Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

CUMASÚ
Empowering through learning

END OF YEAR REVIEW

Action Plan for Education 2019

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

1.0   Background and Introduction

"Education and training matter to people. They provide a way to help people realise their full potential, to lead richer lives, and to help our society develop. They can be truly transformative, and I believe that this is reflected in the phrase "Cumasú"; we are empowering people through learning and helping them to achieve their full potential."

Joe McHugh, TD, Minister for Education and Skills

Following his appointment as Minister for Education and Skills in October 2018, Minister Joe McHugh consulted widely with stakeholders to identify what they saw as the main areas to include in a new Statement of Strategy for the Department of Education and Skills. As the guiding strategic framework for the sector, the Statement sets out a cohesive mission statement, values and high-level goals and sets the direction of service support and delivery for the medium term.

In recognising the power of education and training services to share knowledge and enrich lives, Minister McHugh was anxious to have an opportunity to listen to key stakeholders and to take a comprehensive look at progress made to date, to assess the pace and scale of change and measure how the Action Plan is delivering. A series of sectoral consultation events were held across the country, as well as an online general public consultation. The feedback received informed the development of CUMASÚ: Statement of Strategy 2019-2021 and the Action Plan for Education 2019.

Both documents marked a change in tone from the previous Statement of Strategy, which covered the period 2016-2019, and associated Action Plans. Responding to concerns around the pace and sequence of change, but conscious of the need to deliver improved quality and best learner outcomes, a new emphasis was placed on enabling people to achieve their potential.

The Action Plan model was retained, in recognition of its value in capturing whole of system reform, providing a high-level overview of the sector and allowing for informed scheduling. It allows us, as a Department and sector, to show exactly what we intend to deliver on an annual basis to support learners and the system and to contribute to wider Irish social and economic development.

The Action Plan for Education 2019 is one step in a cohesive and holistic approach to change in a complex and dynamic environment. It forms a bridge between the significant achievements of 2017 and 2018 and our ambitions into the future. The 2019 Plan set out time-bound actions to be achieved by the Department and sector under five key strategic goals, in response to the needs of learners, employers and society in the context of significant national and international change including Brexit, skills demands and demographics.

Each annual plan is designed to build on the success of the past and on the strengths of the education and training system. They are also designed to actively address areas of weakness and areas where there is room for improvement.

During 2019, 89% of actions scheduled for delivery were achieved or substantially achieved.

This end of year review of the Action Plan for Education 2019 is the first review under "Cumasú: Statement of Strategy 2019-2021". Quarterly progress reports have also been published and, along with this Review, are available on our website, www.education.ie.

Key strategies and initiatives

The foundation for the Action Plan approach is a reform programme designed to equip learners with the skills and knowledge that they need to achieve their potential and to participate fully in society and the economy. Our activity during 2019 was informed by our key strategies and initiatives, which seek to deliver improved learner outcomes and empower learners to achieve their potential. This range of integrated national education and training strategies provide high level strategic direction for the Action Plan framework and drive "whole of system" change across the continuum of education and training.

In 2019 work, including policy development, the review and the publication of action/implementation plans, was advanced under the following strategies and policies within the overall strategy framework for the sector:

1.	STEM Education Policy Statement 2017-2026
2.	Languages Connect, Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-2026
3.	National Strategy: Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020
4.	Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship in Ireland 2016-2020
5.	Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025
6.	Technology Skills 2022- Ireland's Third ICT Skills Action Plan
7.	Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020 Enhancing Teaching, Learning and Assessment
8.	Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022
9.	Irish Educated Globally Connected an International Education Strategy for Ireland, 2016-2020
10.	Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019
11.	National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030
12.	Framework for Junior Cycle
13.	"Education for Sustainability" National Strategy on Education for Sustainable development in Ireland 2014-2020
14.	20-Year Strategy for the Irish language 2010-2030
15.	Education and Training Sector Shared Services Plan 2017-2020
16.	DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) 2017
17.	Teacher Supply Action Plan
18.	National Síolta Aistear Initiative

19.	Strategy for Technology-Enhanced Learning in Further Education and Training 2016-2019
20.	Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018–2023
21.	National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2021
22.	School Inclusion Model

We also contributed to government-wide reform and strategy, through our work on Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures, the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020, National Broadband Plan, National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development 2014-2020, Action Plan for Online Safety, 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language, 2010- 2030, Creative Ireland's "Creative Youth" plan, Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness, Future Jobs Ireland, Realising Our Rural Potential: Action Plan for Rural Development, Climate Action Plan, Civil Service Renewal Plan, Our Public Service 2020, National Development Plan and Project Ireland 2040.

All of these initiatives advance the Government's broader reform agenda to ensure that cross-government provision of services and supports is delivered cohesively and to an optimal level.

Key enablers

Financial provision:

Our work is enabled chiefly through the Department's annual budget allocation. 2019 was the third year of a major reinvestment in education and training: there has been a €1.7bn (18.7%) increase over the period 2017-2019. The 2019 budget marked the then highest ever level of government expenditure on education and skills. The budget increased almost 7% on 2018, to stand at €10.8 billion overall, with the capital element of this amounting to €941 million.

Some of the main provisions in Budget 2019 included:

Additional posts in schools: Funding for over 1,300 additional posts in schools, including 950 additional SNA posts and 372 teaching posts to cater for growth in student population and additional special classes.

Increased School Funding: A 5% increase in capitation from September 2019. Over the course of the school year 2019/20, an additional €10 million was allocated to schools, of which €4 million was allocated in 2019.

€300m Human Capital Initiative: A major new Human Capital Initiative was established using the National Training Fund to allocate €300 million from the Fund's surplus, over the period 2020-2024, to meet the future skills needs of the economy and provide additional investment at levels 6-8 in higher education. This investment will underpin additional capacity across the higher education sector to meet the priority skill needs of enterprise, to drive regional jobs growth and development, and support key economic sectors in responding to the challenges of Brexit.

Focus on innovation and excellence: The School Excellence Fund, the Government's initiative to encourage and support local innovation, increased by 25% to over €2.5 million, allowing more schools to collaborate in clusters to experiment with novel solutions to common challenges.

