



# Partnership In Our Schools

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PACCS Conference,  
Roscrea,  
3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2007



# What makes a school good?

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- Excellent teaching and learning
- Good Discipline
- Good work ethos
- Holistic education
- Leadership
- Compliance with legislation
  - spirit of partnership
- Good relationships facilitate partnership



# Challenges to Partnership

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- Leave it to school
- Legendary isolationism of Irish teacher
- Time constraints
- Interference...outside agents
- Resources: financial, physical, manpower
- Control cultures



# Opportunities

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- A pioneering phase...going forward
- Whole School Evaluation...start?
- Community values...volunteerism
- School policies reinforced
- Outside influences – new pair of eyes!
- School of future - collaborative culture
- Listening and caring school

# For partnership to work we must know...



- Education system
- The law & application to schools
- Provide leadership & effective decision making skills
- Develop excellent communication networks with partners
- Build self-esteem
- Develop teamwork approaches
- Enhance listening skills & consult



# Education Act 1998

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- Some principles of Act:
  - statutory framework
  - partnership
  - transparency and accountability
- Section 6: some objects
  - parental choice
  - partnership
  - accountability and transparency



# Education Act 1998...2

- Section 8: schools & patron
  - patron is generally person who requested recognition of school
  - role recognised and emphasised
  - Board to manage school on patron's behalf
  - Board must consult and inform
  - May dissolve board with Minister's consent
  - Role in determining staff appointment procedures
  - Board accountable to patron for upholding<sub>7</sub> characteristic spirit



# Education Act 1998...3

- Section 9: some functions of school
  - Educational needs of all students
  - Students with special needs
  - Students general development
  - Ensure parents have access to records (Parents, staff, BoM, Students)
  - Ensure management and staff development (BoM, all Staff, review curriculum)



# Education Act 1998...4

- Section 13: functions of Inspectorate & Psychologists include:
  - Support and advise recognised schools and centres
  - Evaluate management and effectiveness
  - Advise Teachers and Boards of Mangt.
  - Assess the educational needs of students
  - Assess and advise on psychological needs of students to parents, staff & management
  - Assist in formulation of policy by the Minister



# Education Act 1998...BoM

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- Establishment and membership of Boards of Management
- Diversity of school types, ownership, management structures
- Partnership and consensus, not coercion
- Duty of patron to establish
- Composition agreed between partners
- Members appointed by patron (Section 14)



# Education Act 1998...BoM

## Section 15..

- Educational needs of all students
- To manage school for benefit of students and their parents
- Have regard to the following:
  - Ministerial policies & directions
  - Ethos of School
  - Efficient use of resources
- Consult with and keep patron informed
- Publish school policies in relation to admissions, suspensions and expulsions

# Education Act 1998...BoM



## - other provisions

- Sections 16 and 17 deal with dissolution by the patron or at the request of the Minister
- Keep all proper and usual accounts and have them audited (S 18)
- Minister has power to appoint a person to report in relation to discharge of function by a board (S 19)
- Establish procedure to keep local partners informed on the operation of the sch. (S 20)
- Arrange for preparation of school plan (S 21)
- Establish procedures to keep pupils informed concerning the activities of the school (S 27)<sub>1/2</sub>



# Legislation also states...

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- Be responsible for day-to-day management of school
- Provide leadership to staff and students
- Create school environment supportive of learning
- Promote the professional development of teachers
- Set objectives for the school and monitors achievements
- Encourage involvement of parents in their children's education



# Legislation also provides for...



- Statutory recognition for Parents Associations (S 26)
- Students have right to establish students council (S 27)
- Minister may prescribe procedures in relation to the resolution of student grievances at school level (S 28) – excluding grievances relating to enrolment, suspensions and expulsions (Unions/Parents, BoM)



# Section 29 appeal to DES

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- By parents and student over 18
- Effective appeals system which balances the rights of all (rights of partners respected)
- Appeal against expulsion, suspension, non-enrolment
- Appeal to Board of Management first
- Further appeal to Secretary General of the Department of Education & Science
- Appeal to be heard by an Appeals Committee which report to the Secretary General
- Board must act in accordance with any directions issued by Secretary General



# Role of Parent...Act

- Promotion of parental choice an object of Act
- National Parents' Council to be given statutory recognition
- Parents have right to establish School Parents' Association
- Parents have right to be on Boards of Management
- Inspectorate has statutory duty to advise Parents' Associations
- Parents have right of access to records relating to their children.



