

Fáilte an Uachtaráin

President's Welcome

Dear Principal / Deputy Principal

I am delighted to be in a position once again to invite you to attend our annual PDA conference. This year we're going West to the beautiful city of Galway, where our conference will take place in the Galway Bay hotel from Wednesday 15th to Friday 17th of November. Last year our conference at Mount Wolseley, County Carlow, was an incredible success with a fantastic line up of speakers and events. Delegates to conference really enjoyed the content along with the networking and social aspects.

We are currently working hard looking for suitable people to speak to topics of direct concern to principals and deputy principals. With so much change coming down the line, information is key, and it is more important than ever that, as school leaders, we keep ourselves informed and up to date. This conference in Galway represents a great opportunity to hear speakers on these topics and network with colleagues facing the same challenges as you.

The conference offers an opportunity for us, as school leaders, to look after our own well-being. We spend much of our time trying to mind everybody else, so it is important that we take these opportunities to look after ourselves. As a CPD event, our conference is open to all irrespective of membership, so we would love to see you there. As such, we also have a long-standing agreement that attendees are entitled to claim travel and subsistence from your ETB as well as payment of conference fees. You may need to seek prior approval from your ETB in respect of such expenses.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you well for the remainder of the summer term, and I hope you have a decent break over the summer to wind down and detach from school life. I would urge you to book your hotel room in the Galway Bay as soon as possible to make sure you can avail of our excellent conference rate and register for the conference as soon as you can. I have no doubt that this conference will be every bit as successful as last year and you will not go away disappointed.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Power

President PDA



Conference Speakers 2023

Jarlath Burns



Jarlath Burns captained Armagh to their first Ulster title in 17 years in 1999 and in 2000, became the first player's representative on the GAA Central Council. He has held many significant roles within the GAA since then, most notably as manager of the Ladies International Team in 2009 where they beat Australia in both tests, but his biggest achievement came in February 2023 when he was elected President Elect of the GAA. Jarlath has been involved in education for 34 years and his last ten years has been as principal of St. Paul's Bessbrook, which is seen as a beacon of education in the north. He was also a member of the Eames Bradley Consultative

Group on the past and has been praised for his moderate tone in his dealings with the unionist community. He is a fluent Irish speaker and a life long member of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association. Jarlath is heavily involved in his local club Silverbridge and has held positions of juvenile coach, chair and now, secretary. All his family are involved in the club, which is the hub around which their lives are built.

Dr. Keith Quille



Dr Keith Quille is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Enterprise Computing and Digital Transformation at TU Dublin. Before TU Dublin, Keith was a PLC and second-level teacher for almost a decade. Keith was recently an Expert on the development of the European Commission Guidelines on the use of AI and Data in Education and Training, and his PhD was in using AI to predict students at risk of failing or dropping out of introductory programming courses.

Dr. Mona O'Moore



Dr. Mona O'Moore is Professor and Fellow Emeritus of Trinity College Dublin (TCD). A Trinity Graduate, she gained her M.A. in Child and Educational Psychology at Nottingham University and her Ph.D. from Edinburgh University. She served also as Head of the School of Education in Trinity College (2000-2007), and was a member of the Ministerial Working Party that drew up the National Guidelines on Countering Bullying in Primary and Post-Primary Schools in Ireland in 1993. In 1996, Prof O'Moore established the Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre (ABC) at TCD (transferred to Dublin City University in later years, 20015, where she served then as Adjunct Professor). She conducted the first nationwide study of school bullying in Ireland and has many years of experience working with schools and individual parents and teachers. Having also conducted the first workplace bullying study in Ireland (2000), she served as a member of the Expert Advisory Group on Workplace Bullying (2005). She has been a partner in 15 EU projects related to bullying prevention and intervention. She has written and published widely, particularly on the subject of school bullying. Books include: *Dealing with Bullying in Schools: A Training Manual for Teachers* (Sage Publications, 2004); *Understanding School Bullying: A Guide for Parents and Teachers* (Veritas Publishing, 2010); *Inclusion or Illusion? Educational Provision for Children with Mild Learning Difficulties* (Blackhall Publishing Ltd., 2009); *Bullying in Irish Education* (Cork University Press, 2013); *Understanding Cyberbullying: A guide for Parents and Teachers* (Veritas Publishing 2014). In 2018, she was awarded a life time achievement Award by the World Anti-Bullying Forum.