Support for school leadership and wellbeing: Further investment was made to provide teaching principals in primary schools with one additional release day and four additional release days for those in schools with special classes. Provision was also made for 10 additional psychologists in the National Education Psychological Service to support wellbeing in schools.

Improving outcomes for children with additional care needs: Nearly €5 million was allocated to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Review of the SNA scheme, which was intended to support a new school inclusion model to deliver the right supports at the right time to students with additional care needs.

Building state of the art schools: Under Project Ireland 2040, we are delivering an ambitious school building programme, which supported the creation of up to 23,000 new and replacement school places in 2019. Over 45 large scale school projects reached substantial completion in 2019. €50 million was allocated to facilitate the further upgrade ICT infrastructure in all schools – a 67% increase on 2018 – in line with our ambition to embed computer science and coding across the curriculum.

Higher Education: Additional current funding of €57 million was invested in higher education initiatives in 2019, alongside €41 million in additional funding for pay deals and pensions in the sector. This funded the provision of 3,500 additional places, initiatives to support innovation and performance awards, teaching and learning capacity, 1,000 additional places on Springboard+, research funds for Institutes of Technology/TUs, part-time and flexible learning. There was a significant investment of €4.5 million for the provision of online and flexible learning in HEIs and a €5 million investment in additional teaching and learning supports for staff. There was also a strengthening of counselling services in higher education. Total funding in higher education was €337m higher in 2019 than in 2016 (current funding increase of €260m since 2016 and capital funding increase of €79m since 2016). Capital investment of €150 million was also allocated to the higher education, further education and training and research sectors in 2019.

Apprenticeships and Skills: Funding was made available to support 7,000 apprenticeship registrations, 5,000 traineeship enrolments and 11 new apprenticeship schemes, in line with our overall commitment to double the number of apprenticeships. There was also significant investment in workforce learning and development with €6 million additional funding for Skillnet Ireland and €11 million for employee skills development initiatives.

Public service pay: €122m was provided to implement the Public Services Pay and Stability Agreement, and the recent outcome of discussions on new entrant salary scales.

Reform of the National Training Fund: The NTF levy was scheduled to rise by 0.1% in 2019 and 2020 in order to fund investment in education and training relevant to the skills needs of the economy. An implementation plan for the independent review of the NTF was published, highlighting the commitment to reform of the Fund to ensure that it continues to be responsive to the world of work.

The breadth of this investment shows how education and training were funded to deliver across a range of learners, and intended to bring benefits to many sectors of society: individuals, communities and employers.

Progress on the legislative programme:

The Technological Universities Act, 2018 and the Education (Admission to Schools) Act, 2018 both allowed for significant developments in 2019.

The Technological Universities Act, 2018 provides for the development of a new Technological University model. Technological University Dublin (known as TU Dublin and comprising the former Dublin Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Blanchardstown and Institute of Technology Tallaght) became the first Technological University, formally coming into existence on January 1st, 2019.

Four other consortia of Institutes of Technology are currently engaged with the assessment process seeking to become designated as technological universities:

1. Munster Technological University (MTU), consisting of Cork and Tralee Institutes of Technology (which submitted an application for designation as a TU in 2019)
2. Technological University for South-East Ireland (TUSEI), consisting of Waterford and Carlow Institutes of Technology
3. Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA), consisting of Galway-Mayo, Sligo and Letterkenny Institutes of Technology
4. Athlone IT and Limerick IT

The Education (Admission to Schools) Act, 2018, is intended to achieve a more structured, fair and transparent decision-making process by schools regarding enrolment. A number of commenced sections of the Act had an immediate impact in 2019, including a ban on charging admission and enrolment fees, removing the role of religion in school admissions for virtually all primary schools, and providing for schools to be able to cooperate with each other in managing their admission processes. The Minister also required schools to open special classes for children with special educational needs where the National Council of Special Education deemed it necessary and local arrangements were not forthcoming. In this way, the Act provided for enhanced access to mainstream services for local children needing school places. Preparations were also made during the year for commencing further sections of the Act early in 2020.

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 was signed into law in July 2019. It will pave the way for the development of an International Education Mark as part of quality assurance of providers. It strengthens QQI's role as a regulator of quality in the English language education sector and strengthens the terms and conditions of employment in this sector. It establishes a new national Learner Protection Fund to ensure that students are allowed to finish their programmes of education and training in the event that their programme ceases prematurely. It also provides a new mechanism enabling higher education institutions to apply for authorisation to be called a university. Under this provision, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland has successfully applied for university status.

During 2019 work on both the Education (Parent and Student Charter) Bill to provide for a Student and Parent Charter in every school and the Retention of Certain Records Bill advanced substantively. Both Bills were published and made progress through the Houses of the Oireachtas. It is intended that they will be considered for the legislative programme of the new Government.

Advancing the Shared Services agenda:

The shared services agenda made significant progress in 2019. The Education Shared Business Services (ESBS) Centre was developed in readiness for the commencement of the Payroll Shared Service responsible for paying 27,000 ETB employees.

The phased implementation of Payroll Shared Service for ETBs began with the migration to the ESBS of the payroll functions of three ETBs in 2019.

In late 2019 work began on a new centralised managed payroll service in the ESBS to process payments for some 50,000 ETB apprentices and trainees on behalf of SOLAS and the ETBs.

Planning has also progressed for the phased implementation of Finance Shared Service for ETBs. eInvoicing services are already being provided to the ETB sector, including ETB schools, and were further developed in 2019.

Work was also undertaken in relation to the higher education sector. Detailed mapping and analysis of the current payroll and related HRM processes in the sector was completed and Trinity College operated as a pilot university site for transition payroll shared services. Based on this, an approved

business case was developed to inform an appropriate implementation plan to progress shared services within higher education institutions.

Building on work carried out in 2018, a preferred solution to upgrade the teachers' payroll function to shared service standards was developed, in order to better serve its 120,000 payees. This included peer review of the business case and procurement of technical expertise to design a payroll application.