# Education (Welfare) Act 2000

- Parents: Part 111, s 17 & 18
- **shall cause a child to attend a recognised school on each school day**
- **shall, in accordance with the procedures in the code of behaviour prepared by the school, notify the principal of reasons for absence when a child is absent for part of a school day, a school day or more than a school day.**

# Education (Welfare) Act 2000...continued



## ■ Possible Implications for School

- **Clearly defined procedures re recording of parent notification; record system; co-ordination role might be assigned to Post of Responsibility. This post-holder would liaise with Year Heads and others who may already have responsibility for receipt of letters of notification/explanation from parents/guardians.**

# Legislation...NEWB

## Registers/School Attendance

### Records...(Part III, Sections 20, 21, 22)



- **EWO will consult with student and parents and others considered appropriate to ensure all reasonable effort is made to continue student's education**
- **BOM required to submit an attendance report, not later than 6 weeks after end of each school year, to EWO and Parents' Association of the school (comply with NEWB needs)**

# School Attendance Strategies...(Part 111, S 22)



- **BOM required to draw up a “statement of strategy” in consultation with Principal, teachers, parents and EWO. Strategy to foster appreciation of learning and encourage good attendance**



## Strategy to provide for...

- (a) early identification of potential attendance problems.**
- (b) establishment of closer contacts between school and families.**
- (c) rewarding good attendance.**
- (d) Promoting contact with other schools, youth services, local area bodies (wider community).**



## Strategy to provide for..

- (e) co-ordination with other schools of programmes to promote good behaviour or attendance.**
- (f) identification of aspects of school operation, management, teaching of curriculum which may contribute to poor attendance.**
- (g) removal of such aspects not necessary to running of school.**

# Legislation :Code of Behaviour

## - Part 111, S 23.



- **BOM in consultation with Principal, teachers, parents and the EWO is required to prepare a Code of behaviour which specifies:**
  - the standards of behaviour expected of students
  - the sanctions for refusal to observe these standards

# Code of Behaviour - continued...



- - procedures for suspension & expulsion
- grounds for removing a suspension
- procedures for notification of a child's absence

**A student or parent may request a copy of this Code of Behaviour at any time**



# EPSEN Act 2004

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- New legislation
- Education of persons with special educational needs
- Role for parents
- National Council for Special Education
- Role of NEPS (Psychological services)
- Role & function of SENO's
- IEP's.....
- Commencement?

# Policy Development...

## consultation/involvement...

### some areas...1



- School Plan, Code of Discipline/Behaviour
- Curriculum – special needs, subject choice etc
- Multiculturalism, ICT
- Student Retention, Student Absenteeism
- Enrolment/Admissions
- Career Break/Job Sharing/Secondment
- School uniform, homework, bullying (anti)
- Extra-curricular activity programme etc.
- Green School, Healthy Eating, mentoring

# Policy Development...

## consultation/involvement...

### some areas...2



- Substance Abuse
- Internal examinations
- Entry to programme (TYO)
- Partnership: garden of remembrance, prospectus, website, recreational room etc
- Procedures to involve students in operation of school
- Transition from primary programme
- Guidance



# Traditional Model of School

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- Command Culture
- Rules/ Regulations
- Trustees abandoned
- Parents kept outside loop
- Students do what they are told...directed
- Teachers teach class
- Students...temporary guests!
- Top down – hierarchical approach
- BoM were a necessary blip

# New approaches under enlightened leadership



- Emotionally Intelligent School
- Social Capital enhanced (involvement)
- Listening & caring school
- Communication is central
- Distributed/Devolved/Delegated leadership
- Empathetic relationships
- Socio-political contexts of students & community understood by all
- Partnership is a reality



# Partnership Road Map

- Multifaceted approach...involve Partners
- Generic (whole group)
- Sectional (aspects)...based on particular needs
- An aspect of school planning (implications)
- Resources
- Communication
- Invitation to all to participate



# School Planning

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- Steering group
- Particular task groups: discipline, admissions, curriculum (composition to reflect partnership)
- Approach to SDPI Model: Review, design, implement & evaluate

# Organisational Issues...

## market concept to all

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- DES.....Minister
- Trustees
- Student Councils/Mentoring/Prefects
- Parents Association
- Teaching staff
- Ancillary staff
- Management/Board of Management
- Communication



# DES.....

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- Minister decides overall policy
- Consults with DES
- Policy communicated
- Challenge ....make it happen
- What does it do to maker it happen?
- Cannot hide
- Must take initiative

# Towards a policy on Partnership



Audit of partnership (proof) in our school

- 1 Informal...casual?
- 2 Intervention led...by who?
- 3 Formalised...what way?
- 4 Normalised...how?

