Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

CUMASÚ
Empowering through learning

Action Plan for Education 2019
Quarter 3 Progress Report

Prepared by the Department of Education and Skills
www.education.ie

Introduction

Action Plan for Education 2019 sets out the priorities for the Department of Education and Skills and its agencies and aegis bodies for the year. This annual plan is driven by the goals and ambitions set out in our Statement of Strategy 2019-2021.

In March this year we published our Action Plan for 2019. This sets out over 200 actions specifically targeted to achieve our goals:

1. Shape a responsive education and training system that meets the needs and raises the aspirations of all learners.

2. Advance the progress of learners at risk of educational disadvantage and learners with special educational needs in order to support them to achieve their potential.

3. Equip education and training providers with the skills and support to provide a quality learning experience.

4. Intensify the relationships between education and the wider community, society and the economy.

5. Lead in the delivery of strategic direction and supportive systems in partnership with key stakeholders in education and training.

The Action Plan for Education 2019 highlights the significant strategic reform programme under way in education and training. It recognises the importance of critical business functions to ensure business continuity and quality of service. The publication of an annual plan within a broader strategic framework enables us to respond in an agile way to the demands of the challenging and complex environment in which we operate while maintaining a strategic focus on sustainable reform.

To ensure an informative and transparent process, our progress during the year will be monitored through published quarterly reports. This is the third such report for 2019. It outlines progress made on actions and subactions due for delivery in quarter 3 of 2019. While providing details on the achievements made during this period, the report also provides an update on actions where significant progress has been made, but where it has been necessary to adjust the target date.

Overview

Actions due for delivery by end quarter 3, 2019

The Action Plan for 2019 contained 45 actions and subactions due for delivery by the end of quarter 3, 2019. Of these, 36 have been achieved, giving a completion rate of 80%.

Actions achieved in the third quarter of the Action Plan for Education 2019 include:

- Publish, in conjunction with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (OPC), the Education (Student and Parent) Charter Bill.
- Complete a public consultation on the circulars governing the granting of exemptions from the study of Irish.
- Publish the new Primary Language Curriculum/Teanga na Bunscoile for junior infants to sixth class.
- Development of a programme of CPD to support the introduction of the Primary Maths Curriculum.
- Increase the number of post-primary schools participating in the Foreign Language Assistants scheme.
- Reduce the timeframe for the Leaving Certificate appeals process.
- Implement online marking of examinations in an expanded range of subjects.

- Recruitment of 10 additional NEPS psychologists.
- Publish the third edition of "Terms & Conditions of Employment for Teachers in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools".
- Progress the Higher Education Strategic Infrastructure Fund to project confirmation stage, supporting expansion of capacity and key skills needs.
- Oversee development of, and annual calls for, Springboard+.
- Publish "Education Indicators for Ireland" report in order to provide a sound basis for evidence-informed policy making across the sector

Other key developments during quarter 3 include:
- The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Bill 2018 passed both Houses of the Oireachtas, and provides for regulation of the English Language Education sector and a route for the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland to become a university.
- A new Governance Manual for primary school boards of management was launched, containing a helpful overview of the role of boards in addition to the various rules regarding their composition and operation.
- New criteria were announced for schools to grant students an exemption from studying Irish. Following an extensive public consultation the new arrangements will take begin in the 2019/2020 school year.
- Almost 59,000 students received Leaving Certificate results following major reforms to the exam timetable, appeals system and bereavement policy, as part of efforts to support students' welfare and reduce anxiety and stress.
- A new pilot primary schools supply panel scheme was announced to help answer demand for substitute teachers. The focus for the pilot is on Dublin, Galway, Kildare and Meath, with up to 90 schools benefitting from the initiative.
- 34 migrant teachers graduated from a bridging programme under the Migrant Teacher Project at Marino Institute of Education which was established to increase the participation of Immigrant Internationally Educated Teachers (IIETs) in schools.
- 36 student teachers have begun the new Irish-medium Bachelor of Education (Primary Teaching - Initial Teacher Education Programme) at Marino Institute of Education as part of the Department's commitment to an investment of €5 million to enable 150 students to enroll in the programme over eight years.
- Almost €100 million is to be invested by the Government in major building projects at five higher education institutions: Maynooth University, IT Sligo, UCC, NUI Galway and UCD.
- A progress report on the National Student Accommodation Strategy showed that, as part of Project Ireland 2040, 6,691 purpose built student accommodation bed spaces have been completed by the end of Q2. This is towards a 2019 overall target of 7,000 bed spaces, with a further 5,986 bed spaces under construction.
- Measures to increase access to Irish-medium education have been announced, with five new primary schools being established between 2020-2022 designated for Irish-medium education.
- Details of the additional 227 schools that will have increased access to creative activities as part of the *Scoileanna Ildánacha/Creative Schools* and *Creative Clusters* initiatives have been announced. The expansion of these initiatives, under the Creative Ireland Programme, places arts and creativity at the centre of school life for over 100,000 students.
- An archive to preserve arts in education content and showcase the work of creative organisations in Ireland was launched. The Arts and Culture in Education Research Repository (ACERR) will be open to people working in education and the public, allowing them an insight into the inspirational ideas being developed for schools.