In 2019, we continued to work with the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) to provide the education and training sector with a sector-wide procurement shared service, while remaining aligned to OGP regulations. This included advancing work to align and integrate procurement functions into a single shared procurement service for the sector.

Use of data:

We continued to improve the interpretation and analysis of our data, to improve evidence-based policy making and service delivery. In 2019, this included publishing the first ever set of sectoral indicators. This marks the first time that such verified data are publicly available for wider use and comparison, following an internal quality-proofing process. We also developed regional school enrolment projections and developed a model to understand teacher supply and to predict teacher demand.

In 2019, we continued our participation in the spending review process and engaged in three papers., The first of these, 'Monitoring Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes in Special Education Needs Provision', was a joint paper between DES and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The two other papers, 'School Transport Expenditure' and 'Review of Participation in and Costs of Apprenticeships' were led by DPER with collaboration from DES. The areas covered by the reviews represent well over a fifth of our current expenditure within the Department. The findings of these reviews are informing policy formulation and service delivery in these areas.

At the same time, we strengthened our approach to using data, to ensure proper guidance is available for staff. This included producing Corporate Data Governance and Data Management Frameworks setting out clear roles and responsibilities for using data, and developing a Data Governance Compliance programme and a Data Strategy for the Department.

Key Themes and Achievements

In 2019, we worked on enhancing learning outcomes. We did this by reviewing and revising curricula, increasing subject choice, better matching teacher demand and supply, supporting the responsible use of digital technology in teaching and learning, enhancing wellbeing and supporting access and inclusion for learners at risk of educational disadvantage. We supported the role of educators through further empowering teachers and leaders (including future leaders) through CPD and other targeted supports. We worked on enhancing links between education and communities, including enterprise, so that education is valued as a public good. Underlying all of this was a focus on putting in place the right systems to support service delivery across the sector, including advancing cross-government initiatives such as civil and public service reform programmes.

More specifically, our high level activity in 2019 can be grouped around the following themes:

Continuing with curricular review and reform, in order to equip learners with the most appropriate skills: subject changes (including exemptions) and new learning opportunities have been introduced, changes have been made to help relieve pressure on students who suffer a close bereavement during State exams, foreign language supports (the Foreign Language Assistants scheme) are being rolled out to more schools and there is increased uptake of the Erasmus+ programme.

Valuing the role of wellbeing for all learners: the National Educational Psychological Service has recruited additional psychologists to support learners and schools and delivered a range of resources to school communities, a consent framework for higher education institutions is now available, third-level students have greater housing certainty though the inclusion of student accommodation in rent-pressure zones regulations, there is increased use by teachers and young people of Webwise resources and supports and healthy eating and physical activity have been promoted.

Supporting learners at risk of educational disadvantage: the transition of children with a disability from pre-school to school is being supported and there are guidelines for schools to support successful transitions at key stages of education, the new School Inclusion Model is being trialled to provide the right supports at the right time to students with additional needs, the pilot of the In-School Therapy Demonstration Project was evaluated, additional funding provided 950 new special needs assistant (SNA) posts in schools and increased funding was made available for third-level student supports and access measures.

Supporting the delivery of a quality service for learners: several measures have been advanced to better match teacher demand and supply, a range of leadership supports and measures have been introduced across the sector, reforms of initial teacher education have continued, CPD has been delivered for educators at early years, primary and post-primary levels including more than 330 places made available for professional development programmes in special education, a series of inspection reports and guides for schools have been published and a new research and innovation fund for institutes of technology (IoTs) and technological universities (TUs) was introduced.

Strengthening the relationships between the education and training sector and local communities and wider society: redevelopment of the tertiary sector continued, with the establishment of the first TU (TU Dublin), provision for up to 9,000 places on a broad range of Springboard+ courses, the expansion of apprenticeship provision, continued support for the Regional Skills Fora, expanded lifelong learning provision (including through Skillnet Ireland), allocated €14.25m to TU and other landscape restructuring projects, progressed implementation of priority actions in the Indecon Career Guidance Review, the "ICT Skills Action Plan 2019-2022" was published, the Education (Student and Parent) Charter Bill, which supports the role of learners and parents in education, was published, we consulted with our partners on aspects of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and to revise the Governance Manual for Primary School 2015 - 2019 and we funded the expansion of measures supporting creativity in young people under Creative Youth.

Having the right support systems in place to help the sector deliver services: capital investment across the sector continued, with sites acquired to meet demand for new schools, the roll out of the "Energy Efficiency Upgrade Pilot Programme for Schools", the provision of funding for major capital projects in higher education and the integration of climate action priorities into higher education infrastructure redevelopment, evidence-informed policy formation was supported with the publication of the sector-wide "Education Indicators for Ireland" and the development of regional projections of school enrolments, data governance within the Department and governance across agencies, aegis bodies and support services was strengthened, shared services across the sector continued to be rolled out, a framework for an integrated strategic approach to tertiary education was developed and regulation of the sector was strengthened with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019.

Section 4: Progress in 2019 towards the achievement of the five strategic goals

1.0   GOAL 1: Improve the learning experience and the success of learners

Goal 1 is about building learning environments for all learners that promote health, wellbeing and personal development. Positive, agile and responsive environments provide opportunities for all learners to fully participate in, and get maximum benefit from, their education and training experience. Development and review of curriculum and assessment, enabling transitions and embracing the power of digital technologies across the continuum of education and training are key to better outcomes for learners, society and the economy.

As a result of successful achievement of the actions associated with this goal, participation rates, retention rates and the performance of Irish students at all levels of the system should be ranked amongst the best in Europe.

In line with demographics, the numbers in full-time education (excluding pre-school) have risen to stand at 1,171,283 overall (2017, the latest year for which figures are available). Our retention rates have also improved over the years, so that more students are completing their schooling. The number sitting the Leaving Certificate has risen from 90.6% of the eligible cohort (2014) to 91.5% (2018, the latest year for which figures are available).