Dr. Johanna Fitzgerald



Dr. Johanna Fitzgerald was recently appointed as the National Inclusion, Special Education and Research Coordinator with ETBI and is seconded from her previous role as Head of the Department of Educational Psychology, Inclusive and Special Education in Mary Immaculate College. She is tasked with leading research-informed effective policy and practice in inclusive special education across the ETB sector in post primary Community Colleges and Community National Schools. Johanna's research is concerned with the development of an integrated systematic approach to inclusive special education provision and an understanding of how special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs), teachers and school leaders can improve their practice. Underpinning her research is recognition of the importance of collaborative and situated approaches to professional learning, processes of individual reflective practice and school self-evaluation, all of which coalesce to identify the need for reform in the first instance, but more importantly, promote evidence-informed strategic direction for schoolwide improvement.

Johanna Fitzgerald will be joined by **Mr John Kearney**. In February of this year the appointment of Mr. John Kearney as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).

Mr. John Kearney



John Kearney was appointed Chief Executive of the Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board in September 2016. John progressed the delivery of a multi-million Regional Capital Investment Programme having overseen significant increases in post primary enrolments. John fronted the partnering of further education and training services with employers to deliver targeted upskilling programmes and has led the delivery of successful administration pilots with Education Shared Business Services.

He has a wide-ranging wealth of experience in education developments at national level, currently implementing ICT initiatives nationwide with the Department of Education and representing the sector on the Tertiary Education System (TES) Steering Committee

John has a deep-rooted passion for special education and as leader of the NCSE is eager to continue developing effective stakeholder relationships in supporting the collective implementation of the vision, goals and strategy of an inclusive education system for children with special educational needs.

Dr Steve Lane



Steve is an experienced educator with a career spanning over four decades. After graduating from St. Patrick's Training College Drumcondra in 1979, he served as a teacher and principal in a DEIS primary school until 2014. For six years, he worked with the Department of Education and Skills as a strategic change facilitator and managed an EU YouthStart project aimed at supporting marginalized youth in schools. He earned an M.Ed (Hons) in 2006 and completed his doctoral research in 2021, which centred on well-being promotion in schools. Steve has played a pivotal role in developing and teaching leadership training programs with organizations like LDS and PDST Leadership.

He also lectures on leadership at Maynooth University, Mary I, and Trinity College Dublin's Trinity Business School, where he teaches the Psychology of Management. This session delves into classroom dynamics through the lens of Polyvagal Theory. It highlights that as educators, our nervous systems fundamentally influence classroom behaviours and learning outcomes. Polyvagal Theory and recent social and affective neuroscience show that learning requires “state regulation” or “self-regulation”. However, we cannot self-regulate unless we feel safe. And we cannot feel safe unless we pick up cues of safety from the environment and from each other. In order to self-regulate in the classroom, we must co-regulate.

Examining the concepts of neuroception, hierarchy and coregulation the session will explore how these relate to teachers' everyday experiences in their classrooms.

Dr. Pádraig Kirk



Dr. Pádraig Kirk is a graduate of the University of Limerick, Maynooth University and the Honourable Society of King's Inns. He started his career as a teacher of Engineering/Graphics in O'Fiaich College, Dundalk. After a period in Engineers Ireland in Dublin, Pádraig moved to the Department of Education where he worked as Senior Inspector in a range of roles including school inspection work, North-South relations, the Department's building unit and in the Inspectorates' Evaluation Support and Research Unit. In 2009 Pádraig was appointed CEO of Co. Louth VEC and upon the establishment of the ETBs in 2013 Pádraig moved back to the

Department to head up the establishment of Junior Cycle for Teachers, a support service he led up to 2023. Pádraig has recently taken up the position of Managing Director of Oide, the Department's new cross-sectoral schools' support service.

Orlaith O' Connor



Orlaith O'Connor is a Deputy Chief Inspector with the Department of Education. She started her teaching career as a teacher of business subjects in a postprimary school serving the needs of students from disadvantages communities. For over twenty years she has worked in the Department of Education's Inspectorate in the areas of inspection and curriculum and assessment policy. Her current responsibilities include overseeing the development and implementation of the Inspectorate's annual inspection programme and supporting the Inspectorate's advisory and policy work.

Dr. Ciara O'Donnell



Dr. Ciara O'Donnell is the former National Director of the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), a position she held for 9 years (2013 - 2022). She began her career as a primary school teacher in a West Dublin DEIS school during which she spent six years as the Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator. Ciara has worked in the area of teacher education for seventeen years holding a number of senior leadership positions with responsibility for curriculum, DEIS, school leadership, professional development policy, research and design. Ciara now works as an independent education consultant specialising in teacher education,

curriculum and school leadership while also working as a tutor with Maynooth University. Her research exploring the secondment of teachers to teacher education which has been presented nationally and internationally has resulted in her evidenced based programme for aspiring and developing teacher educators "Becoming and Developing as a Teacher Educator"