Goal 1: Shape a responsive education and training system that meets the needs and raises the aspirations of all learners				
Action/Subaction		**Actions/subactions for Quarter 3**	**Achieved/Not achieved**	**Comment**
2		**Provide a comprehensive educational psychological service to the primary and post-primary school sector**		

	2.1	Commence the recruitment of an additional ten NEPS psychologists to support implementation of the Wellbeing Policy and Framework for Practice 2018 – 2023 in schools	Achieved	
4		**Further development of the Primary Curriculum**		
	4.2	Publish the new Primary Language Curriculum/Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile for junior infants to sixth class both online and in hardcopy	Achieved	
	4.3	Publication of overview of a redeveloped primary curriculum, based on extensive research including a series of seminars, for public consultation	Not achieved	Work on this action continues, with extra time given for publication in order to avoid an overlap with the roll out of the Primary Language Curriculum.
5		**Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle**		
	5.3	Introduce the final phase of Junior Cycle specifications in Technology subjects, Religious Education, Jewish Studies and Classics	Achieved	
7		**Advance actions that cross curricular areas**		
	7.3	Publish results of 2018 Wellbeing and Lifeskills survey to inform policy development in a range of areas	Not achieved	Due to the low response rate, the reliability of the data gathered is now being assessed.
8		**Implement "Languages Connect, Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-2026 "to promote a society where the ability to learn and use at least one foreign language is taken for granted, because of its inherent value for individuals, society and the economy**		
	8.1	Increase the number of post-primary schools participating in the Foreign Language Assistants scheme	Achieved	
9		**Progress implementation of the "STEM Education Policy Statement 2017 - 2026" and the Implementation Plan 2017 – 2019**		
	9.3	Develop a framework in relation to STEM partnerships between Business/Industry and Schools to include an agreed set of mutually beneficial guidelines in relation to engagement	Achieved	
10		**Implement the "Digital Strategy for Schools 2015 -2020" to enhance teaching, learning & assessment**		
	10.2	Produce Working Group Report with recommendations for the provision of ICT technical support in schools	Achieved	
11		**Progress implementation of the Education Chapter of the 20-Year**		

Action/Subaction				
		Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030 as set out in the 5-Year Action Plan for Irish 2018-2022		
	11.2	Complete a public consultation on the Circulars governing the granting of Exemptions from the Study of Irish and analyse responses for consideration in the finalisation of the revised circulars for Primary and Post-primary level	Achieved	

Goal 2: Advance the progress of learners at risk of educational disadvantage and learners with special educational needs in order to support them to achieve their potential				
Action/Subaction		Actions/subactions for Quarter 3	Achieved/Not achieved	Comment
16		Implement the DEIS Plan in order to close the gap in performance between DEIS and non-DEIS schools, increase retention rates of DEIS students, and increase the progression rates of DEIS students into Higher Education and Further Education and Training		
	16.6	Publish review and recommendations of Out-of School report	Not achieved	Work is advanced on completing this action and the Review is scheduled for publication in Q4.
20		Progress development of guidelines for management of crisis student behaviour	Achieved	

Goal 3: Equip education and training providers with the skills and support to provide a quality learning experience				
Action/Subaction		Actions/subactions for Quarter 3	Achieved/Not achieved	Comment
31		Manage a programme of School Self-evaluation (SSE) Advisory visits to primary and post-primary schools		
	31.1	Publish SSE updates (for primary and post-primary schools) in order to promote the embedding of SSE in schools and to support the implementation of national strategies such as STEM, Modern Foreign Languages, and Digital Learning	Achieved	
	31.2	Review the model of SSE Advisory visits to primary and post-primary schools	Achieved	
37		Support the further enhancement of professional qualifications and standards within the ELC sector		

			Achieved/Not achieved	Comment
	37.2	Develop and finalise revised professional awards at levels 5 and 6 of the National Framework of Qualifications in ELC	Achieved	
39		**Manage the development of a comprehensive Workforce Development Plan in the ELC sector**		
	39.1	Consult on paper for consultation on high level workforce development plan framework	Achieved	
40		**Implement the Teacher Supply Action Plan**		
	40.2	Review and update the Teacher Supply Action Plan to ensure alignment of teacher supply and demand	Achieved	
	40.3	Launch a Teacher Recruitment Portal to assist schools in recruiting for all teacher vacancies, including substitutes	Achieved	
43		**Undertake a review of the Summer Courses for Teachers Scheme**		
	43.1	Following consultation and a tender process, commence the review of the Summer Courses for Teachers Scheme	Not achieved	Additional work on this project was flagged during the consultation process. This work will be undertaken and the action delivered in 2020.
46		**Provide dedicated professional support to teachers to support the implementation of curricular change and Department policy**		
	46.2	Develop a programme of CPD to support the introduction of the Primary Maths Curriculum	Achieved	
49		**Improve the impact of further education and training programmes and schemes**		
	49.2	Publish the Review of VTOS and Specific Skills Scheme	Not achieved	It is intended that the evaluation will be published later in Q4, following its finalisation.
	49.3	Publish the Impact Study of an Education and Training Board (ETB)	Not achieved	It is intended that the evaluation will be published later in Q4, following its finalisation.
50		**Strengthen quality of Tertiary Education**		
	50.3	Publish a review of the quality assurance system in Higher Education	Not achieved	A scope and terms of reference are being developed with a consultation document expected to be published in Q4.