The OECD's 2018 PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) results, which were released in 2019, showed that our 15 year-olds are among the best in reading literacy and are performing significantly higher than the OECD average in maths and science. Whilst the maths and science results are relatively stable and at an above average level, we can improve further. Critical thinking skills are being emphasised under the Framework for Junior Cycle and it is expected that these changes will help young people to see how they can apply their knowledge in a real world context.

The comprehensive higher education Graduate Outcomes Survey: Class of 2017 report (published in 2019), showed that a total of 78% of graduates were working or due to start work and 14% were engaged in further studies. The findings of the report are helping to shape evaluation and the promotion of excellence in HE, to improve outcomes for learners.

During 2019, we continued to focus on **Wellbeing**, piloting a new school inclusion model integrating pupil centred services, evaluating the pilot of the In-School Therapy Demonstration Project and continuing to expand the number of NEPS psychologists who support implementation of the Wellbeing Policy and Framework for Practice 2018 – 2023. In higher education we drafted a consent framework for deployment by higher education institutions and supported the implementation of legislation providing for rent predictability measures in purpose-built third-level student accommodation.

We continued with our programme of **curricular reform and increasing subject choice.** We continued the development of the **primary curriculum,** publishing a report on coding and computational thinking in the primary curriculum. This identified three aspects of digital competence—creating with technology, understanding technology, and using technology—as fundamental to the inclusion of coding and computational thinking in a curriculum and charted short-term and long-term steps to achieve inclusion.

At **junior cycle** we scoped a longitudinal study of the impact of the changes made as a result of the introduction of the Framework for Junior Cycle, published a review of the optional nature of History under the new Framework and introduced the final phase of new junior cycle specifications, covering technology subjects, religious education, Jewish studies and classics.

At **senior cycle** we continued to revise Leaving Certificate subject specifications. In 2019, this involved commencing a review of Biology, Chemistry and Physics, to include a new course work assessment component, and advancing the work of subject development groups in Gaeilge, Mandarin Chinese for non-native speakers and Polish, Lithuanian and Portuguese for heritage speakers. We also completed an advisory report on the review of Senior Cycle, which set out the main themes, ideas and perspectives emerging from the review.

Significant changes to the process of Leaving Certificate exams included providing special arrangements for students who suffer a close family bereavement to sit alternative papers in July and reducing the timeframe for receiving results.

In the area of **critical skills development** we took action to build momentum behind our ambition for STEM, foreign languages, closing the gap in literacy and numeracy, and adopting the transformation of learning made possible by digital technology. In 2019, we began a longitudinal study of the Digital Learning Framework and its implementation in schools, produced recommendations for the provision of ICT technical support in schools and supported the Schools Excellence Fund–Digital and STEM. Implementation of the "STEM Education Policy Statement 2017 - 2026" progressed, a work plan to integrate arts education into all STEM learning experiences and a framework in relation to STEM partnerships between Business/Industry and Schools were developed, and we sought to increase participation levels in STEM subjects through an advertising campaign aimed at learners, teachers, school leaders and parents.

Under "Technology Skills 2022: Ireland's Third ICT Skills Action Plan" (published in February 2019), we're working with industry and the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation to deliver 47,000 IT Graduates by 2022 and to provide appropriate education and training pathways for people to train, learn and upskill in a variety of high-level ICT skills which are sought after by a diverse range of industries. By working to meet Ireland's needs for graduates skilled in computing and electronic and electrical engineering, we can support and drive economic performance over the coming years.

In November 2019, the Human Capital Initiative was launched, representing an investment of €300m, over 5 years 2020-2024 (€60m per year). The initiative aims to provide additional capacity across the Higher Education Sector to meet priority skill needs for enterprise. It will form a key part of the country's strategic response to addressing the skills needs of the economy, mitigating Brexit risks, responding to digitalisation and the future world of work, and preparing Ireland for other challenges that the economy may face. In December 2019, Government investment of €24 million in Pillar 2 of the HCI created over 3,000 new places on 138 full-time undergraduate courses in 22 public and private higher education institutions to commence in autumn 2020 and 2021. Two further calls will take place in 2020.

 Work to **improve proficiency in, and increase the diversity of take-up of, languages**, in order to provide greater opportunities to learners and meet skills needs continued throughout 2019. "Languages Connect: Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017 – 2026" published late in 2017 builds on the bilingualism developed through learning Irish and English at primary level, and aims to improve language proficiency, diversify and increase the uptake of languages, increase awareness of the importance of language learning, and enhance employer engagement in the development and use of trade languages. In 2019, the number of post-primary schools participating in the Foreign Language Assistants scheme increased, as did participation on the Erasmus+ programme. In relation to Irish specifically, we provided guidance for naíonraí and schools, to support immersive education and linkages between levels of education and a pilot Transition Year module delivered Irish language higher-level Leaving Certificate Physics from e-Hub Gaeltacht schools to students in other post-primary Gaeltacht schools

Key indicators of progress and success for Goal 1 in 2019[1]

Policy area	Indicator	Measure
Wellbeing	Number of dedicated days for support and development activities in schools by NEPS psychologists	5,285 (2018)
The provision, take up of and success of post primary students in STEM subjects	% LC students achieving H4 or above in higher level maths	56.8% (2018)
	% LC students achieving O4 or above in ordinary level maths	56.1% (2018)
	% boys' schools offering a STEM subject other than maths or a science	96.0% (2018)
	% girls' schools offering a STEM subject other than maths or a science	56.1% (2018)
	% mixed schools offering a STEM subject other than maths or a science	93.1% (2018)
	% 6th year boys taking 2 or more STEM subjects (excl maths and biology)	40.0% (2018)
	% 6th year girls taking 2 or more STEM subjects (excl maths and biology)	8.0% (2018)
The provision, take up and success of post primary students in foreign languages	% LC students achieving grade H4 or above in any foreign language	31.5% (2018)
	% post-primary schools offering at least two foreign languages	74.1% (2018)
	% 6th year boys studying at least one foreign language	69.0% (2018)
	% 6th year girls studying at least one foreign language	86.5% (2018)
Retention rates to Leaving Certificate	% of Students sitting Leaving Cert	91.6% (2017)

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[1] In October 2019, the first set of sectoral indicators were published by the Department: "Education Indicators for Ireland" Report Updated reports will be published at intervals, with the figures in the 2019 report providing the baseline for measuring progress and success.

