

Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board

**Minutes of meeting of Principals and AEO
held on Friday, 24 January, 2014 at 11.00a.m.
in Kilian's Lodge, Mullagh, Co Cavan**

Present:

John Crotty	Adrian Delaney
Gerry Hand	Niall Lynch
Moya Lynch	Sharon Magennis
Fiona Maloney	Fiona McGrath
Roddy Minogue	Brendan Ó Dufaigh
Martha Williamson-Hunter	

In attendance:

Martin O'Brien, CE	John Kearney
Pauline Grogan	Fiona Nugent
Marie Traynor	

Apologies:

Anne Conaghan	Karen Fitzpatrick
Ann Marie Lacey	Mary Sheridan

AGENDA

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting
2. Matters Arising
3. Correspondence
4. Establishment of Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board School Support Service (CMETBSSS)
5. Policies – John Kearney and Fiona Nugent
 - Review of SEN Policies and upcoming NEPS presentation (not presenting at this meeting)
 - Guardianship Rights and Enrolment Forms
 - School Plan/SSE Presentation and Archiving – Follow up from MLL in Coláiste Oiriall
 - Board of Management Minute-taking.
6. Centre Report for ETB Meetings
7. CMETB Leadership Project
8. Supporting teacher competence development for better learning outcomes
9. P-POD Update – John Kearney
10. CMETB Careers' Event 2014
11. Teaching Council Registration – Pauline Grogan, HR
12. Any other business

Welcome

Fiona Maloney, AEO, was welcomed to the meeting and the CE indicated that she would be invited to future meetings.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 October, 2013 were approved.

Correspondence

Correspondence from Department of Education:

- 25/11/2013 Temporary Acting Up Education Officers
- 19/11/2013 "Be-Winter Ready" 2013-2014 Information Campaign

Circular Letters

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| Circular 0052/2013 | Procedures on Commencement of Section 30 in recognised schools |
| Circular 0055/2013 | Revised arrangement 2013/2014 – Transition Year Certificates |
| Circular 0056/2013 | Revised arrangement 2013/2014 – Computer Studies Certificates |
| Circular 0058/2013 | Home School Community Liaison Scheme |
| Circular 0059/2013 | Summer Works Scheme (SWS) 2014 |
| Circular 0060/2013 | Public Procurement |

Other Sources:

- Diocesan Advisory Booklet
- Careers Portal Newsletter – January, 2014
- ETBI re TUI and ASTI regarding Haddington Road Agreement

Religion in schools

The CE referred to the Diocesan Advisory Booklet which was circulated. He also stated that the agreement is 3 classes (but at least 2 classes) of religion per week must be timetabled and that this is not an option even at senior cycle.

The CE gave an update on the terms and conditions relating to Chaplains and advised that provision for RE be in accordance with circular letter.

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Parish of Monaghan & Rackwallace

Diocese of Clogher

*circ @
meeting 04-24/11*

With Compliments

As promised booklets with role of D.A. -
Also included D.A. time allocation and role
papers. Please let me know if you need
anything else. Claudine.

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**National Association of Post Primary Diocesan Advisers
Position Paper 1: Religious Education - Time Allocation**

Overview

Diocesan Advisers remind schools to make adequate allowance for Religious Education (RE) in their timetables. Schools managed by the Vocational Educational Committees are directed to provide religious instruction "of the order of two hours per week."¹ Likewise the typical Deeds of Trust and Articles of Management for Community Schools and Community Colleges refer to the provision of two hours religious education per week, in accordance with the rites and practices of the religious denomination to which the student belongs.

In its guidelines the Irish Bishops' Conference states:

In non-examination classes religious education should be allocated a *minimum of two hours per week*. It is not acceptable, **for any reason**, that this requirement be reduced in schools where the education of Catholic students takes place. Boards of Management and principals should do all in their power to prevent the erosion of this small number of hours on the timetable. Diocesan Advisers should also be vigilant on the matter and help management wherever possible to maintain the requirement.²

Two hours, or approximately three classes per week is the minimum amount of time required for the delivery of both the examination and non-examination syllabi at Junior and Senior cycles. The catechetical programmes were prepared with this amount of class-time in mind. Anything less deprives students the necessary continuity to engage with the material and establish a rapport with the RE teacher.

When a Whole School Evaluation or RE Subject inspection is conducted by the Department of Education, confirmation is sought that the school discharges its obligation to the spiritual and moral formation of the students in its care. We advise that the Religious Education policy statement refer to the number of classes it allocates, with respect to this commitment.

In addition to class hours, time should be allowed for regular class, year and school based liturgies as well as an annual retreat or pilgrimage. In this way God's presence is celebrated as well as understood. We advocate the provision of regular opportunities for the RE Department to meet as a team as well as the inclusion of a religious element in staff days.

¹Department of Education, "Circular Letter 7/1979: Religious Instruction in Vocational Schools."

²Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Guidelines for the Faith Formation and Development of Catholic Students. Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus*. (Dublin: Veritas, 1999), 10

Points in relation to the time allocation of R.E. in Post-Primary schools:

- Share The Good News p. 156 states, "All second-level schools, encouraging critical thinking across the Curriculum among adolescents and recognising the multi-faceted world they inhabit, should give significant time and space to support young people in developing the spiritual and moral dimension of their lives. Two hours of Religious Education, that is, three class periods, is the accepted **minimum** for all classes at second level, a time allocation that the Irish Catholic Bishops join in affirming as the **least** amount of time that can be considered appropriate. Anything less is clearly insufficient. These class periods should be taken by qualified religious educators, whether or not the class group is sitting a State certified Religious Education examination. (Share the Good News - National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland: Irish Episcopal Conference, 2010)
- Bishops' Guidelines p.10 states "In non-examination classes religious education should be allocated a minimum of two hours per week. It is not acceptable, for any reason, that this requirement be reduced in schools where the education of Catholic students takes place. Boards of management and principals should do all in their power to prevent the erosion of this small number of hours on the timetable." (Guidelines for the Faith Formation and Development of Catholic Students: The Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, 1999)
- The Model Agreement for community schools and designated colleges states: "The religious worship attended by any pupil at the school/college and the religious instruction given to any pupil shall be in accordance with the rites, practice and teaching of the religious denomination to which the pupil belongs. Religious instruction as aforesaid of the order of 2 hours shall be given to all pupils in the school (except those who are withdrawn from religious instruction in accordance with the provisions of sub-clause (i) of this clause) in each week during which the school is in session."

The Present Situation

Unfortunately many schools do not provide the minimum of two hours Religious Education per week in their timetables. It is also more likely for students to be withdrawn for learning support or resource education from an RE class than from other subjects. In Senior Cycle, Religious Education is sometimes positioned against other subjects as an option rather than as a core subject. Some students have no regularly time-tabled RE class. This is not acceptable.

In recent years the curriculum has come under increasing constraints with the introduction additional subjects and activities. In particular, Social Political and Health Education (SPHE) and Civil, Social and Political Education (CSPE), because they overlap with RE in some ways, have encroached on the provision of time for RE. While related to Religious Education, these subjects are quite distinct and should not be counted as time in RE. In schools where RE is not a State examination subject, it is all the more tempting to sacrifice RE classes for the sake of purely academic achievements. Students deserve preparation for the spiritual as well as the economic realities of their lives.

Recommendations

- That two hours or at least three classes of religious education be provided as a core subject for all students each week.
- That students not be withdrawn from RE class for instruction in other subjects. That provision be made for retreats, masses and other liturgical services.
- That each Bishop occasionally write to remind principals of the importance of timetabling two hours of Religious Education each week as a core subject for all students.