approach to the 33 hours in the FE sector is needed for the following reasons:

- It is not clear how much extra work there will be for staff under the new FETAC certification procedures. If all 33 hours are designated before the start of the year, difficulties may arise if there is significant extra work towards the end of the academic year.
- The proposed FETAC self-evaluation process is not to be included in the 33 hours as this is not considered new work. While teachers are always encouraged to engage in self-evaluation after each class and module, this is a specific model, with set paper work that must be followed. This has been piloted in 64 Colleges.
- The work involved in the new internal verification process is not exactly clear, we are told this is not new work, yet colleges have many questions e.g.
 1. Who are going to be the internal verifiers?
 2. How many internal verifiers will be required in a college? Is it based on the number of students or courses/modules offered?

The issue identified by every college as giving rise to major administrative difficulties is the collection of the €200 government levy.

- Is it to be collected at registration from BTEI students or those applying for a grant? If a student subsequently gets a grant will the fee be refunded?

- How long will this take and how much will it cost to administer the system?
- Students will now find it difficult to pay local student service charges – therefore, colleges will be trying to provide courses with dwindling resources.
- Some students will be discouraged from enrolling on courses.
- The levy is going to be deducted from capitation grants based on actual students (even those over the cap) so no matter what, colleges will end up losing out.

Finally, the additional 1000 PLC places do not go anywhere near meeting the increased demand for places.

The issues outlined above are making it increasingly difficult for FE colleges to continue to offer a quality service catering for a wide range of people including those most disadvantaged. However, given the professionalism and dedication of principals, deputy principals and their staffs in this sector they will continue to try and provide the best educational opportunities to a very important segment of our population.

PDA Online

Follow link to PDA on tui.ie homepage for information on PDA Executive Committee, Upcoming PDA Annual Conference, TUI/PDA Agreements and Clarifications, PDA reference material, Latest Presidential Addresses, Newsletters.



2011 PDA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

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For further details contact your PDA
Executive Member or visit tui.ie and follow
the link to PDA for registration form and
Conference programme.

Revised Mergers of Vocational Education Committees (VECs)

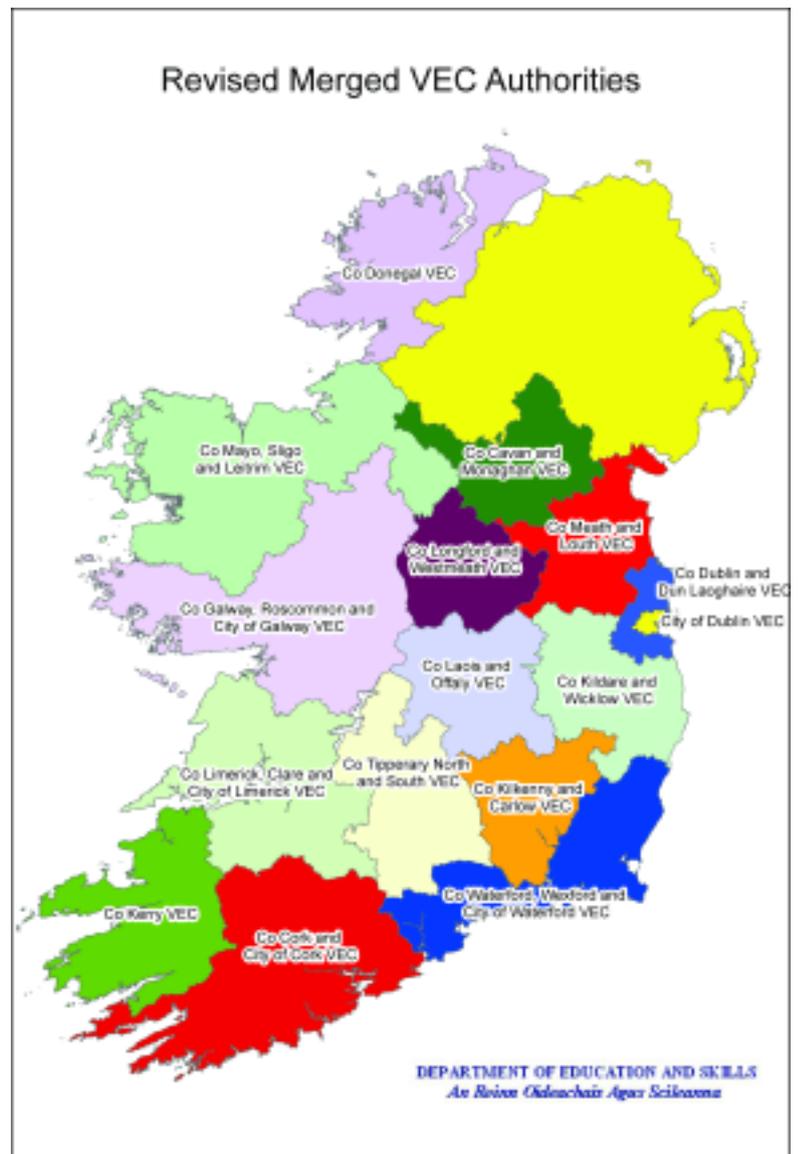
On the 29th June 2011 the Minister for Education and Skills announced revised mergers of Vocational Education Committees (VECs) and confirmed that the number of VECs will be reduced to sixteen.

Announcing the decision, that the Government had approved a revised reconfiguration of the Vocational Education Committees system, Minister Quinn said, "I am pressing ahead with the work on restructuring the VEC system. I was prepared to take a fresh look at how best to bring about a reduction in the number of VECs and gave considerable weight to a submission made to me by the IVEA who had expressed concerns regarding the configuration decided by the previous Government"

Minister Quinn's decision confirms that the number of VECs will be reduced to 16 but involves different mergers to those previously announced. The Minister also indicated that legislation to bring about the changes was being prepared and that it would involve the consolidation of the provisions of the existing nine Vocational Acts into one new bill. "This new bill will reflect the important role which these new entities will play in relation to education and training in the future," added the Minister.

The sixteen revised VEC areas are as follows (see maps):

- City of Dublin
- City of Cork and Co. Cork
- Co. Dublin and Dun Laoghaire
- City of Limerick, Co. Limerick and Co. Clare
- Co. Donegal
- Co. Kerry
- Co. Tipperary North and South
- City of Waterford, Co. Waterford and Co. Wexford
- City of Galway, Co. Galway and Co. Roscommon
- Co. Mayo, Co. Sligo and Co. Leitrim
- Co. Cavan and Co. Monaghan
- Co. Louth and Co. Meath
- Co. Longford and Co. Westmeath
- Co. Laois and Co. Offaly
- Co. Kildare and Co. Wicklow
- Co. Kilkenny and Co. Carlow



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PDA EXECUTIVE 2011

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Area 4 Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Wexford, Waterford City & County	Ms. Mary Finnegan Burke, Principal, Coláiste Dún Iascaigh, Cahir, Co. Tipperary. T: 052 7742 828 / 7742906		Area 10 Dublin City	Ms. Mary Friel, Principal, Margaret Aylward Community College, Thatch Road, Whitehall, Dublin. T: 01 8375 712	
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