2.0   GOAL 2: Improve the progress of learners at risk of educational disadvantage or learners with special educational needs.

Inclusive education is a fundamental principle of our education and training system. Education and training are key to breaking the cycle of disadvantage. Ireland has had measures in place to support the diverse needs of students of all ages for many years. While considerable progress in advancing equity and equality of opportunity has been made, significant challenges remain if we are to ensure that children and young people from different backgrounds and needs are adequately supported so that they can experience success in the education system.

Actions under Goal 2 have been designed to improve the educational outcomes of learners at risk of educational disadvantage or learners with special educational needs. **As a result of successful achievement of the actions associated with this goal the profile of learners progressing through the education system should become more representative of the population in general.**

Good progress towards the achievement of this goal was made during 2019 with the most recent review of DEIS showing real improvements in terms of educational outcomes and in the progression through school for students involved. In particular, the latest evaluation of DEIS published by the ERC and focussed on post-primary level, indicated a continued reduction in differences in student achievement and attainment in DEIS and non-DEIS schools over time. Significant positive trends in achievement (overall Junior Cycle performance, performance in Junior Cycle English and maths) were identified across all schools between 2002 and 2017. Significant positive trends over time in attainment were identified in all schools in retention levels to Junior and Leaving Certificate of students in the entry cohorts from 1995 to 2011 (the most recent cohort for which data are available). Since the introduction of DEIS in 2006/2007, there have been reductions in the proportion of students in DEIS schools sitting foundation level English and maths, and increases in the proportion sitting these subjects at higher level.

In 2019 we supported **learners at risk of disadvantage** and worked to **increase inclusion** through the further expansion of the DEIS strand of the Schools Excellence Fund; worked with partners to improve Traveller engagement with education in the context of the "National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy", and developed guidelines for schools to support successful transitions at the key stages of pre-school to primary and primary to post-primary school.

We reviewed the allocation of special education teachers to schools by ensuring that data are available and there is engagement with the sector so that school profiles were updated to enable new allocations to be made for the 2019/20 school year. A total of 950 new special needs assistant posts were made available for 2019/20, bringing the total number of SNAs supporting and working with children in schools to approximately 15,950 - a record level of investment. This means that approximately 37,500 pupils with additional care needs are being supported by SNAs in the current school year. We completed an evaluation of the pilot of the In-School Therapy Demonstration Project.

We also progressed policy advice on special classes and special schools and the development of guidelines for managing crisis student behaviour.

We developed further the measure to improve **access to higher education** for under-represented groups. The "Action Plan to Promote Traveller Participation in Higher Education", developed in consultation with Traveller representative groups to support and advance their participation in higher education, was launched and we led the interdepartmental implementation of the recommendations of "An Independent Review to Identify the Supports and Barriers for Lone Parents in Accessing Higher

Education". A new undergraduate programme in DCU, which enables deaf and hard of hearing people who use Irish Sign Language (ISL) to enter primary teaching, was launched. Further financial supports were delivered through a €1 million increase in the Student Assistance Fund for Professional Master of Education students, the continuation of the Pilot Student Support Scheme, a grant support scheme for asylum seekers in third level education, and several improvements made to the 2019/20 Student Grant Scheme in order to benefit some of the most disadvantaged students.

Fostering **inclusion in further education and training** has been a key priority since the publication of the first FET Strategy in 2014. Through the Strategic Dialogue Performance Agreements process, SOLAS, working closely with the Department, has established multi-annual strategic performance agreements with the 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs). These agreements, launched in 2018 and covered their first full year in 2019, place a clear emphasis on inclusion. In terms of promoting equity, one of the most significant features of these new agreements is the setting of quantitative targets for inclusion, which are derived from a combination of specifically identified local needs and Government strategies and action plans, as well as the relevant EU strategies and policies.

2.1   Key indicators of progress and success for Goal 2 in 2019

Policy area	Indicator	Measure
Retention rate differences between DEIS and non-DEIS schools	% gap in retention rates in post-primary DEIS and non-DEIS schools	8.7% difference (2018): 94.4% retention in non-DEIS schools and 84.7% retention in DEIS schools
Retention rate differences between DEIS and non-DEIS schools	% gap in senior cycle retention rates in post-primary DEIS and non-DEIS schools – started 5th year but did not sit Leaving Cert	6.1% difference (2018): 9.2% drop out rate in DEIS schools and 3.1% drop out rate in non-DEIS schools
Access to Higher Education by under- represented groups	% of new entrants to Higher Education that are people with a disability	10.6% (2017/18)
	% Mature entrants of total entrants in HE (full-time undergraduate)	8.4% (2017/18)
	% of 20 year olds in disadvantaged areas who are students (Census)	47.4% (Census 2016)
	Number HE students studying on flexible basis (part-time and remote), and that number as a percentage of total number of HE students	52,267 (based on 2017/18 and 2018/19 figures, provisional), 22.04% of total student numbers (provisional)
	Number of students receiving supports in the form of grants, and that number as a percentage of total number of HE students	66,774 (based on 2017/18 and 2018/19 figures, provisional), 36.11% of total student numbers (provisional)

	Number of (self-declared) Irish Travellers in HE	61 (2017/18)
Special Education Needs (SEN) Size and Capacity	Number of SNAs	15,950 (2019)
	Number of SETs in mainstream schools (WTEs)	13,530 (2018/19)
	Number of special schools	114 (2018/19)
	Total number of pupils in special classes	6,229 (primary, 2018/19) 2,136 (post-primary, 2018/19)
	Total number of pupils in special schools	7,728 (2018/19)

3.0 GOAL 3: Help those delivering education services to continuously improve

Quality of provision is the cornerstone to the success of the education and training system. We recognise the fundamental roles that leaders, teachers and support staff play and we seek to strengthen the system's capacity as a whole to continuously improve and to deliver the highest quality education and training services for learners. The quality of Ireland's education system is recognised internationally, but to be the best we need to continuously improve.