# Some themes for self evaluation



- School Management
- School planning
- Curriculum provision
- Teaching and learning
- Support for students
- Communications with Partners

All initiatives have resource implications



# Issues for management..

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- Board of Management
- Relationships
- Communication
- Parent teacher meetings
- Induction: staff, students, parents
- Transition from...to...
- Access to school records
- Grievance/Complaints/Appeals procedures



# School Planning

- Have all the stakeholders been consulted
- Role of Board
- Consultation with Trustees
- How can students be involved
- Communication with parents
- Communication with staff
- What policy areas facilitate a partnership approach?
- Advantages of partnership approach?
- Set annual goals...then review



# Curriculum

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- Who determines needs and interests of students?
- Needs and choices of students
- How do we inform parents on curricular changes and provision
- Links with outside agencies
- Use of ICT regarding choices and programmes...access to school website/IT records
- How do we support active involvement of parents in subject choice – guidance?



# Teaching and Learning

- Subject area collaboration
- School reports
- Appraisal
- Study skills
- Active learning

Involvement of partners critical for success



# Support for Students

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- Disadvantaged status schools
- Pastoral care
- Structures to facilitate co-operation
- Parental involvement in students learning and study
- Student council & training
- Student leadership



# Partnership Charter

- ...the successful education of all pupils depends on an active three/four way partnership between trustees, staff, pupils, parents and the school. All have rights and responsibilities...



# Partnership: Trustees

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- Ethos & or Characteristic spirit
- School buildings & environment
- Set up Board of Management
- Dialogue with DES
- Take active interest in school
  - carrying out its functions
  - a listening ear



# Partnership: Management

- Board of Management
- Establishment of communications structures: trustees, staff, students, parents & community
- Facilitate the establishment of Parents Council & Students Council
- School policy development (consult.)
- School Planning
- Establish agreed procedures for grievances, complaints, etc
- Welcome involvement of partners



# Meeting the expectations of Parents and Students

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- Broad and balanced curriculum
- High expectations
- High standard of teaching and learning
- Secure safe orderly environment
- Regular homework
- Written reports
- Parent teacher meetings

Planning & communications essential



# Partnership: Parents

- Board of Management
- Parents Association
- Open days/evenings (arrange)
- National Association
- Consultation on school policy development
- School planning
- Communications: format, reporting, grievances, complaints, parent/teacher meetings, dialogue etc.
- Volunteerism: library, coach, co-lead activity
- Welcome at school how treated



# Parent Responsibilities

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- Encourage excellent attendance
- Supporting school work
- Attending parent-teacher meetings
- Checking homework/journal
- Providing required text books/accessories
- Supporting school policies
- Willingness to participate in school life



# Student responsibilities

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- Treating all with respect
- Punctuality
- Completing homework
- Working hard
- Attending regularly
- Uniform

These goals have to be communicated?



# Partnership: Students

- Students Council
- Mentoring, Meitheal, Gluais, Buddy
- Assist with development of Extra-curricular activity programme
- Development on school policy matters
- Pride in self, school, community
- Community involvement
- Spirit of vounteerism...voice...training...consult



# Partnership: Staff

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- Carry out the lawful instructions of the Principal
- Assist students achieve potential
- Board of Management
- Staff Advisory Committee (C & C)
- Accountability: Reporting/Assessing & Communications
- Co-operate with all the partners
- Parent/Teacher & Open events
- Adhere to agreed grievance/complaints procedures with mangt, students, parents

# Partnership In Our Schools - II

A Manual of Best Practice



The Centre for Education Services

Coláiste Mhuire

MARINO

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION



# Leadership...1

- L - learning
- E - empathy
- A - attitude
- D - dedication
- E - energy
- R - respect
- S - service
- H - honesty
- I - ingenuity
- P - passion





# Leadership...2

- **Service to others – the road to service is travelled with integrity, compassion & understanding...fulfilling**
- **Leadership usually starts with a willing heart, a positive attitude & a desire to make a difference**
- **Leaders have visions but realistic short term goals are the key to success**
- **Remember knowledge is not power, knowledge applied is ....**
- **Mistakes happen....lead on**



# Queries?

- **What successes has your school had over the past year in promoting a partnership culture in the school?**
- **What are the challenges in implementing this culture of partnership in the school?**
- **Any practical suggestions to help further a partnership approach?**



# What next?

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- Establish a partnership forum- composition?
- Aspects of school life for improvement
- Agreement on specific projects
- School planning initiative (plan action)
- Obstacles to success
- Ownership of projects – share responsibility
- Evaluate outcomes
- Terminate.....where appropriate!



# Remember

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- Imparting knowledge is only lighting candles of others at our lamp without depriving ourselves of any flame  
(Jane Porter)



# Thanks....contact details

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# Publications...

- Making the move....Students', Teachers' & Parents' Perspectives of Transfer from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> Level schooling (Maeve O'Brien)
- Encountering Dissatisfaction (Luke Monahan & Ned Prendergast)
- The Student Mentor (Seamus O'Brien)
- Moving forward with students (L. Monahan)
- Achieving Positive Behaviour – a practical guide (Patricia Dwyer)
- Partnership in our schools + II
- The Tutor's Companion – handbook & journal