Goal 4: Intensify the relationships between education and the wider community, society and the economy				
Action/Subaction		**Actions/subactions for Quarter 3**	**Achieved/Not achieved**	**Comment**

51		**Make progress towards increasing the diversity of school type in order to offer parents more choice**		
	51.4	Complete the Online Patronage Process system for primary schools being established in September 2019 and commence the patronage process for schools to be established in September 2020	Achieved	
53		**Introduce a stronger complaints procedure and charter for students and parents**		
	53.1	Publish, in conjunction with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (OPC), the Education (Student and Parent) Charter Bill	Achieved	
	53.2	Progress the Education (Student and Parent) Charter Bill	Achieved	
56		**Strengthen the apprenticeship and traineeship systems through enhancing the range of courses and increasing student places**		
	56.1	Introduce a new online marketplace for apprenticeship opportunities	Achieved	
58		**Ensure that the Higher and Further Education systems meet the skills needs of students, the economy, and society**		
	58.2	Publish "Entrepreneurship Education Policy Statement"	Not achieved	It is expected that the policy/guidelines will be published in early 2020
	58.3	Oversee development of, and annual calls for, Springboard+:	Achieved	
	58.4	Design a new pilot programme for first time upskilling SMEs	Achieved	
61		**Maintain and improve the quality of research in Higher Education**		
	61.1	Produce a report which assesses the degree of balance in the higher education research system in Ireland, considers how that impacts on skills needs and future research capability, and sets out a roadmap of measures, where appropriate, to develop and maintain an optimal research ecosystem.	Not achieved	The data collection phase of this project has been completed, and a high level steering group is being established to produce the report.
62		**Promote creativity in our learners through the implementation of the Creative Youth Plan**		
	62.3	Increase the number of schools participating in the Creative Schools initiative	Achieved	

Goal 5: Lead in the delivery of strategic direction and supportive systems in partnership with key stakeholders in education and training				
Action/Subaction		Actions/subactions for Quarter 3	Achieved/Not achieved	Comment
69		**Publish the third edition of "Terms & Conditions of Employment for Teachers in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools", a compilation of relevant circulars on each teachers employment conditions/entitlements and school managers/Principals in their staff management role**	Achieved	
73		**Work collaboratively with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform as part of the Spending Review process to further strengthen the evidence base regarding public expenditure on education and skills**	Achieved	
75		**Commence partial restoration of Capitation funding**	Achieved	
79		**Progress a work programme to enhance governance standards and accountability across aegis bodies through the implementation of a Periodic Critical Review (PCR) process and a rolling review process in aegis bodies**		
	79.2	Scope the requirements for a PCR process in line with DPER advice	Achieved	
81		**Engage with ETB Management and Staff to pursue a revised ETB organisational structure**		
	81.1	Attend and engage with the conciliation process which is scheduled to take place in the WRC	Achieved	
82		**Complete the second phase of the Schools Remediation Programme which follows initial structural assessments carried out in October and November 2018 at 42 schools**	Achieved	
84		**Implement the "National Development Plan 2018-2027" in respect of the primary and post-primary school sectors**		
	84.1	Progress further categories of work under the Summer Works Scheme	Achieved	
85		**Implement the National Development Plan 2018-2027 in respect of Higher Education and Further Education and Training**		
	85.1	Progress the Higher Education Strategic Infrastructure Fund to project confirmation stage, supporting expansion of capacity and key skills needs	Achieved	

88		**Improve the quality of services across the sector through the introduction of shared services**		
	88.4	Develop detailed mapping and analysis of the current payroll and related HRM processes in the Higher Education sector	Achieved	
89		**Exploit the potential of ICT to enhance the delivery of the State examinations**		
	89.1	Implement an enhanced timeline for the Leaving Certificate appeals system, including through the greater use of technology in exam marking	Achieved	
	89.2	Implement online marking of examinations in an expanded range of subjects	Achieved	
91		**Provide greater strategic direction in the Department's governance, management and use of data**		
	91.2	Develop a Data Governance Compliance programme (incorporating Data Protection compliance)	Achieved	
92		**Improve the interpretation and analysis of the department's data holding and the evidence base for planning purposes**		
	92.4	Publish a report titled "Education Indicators for Ireland" in order to provide a sound basis for evidence-informed policy making across the sector	Achieved	
	92.5	Develop a model to understand teacher supply and to predict demand for teachers at both primary and post-primary levels with a regional dimension if feasible	Achieved	