As a result of successful achievement of the actions associated with this goal leadership, management, quality frameworks, teaching methods, and initial and continuing training will be operating to the highest standards across the continuum of education and training provision. Innovation and excellence will be recognized and experiences shared and celebrated.

During 2019, we placed an emphasis on **providing for a quality system**. For schools, this was assured through the work of the Inspectorate. A range of different inspection models were developed and/or delivered throughout the year, with reports published so that they are publicly available. A national programme of early years inspections provided advice and supported progressive improvement in standards, leadership and learning activities within that sector. The first ever Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections began in primary and post-primary schools. They involve focused and in-depth inspections to look at how school boards and staff are fulfilling their legal responsibilities in relation to the protection and safeguarding of children as required under the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017. A new model of special educational needs inspections began in post-primary schools and school self-evaluation (SSE) updates were published 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. Reports were developed on an evaluation of special classes for pupils with autism in mainstream primary and post-primary schools and on digital learning in early years settings and schools. To assist educators, guides were developed on good practice in modern foreign languages (for post-primary schools) and in STEM (for early-years settings and schools).

During 2019, we worked to **strengthen quality at tertiary level.** The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 was signed into law in July 2019. It will pave the way for the development of an International Education Mark as part of quality assurance of providers. It strengthens QQI's role as a regulator of quality in the English language education sector, including the provision of measures to facilitate the introduction of the International Education Mark (IEM), a core component of the Government's policy for the English language education sector, and to strengthen the terms and conditions of employment in this sector. It establishes a new national Learner Protection Fund to ensure that students are allowed to finish their programmes of education and training in the event that their programme ceases prematurely. It also provides a new mechanism enabling higher education institutions to apply for authorisation to be called a university. Under this provision, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland has successfully applied for university status.

Work also commenced on updating the Higher Education Act, 1971. The updated legislation is intended to provide the HEA with any necessary authority in relation to revised functions, governance and other related matters which more fully reflect its current central role and responsibilities in relation to higher education. The development of a revised legislative framework also provides an opportunity to examine changing and/or expanding the role of the HEA in the future and addressing other areas within higher education which may need a clearer statutory

underpinning.

A report on the extensive consultation process (which took place over 2018 and 2019) was published in 2019, as well as an outline of the legislative proposals for the reform of the Higher Education Act, 1971. The views of stakeholders on the consultation report and the legislative proposals were sought to inform the development of a General Scheme of a Bill to replace the Higher Education Authority Act, 1971.

We published a Review of the Youthreach programme and announced the approval of 20 posts at professorial-level under the Senior Academic Leadership Initiative which aims to help achieve gender balance at the senior academic level in higher education institutions.

We continued to **professionalise the early years sector**, through introducing a new model for delivering mentoring and training supports under the National Síolta Aistear Initiative; professional award criteria and guidelines for initial professional education degree programmes for the sector were launched; a new Aistear CPD programme was rolled out; and a self-evaluation framework was developed.

Recognising the difficulties some schools are experiencing in **recruiting teachers**, we continued to deliver the Teacher Supply Action Plan. We progressed the development of a Teacher Workforce Data Model to facilitate future planning for teacher demand and supply. In a new initiative to provide more certainty for primary schools experiencing staffing shortages, six substitute teacher panels for schools in urban and rural areas were announced, with up to 90 schools targeted in the pilot scheme. A new scheme for post-primary schools was announced, which will allow schools to share teachers in priority subjects. A bridging programme was established to increase the participation of immigrant internationally educated teachers in schools and a teacher recruitment portal was launched to assist schools in recruiting for all teacher vacancies, including substitutes.

We also continued to **reform initial teacher education** (ITE) to ensure that teachers are equipped with the right skills for 21st century teaching, learning and assessment. This included reviewing the reconfigured programmes in ITE, developing proposals for revised accreditation criteria and guidelines for ITE programme providers, reviewing school placements in ITE, with a particular focus on school/HEI partnerships and the capacity of schools to support placements, and supporting the growth phase of "Droichead", the national induction process for all newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in collaboration with the Teaching Council. The publication of a review into teacher education, "The Structure of Teacher Education in Ireland: Review of Progress in Implementing Reform", shows constructive engagement by the centres for teacher education with the HEA on progressing the programme of change in this area.

Qualified teachers were supported during their careers through **continuing professional development** (CPD) opportunities. This included the provision of CPD to support the ongoing implementation of the Primary Language Curriculum, the implementation of junior cycle reform across all new subject specifications and new senior cycle examinable subjects (Computer Science, Politics & Society and Physical Education). We also implemented the agreed Framework for STEM professional development programmes and teaching and learning resources in the development of new STEM CPD and developed a CPD programme to support the introduction of the Primary Maths Curriculum.

School leaders were supported through several targeted measures, including beginning an 18 month cluster programme "Excellence through Collaborative Leadership and Management Scheme", introducing team coaching for school leadership teams and developing a quality assurance

framework for school leadership support.

2019 saw progress in **professional development in further education and training**. In conjunction with ETBI and ETBs, SOLAS developed, piloted and mainstreamed national professional development initiatives in critical areas for the sector, including technology enhanced learning, leadership and management, enterprise engagement and quality assurance. A national planning and budget allocation process has been put in place for FET professional development and a professional development framework was created to identify the development needs of FET learning practitioners, managers and support staff. This framework provides a basis for sourcing and creating targeted initiatives to enhance practitioner confidence and capability to deliver flexible and high-quality FET provision.

