

Information / Training Day

Castletroy Park Hotel, Limerick, Saturday 7th November 2009

Schools who attended : St Caimins, Crescent College, Cashel, Gort, and Moate.

Tommy Walshe President PACCS welcomed everyone.

Three members of PACCS executive were also present and they introduced themselves. They were Ann Leamy from Cashel Community School, Catherine Sides and Leona McCormack from Gort Community School.

Tommy spoke on the role of the parents association.

- How PACCS is a Voluntary Body.
- How is PACCS funded.
- National Parents Council post primary (NPCpp)
- Post Primary Education Forum (PPEF)
- Meetings PACCS had with our Management body ACCS, Teacher Unions, Department of Education and Science, and State Examinations Commission.
- The new PACCS website which will come on line shortly.
- Conference 2010
- Project Maths
- The McCarthy Report

And a lot more. His presentation is on the regional webpage.

Our guest speaker was : Ms. Aideen Walsh, a teacher's representative from St. Caimin's Community School who was nominated onto the ACCS Executive on behalf of the Munster region. She served on the ACCS Executive from April 2006 to August 2009. She also served on a number of Sub-Committees and Task Groups including the ACCS Industrial Relations Sub-Committee, ACCS Education Committee and the Task Group on Special Educational Needs.

Aideen spoke on:

- What is ACCS?
 - School Management Association,
 - 91 Boards of Management ,
 - Community Schools (77),
 - Comprehensive Schools (14),
 - Full-time secretariat (3.8),
 - Company Limited by Guarantee, Charitable status from Revenue,
 - Schools pay annual subscription + DES assistance

- Aims of ACCS?
 - Contribute to advancement of education,
 - Advance & develop concept of comprehensive curricula (Deed of Trust),
 - Advance & develop wider “community” concept.

- Who do ACCS support?
 - Facilitate & assist members of BoM’s in execution of their negotiating body on behalf of the member Boards or on request, of individual Boards,
 - Co-operate with or enter agreements with other bodies having similar objectives,
 - Apply the funds of ACCS in carrying out these objectives and in defraying the expenses of management & administration

- How do ACCS operate?
 - Constitution: Memorandum & Articles of Association,
 - Annual Convention: elections & motions,
 - Elected Executive reflecting BOM membership,
 - Fulltime Secretariat,
 - Sub-committee structures,
 - Task Groups,
 - Executive policy guides ACCS,
 - Representative capacity.

- ACCS sub-committees?
 - Constitution & Conference,
 - School Accommodation,
 - Industrial Relations,
 - Education,
 - In-school Management,
 - Finance,
 - Task Groups.

- Communication? Newsletter,
 - ACCS/Info.
 - Bulletins,
 - Tagairt,
 - Website: www.accs.ie,
 - Annual Convention,
 - Regional meetings,
 - Special Convention/Seminars,
 - ACCS CPD , programme,
 - Telephone & Written communication

Tommy thanked Aideen for her wonderful presentation on such short notice.

The meeting was a great success and Tommy thanked everyone for coming.

Meeting 24th September in The Sunrise Inn, Birr

Tommy Walshe welcomed everyone.

We spoke on the Book Rental Scheme and how one school have a book shop. The books are left in and a form is filled out before the student goes on holidays. The only books bought by the shop are ones needed for the next year. When the books are bought by the new parents, a cheque is then sent to the previous owner of the books. If any parent wants they can buy the books new. This idea is non profit and designed to help parents who are under pressure financially.

The meeting was then concluded.

Meeting 22nd September in Castletroy Park Hotel, Limerick.

Tommy Walshe welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming.

He opened the meeting and discussed the cutbacks in the schools.

- How the book rental scheme was affecting parents.
- Was pass and honors classes put together because of the cut in teaching staff.
- Shorter school time to lessen the cuts.
- Car pooling because of the price increase in Transport cost.
- Parents who are unable to afford books, without the support of the parents association.

The discussion was very enlightening.

The meeting concluded.

