

Communication from Executive Chair, Implementation Group for the Strategic Plan for Catholic Education

I write to update you on a) a significant amendment to the Strategic Plan for Catholic Education which has arisen out of consultations that have taken place in the course of the work of the Implementation Group and b) the next steps arising from this amendment.

The Catholic Education Service Committee considered feedback received from the Implementation Group Executive Chair on its work in implementing the Strategic Plan for Catholic Education and on his engagement with the stakeholders. A concern voiced on all sides related to the complexity and duplication of bodies in Catholic Education.

A modification of the current Plan was proposed to take account of some of the issues raised in the feedback and to further simplify the structures within Catholic Education. These changes would also prepare the way for further development of these structures to accommodate Primary and Third Level, including Adult Faith Formation, in the future.

a) The Amendment

Given that the role of the Catholic Schools Partnership was always intended to be the executive arm of CESC, and that there is considerable overlap in the Strategic Plan between the roles and mandates of the **Catholic Schools Partnership (CSP)** and the planned **Confederation of Post-Primary Schools (CPPS)**, it was decided that a new body, to be known as the **Catholic Education Partnership (CEP)** take the place of the two bodies and carry the roles and mandates of both **CSP** and **CPPS**. The Chair of AMCSS and the Executive Board of the Association of Trusts of Catholic Schools (ATCS) through its Chair would report to this new body. This new body (CEP) would in turn report to the CESC.

The composition of the **Catholic Education Partnership** would be broadly similar to the current composition of **CSP** and would include the chairs of the patron, trustee and management bodies.

It was decided that the new **Catholic Education Partnership (CEP)** would have the services of a full time CEO and ancillary staff to replace the existing CEO of **CSP**.

This amendment was approved by the Irish Episcopal Conference at its June meeting and by the Association of Missionaries and Religious in Ireland since then.

The Catholic Education Service Committee further proposed that the IEC should consider merging the Council for Education of the Irish Episcopal Conference with the revised CESC, and that the latter body would be known as the Catholic Education Service Council. This proposal is to be considered.

b) Next steps/Actions:

- 1) The mandate of the Implementation Group in respect of taking this amendment forward has been formally confirmed.
- 2) The preferred model of Governance is based on the establishment of the CEP as a Company and legal advice has already been sought on how this can be delivered and its associated timeframes.
- 3) Funding of the amended model in respect of the Patron/Trustee 'lung' in particular remains still to be developed. The approved, simplified model now allows for a scope of services to be prepared, aligned to that model, and a short piece of work then to be carried out to both cost that and to consider how funds can be accessed to deliver that. This will be overseen by the Implementation group.
- 4) Timeframe: It is acknowledged that there is an urgency to putting in place the new arrangements and that it has taken some time to arrive at this juncture. We are now in a position to move forward very quickly to put in place the new arrangements with a challenging but deliverable timeframe being set.
- 5) Harmonisation of the proposed mandates of CSP and CPPS is required and some initial work has been carried out on that task.
- 6) The Implementation group has proposed a strategy and a structure that will involve the IG engaging with CSP, AMCSS and ATCS in taking this forward is being considered for agreement with those bodies. It is anticipated that this Strategy will be agreed and underway in early November.

Gerry Lundy, Executive Chair, Implementation Group.