3.2 Key indicators of progress and success for Goal 3 in 2019

Policy area	Indicator	Measure
Early Years Inspections	Number of inspections of ELC centres	691 (2018)
Inspections in primary and post-primary schools	Number of inspections in primary schools including probation	3,566 (2018)
	Number of inspections in post-primary schools	608 (2018)
Other inspections including School Self Evaluations (SSE)	Number of advisory visits	1,473 (2018)
Publication of inspection reports	Number of EYEI reports published	813 (2019)
	Number of primary and post-primary inspection reports published	996 (2019)
CPD provision	Number of primary schools receiving support from the PDST	1,931 (2018)
	Number of post-primary schools receiving support from the PDST	416 (2018)

4.0   GOAL 4: Build stronger bridges between Education and the wider community.

Schools, education and training institutions and providers are at the heart of their communities. Goal 4 is about building strong linkages, creating clusters and sharing good practice to achieve better outcomes and benefits for everyone involved. Our education service must be able to respond to the changing needs, choices and expectations of our changing global context. Successful enterprise engagement is key to driving the growth of traineeships and apprenticeships, ensuring the relevance of work placements and work-based projects and increasing the diversity of opportunity in learning beyond school.

Research, development and innovation are seen as critical to Ireland's economic and social development in the years ahead. We want to attract talent from around the world to our education institutions, engage in world-class research and collaborations and we want to ensure quality standards and best international practice for learners in Ireland.

As a result of successful achievement of the actions associated with this goal there will be stronger linkages between education and the wider community particularly parents, employers and the international community to the benefit of learners, society and the economy. There will be increased choice of school type and parents and students will have a stronger voice in the system. There will be stronger links with industry resulting in an enhanced talent base and learners will be equipped to meet skills gaps in critical areas. Our higher education institutions will be attracting talent from around the world and will be engaged in world-class research.

In 2019, we worked to **increase the diversity of school type** and offer parents a greater voice in choosing new patrons. We completed the Online Patronage Process system for primary schools being established in September 2019, commenced the patronage process for schools being established in September 2020 and explored opportunities for expanding Irish-medium education outside the Gaeltacht. Five new primary schools being established between 2020-2022 have been designated for Irish-medium education.

Recognising the **importance of creativity**, we sought to support this through implementing the Creative Youth Plan. Supported by an additional €6m in funding, this involved beginning the rollout of pilot Local Creative Youth Partnerships, the establishment of new Music Education Partnerships as part of the national expansion of Music Generation, increasing the number of schools participating in the Creative Schools Initiative, announcing details of the additional 227 schools that will have increased access to creative activities and launching Arts and Culture in Education Research Repository– an archive to preserve arts in education content and showcase the work of creative organisations in Ireland.

Engaging with key partners remained important in 2019, and we consulted with them on the detail of regulations required to commence certain sections of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and to revise the Governance Manual for Primary School 2015 – 2019, in line with the change of Boards of Management of primary schools in 2019.

We worked to **strengthen linkages with society and employers** across several areas of activity in 2019. Learners were supported with the publication of an independent review of career guidance and the implementation of priority actions in the review. A new suite of courses under Springboard+ 2019 was launched, bringing the number of courses under the programme to 285 and the number of places available to over 9,000. Options for learners continued to expand, with the creation of the first ever technological university- Technological University Dublin. It emphasises programmes at Levels 6 (higher and advance certificates) up to Level 8 (honours bachelor degree) on the National Framework of Qualifications, and on industry focused research. Its regional development mission and focus on research, innovation and knowledge-transfer will enable it to forge close links with business, enterprise and local and regional communities.

The publication of the ICT Skills Action Plan 2019-2022 provides strategic direction for the design and provision of services in this important area.

Within further education and training, we continued to **grow apprenticeship and traineeship registrations** to meet identified skill needs. Eleven new apprenticeship programmes were launched in 2019 in a diverse range of areas including Media, ICT, Engineering, Construction and Sales. We developed new programmes and expanded participation in existing programmes, with a strong focus on growing employer engagement in the sector. A new online marketplace helped to highlight apprenticeship opportunities.

We worked to **support and promote lifelong learning and upskilling** by expanding the EXPLORE programme, which helps to address the issue of Ireland's low level of participation in lifelong learning amongst the workforce, implementing the "Skills to Advance" programme enhancing the skills of adults currently with low skills levels, and supporting implementation of "Upskilling Pathways – New Opportunities for Adults", an EU Initiative to help low skilled adults acquire basic levels of literacy, numeracy and digital skills.

Skillnet Ireland's provision was expanded in key skill areas, including the establishment of new learning networks to provide training to small business owner managers and develop new certified programmes. The Regional Skills Fora and the "Skills for Growth" initiative were supported by the development of new partnerships to make it easier for more employers to identify their future skill needs, and a new pilot programme was designed for first time upskilling SMEs.

We **maintained a global focus** throughout 2019 by successfully continuing to work on achieving the actions and targets in the "International Education Strategy 2016 – 2020". We received 30 high-level international education visits from partner countries such China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, the UAE and Vietnam. These visits allowed us to learn about the challenges that other education systems are encountering and the policies that they are currently developing to overcome these challenges. We led delegations of higher education institutions to 16 locations, such as China, the UAE, Finland, South Korea, Japan, Russia and the USA and, under the Government of Ireland International Academic Mobility Programme, we awarded grants to the value of €500,000 to fund mobilities to build academic collaboration with global partner institutions. We also, in partnership with Irish higher education institutions, provided funding for 60 international students to study in Ireland under the Government of Ireland Scholarship Scheme.

Reflecting increasing interest in the broad area of climate change, we reported on the education sector's actions outlined in Ireland's first Climate Action Plan and National Sustainable Development Goals Implementation Plan 2018-2020. These actions will inform the development of a successor to the Department's National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to 2030.