Part of the PPEF regional meetings in the mid-west

WESTMEATH POST-PRIMARY PRINCIPALS WARN OF DIRE CONSEQUENCES

We, the 15 Post-Primary Principals of Co. Westmeath have taken the unprecedented steps of issuing the following statement to alert parents and the public in general to what we believe will be the dire consequences of the recent education cutbacks announced in the budget.

The changes, as outlined, were made following no consultation whatsoever, and if implemented, the effects will be as follows: -

- **Changing the pupil/teacher ratio:**

The pupil/teacher ratio is the basis on which teachers are allocated to our schools each year by the Department of Education & Science. The new change means that the number of teachers will be reduced. For the Post-Primary schools in Co. Westmeath it will mean the loss of 31 teaching positions.

The consequence of this is that curricular provision and subject choice will be greatly diminished^ We may be unable to offer our students a number of subjects, thereby restricting their educational experience and putting some students at a great disadvantage.

Inevitably, these changes will mean larger class sizes, thus reducing the capacity of each of our schools to maintain and develop quality teaching and learning.

The effects of these changes will only become obvious from the commencement of the next school year.

- **Abolition of substitution cover arising from uncertified sick leave as well as absences on school business:**

This proposal means that we will not be in a position to put a substitute teacher into a class when a teacher is absent on uncertified sick leave or on school business. This change has the potential to have the most devastating effect not only on curricular activity, but also on a wide variety of extra-curricular activity.

Schools have very limited resources available to them in this regard and as a consequence, curricular field trips in subject areas such as Geography and Science will be impossible to conduct. Sporting activities and other extra-curricular activities such as Young Scientist Exhibition, Young Entrepreneurs, Young Social Innovators etc. will be seriously curtailed and may even disappear.

- **Abolition of Disadvantaged Supports:**

The abolition of disadvantaged support in many of our schools will have serious consequences

for the most vulnerable members of our school communities. The cutbacks will mean a loss of some support teachers, Home/School Liaison Officers, as well as financial resources. This will also mean larger classes for Special Needs students.

- **Abolition of School Book Grants:**

The supports previously given to necessitous pupils with the purchase of school books has been withdrawn. This means a loss of €100,000 to our Book Schemes, The inevitable consequence is that all our Book Rental Schemes are in danger of collapse, *with* financial consequences for parents, without exception,

It is important to understand that in each of our schools in Co Westmeath there are a sizeable number of families who absolutely depend on this financial assistance for the purchase of school books» Our schools do not have the resources necessary to lend support.

- **The abolition of grants:**

The abolition of some grants to our schools, i.e. Transition Year Grant, Leaving Certificate Applied, Physics/Chemistry Grant, Home Economics Grant, Traveller's Grant etc.. will mean a loss of capital funding to Co. Westmeath schools of €435,000. This will greatly increase the financial burden on parents and reduce the level and quality of service being given by our schools.

A 3% decrease in administrative spending will mean a further loss of €33,000 in school supports. Adult and Further Education is subject to a total loss of €35,500 and Youth Grants have also been cut by €7,500.

- **The Increase in Examination Fees/School Transport:**

Parents and families will be required to pay much more for school transport and entry fees to Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations. For example, the increased charges for school transport is €300, paid completely at the beginning of the school year,

As leaders of all the Second-Level school communities in County Westmeath, we feel duty-bound to highlight for you the consequences of the massive cuts on Second-Level education provision. The loss of 31 teaching positions, €578,000 of resourcing, the inevitable cancellation of sporting fixtures and other educational activities are devastating and totally unacceptable.

The increase in capitation (resources given to the school per student), although welcome will in no way compensate for these cuts Those students currently attending Second-Level and those who will enter next September will be severely disadvantaged as a result of these cutbacks. What they loose cannot he made up and the consequences will evidently impact negatively on their futures,

We must cherish all the children in our county equally, our children are our future — the least they deserve is a quality education,

We ask all of you for your support at this difficult time and urge you to defend the rights of the county's youth to a quality education,