4.1 Key indicators of progress and success for Goal 4 in 2019

Policy area	Indicator	Measure
Catholic ethos schools	% of total school enrolment in Catholic ethos primary schools	89.9% (2019)
	% of total school enrolment in Catholic ethos post-primary schools	50.5% (2019)
Irish Medium schools	% of total school enrolment in Irish medium primary schools	8% (2019)

	% of total school enrolment in Irish medium post-primary schools	3.6% (2019)
Number of multi denominational schools	Number of multi/non denominational primary schools	150 (2019)
	Number of multi/non denominational post-primary schools	352 (2019)
Alternative Leaving Certificate pathways	% Students taking Leaving Cert Applied	4.9% (2018)
	% Students taking Leaving Cert Vocational Programme	26.1% (2018)
Number of early school leavers post-primary	% of early school leavers – started 5th year but did not sit Leaving Cert	2,433 (2017)
Transition rates from post-primary to Higher Education	% transitioning from post-primary to higher education	64.0% (2017)
Skills, upskilling and re-skilling	Number of Springboard+ places	9,000 (2019)
	Number of Skillnet learners	56,182 (2018)
	FET enrolments at NFQ levels 1-4	71,364 (2018)
	FET enrolments at NFQ level 5	37,354 (2018)
	FET enrolments at NFQ level 6	8,358 (2018)
	Total graduates Major, Minor and Special Purpose	211,320 (2018)
Research	Total number of postgraduate researchers (full-time, part-time, Masters and PhD)	10,015 (2017)
	Number of PhD full-time and part-time	8,513 (2017)
	Number of research masters full-time and part-time	1,502 (2017)
Apprenticeship	Total number of apprenticeship registrations	17,829 (2019)
Lifelong Learning	% of adults aged 25-64 who participated in formal and or non-formal learning, annual average (Eurostat)	12.5% (2018)
	Persons age 25-34 who achieved an award on the NFQ- any level	57,034 (2017)
	Persons age 35-44 who achieved an award on the NFQ- any level	45,691 (2017)
	Persons age 45-54 who achieved an award on the NFQ- any level	32,804 (2017)
	Persons age 55-64 who achieved an award on the NFQ- any level	16,751 (2017)

	Persons age 65+ who achieved an award on the NFQ-any level	2,982 (2017)
International students	International students a % of full-time HE students in Irish public and private higher education institutions	12.5% (2017)
	Number of higher education students from Ireland funded to participate in Erasmus+	4,900
	Number of English language students studying in Ireland	121,462 (2018)

5.0   GOAL 5: Improve national planning and support services

The Department and its agencies have an important role in providing strategic leadership, developing policy and delivering services. This involves co-ordination with sectoral stakeholders, the broader public sector, the political system and other governmental bodies and cross sectoral work programmes. The remit of the Department encompasses early years education, primary and second level education, further education and training and higher education, including supports for research and international education.

As a result of successful achievement of the actions associated with this goal the Department and its agencies will be working in partnership and consultation to create the right structures, develop the right policies, use the right funding instruments, provide the right service supports and deliver effectively and efficiently.

Good progress has been made towards the achievement of this goal in 2019. We delivered a wide range of actions to **support infrastructure needs across the sector**, under Project Ireland 2040. We continued to implement the "National Development Plan 2018-2027" in respect of schools, HE and FET. For schools, this included continuing the site acquisition programme, addressing the demand for new school buildings and substantial extensions, operating an emergency/contingency fund to address unanticipated infrastructure demands, starting an Energy Efficiency Upgrade Pilot Programme, progressing the Schools Remediation Programme to address structural defects in some rapid build projects and delivering new Summer Works and Minor Works Schemes.

Rollout of Project Ireland 2040 in the school sector has involved overall construction activity during 2018 and 2019 of 139 projects with an individual project value in excess of €1m. There were also 401 projects with a project value less than €1m under construction during this period. The completion of these 540 projects (139 and 401) is expected to deliver more than 40,000 permanent (additional and replacement) school places and replace circa 600 prefabs.

Within the HE and FET sectors, we commenced procurement under the PPP Programme to increase capacity in TUs/IoTs, advanced construction of Grangegorman PPP Projects, ensured that climate action priorities are integrated into the development of higher education infrastructure, supported expansion of capacity and key skills needs by progressing the Higher Education Strategic Infrastructure Fund, supported small-scale and necessary infrastructure works and improvements in IOTs and TU Dublin with €10 million in capital grants and provided further capital funding of more than €7.5 million for nine IoTs and TU Dublin to support the modernisation of craft apprenticeship equipment. Separately, to facilitate significant building upgrades and refurbishment works, a capital allocation of €18.75 million was approved for Cork Institute of Technology.

A critical enabler of education and training services is having the **right financial and systems structures** in place. In 2019, supported by a €10.9 billion budget (€941 million of which was for capital expenditure), we carried out a range of priority actions. They included introducing a standardised financial statement template for education centres which is in accordance with financial reporting standards, providing payroll and pension services to 125,000 payees, providing €383 million in school capitation funding, reviewing the post-primary school transport system with reference to the growth in concessionary passenger numbers, and engaging with ETB management and staff to pursue a revised ETB organisational structure. We also expanded online marking of State exams and delivered an enhanced timeline for Leaving Certificate appeals.

Continuing reform of the **higher education funding** model, we developed the Higher Education Performance Fund and implemented new funds for leadership and capacity building in HEIs, for teaching and learning capacity building in HEIs and for research and innovation in IoTs and TUs. We established a TU Research Network to develop a future funding framework for the TU sector. The European Commission is currently reviewing policy options for overall higher education funding and

following that work, we will review the Free Fees Scheme in HE. Overall, the higher education landscape was developed through the allocation in 2019 of a €90m Technological University Transformative Fund. We also announced the €300 million Human Capital Initiative and Future Jobs Ireland Skills and Talent Pillar, to support universities, colleges and institutes of technology to develop new courses and drive innovation for the period 2020-2024.

The **role of employers** in feeding into the provision of education and training services was formalised through a structured process to secure their input on key expenditure decisions related to the National Training Fund.

We further advanced work on **shared services and centralised procurement** to strengthen management systems across a range of services in the Department and sector. In a significant step, we began operation of a payroll shared service for ETBs and progressed plans for the phased implementation of a finance shared service for ETBs. Work was advanced in relation to higher education, with a detailed mapping and analysis of current payroll and related HRM processes in the sector and the development of an implementation plan to progress shared services within it. We also focussed on internal services, with a preferred solution developed to upgrade the Department's payroll function to shared service standards. Delivering on this will mean a more efficient and effective service for the thousands of teachers and retired teachers who receive payments through this system. With a view to further supporting public procurement in the sector work to align and integrate procurement functions into a single shared procurement service was advanced in 2019 for completion in 2020.

To **enhance governance** across the education sector, we delivered a range of measures. These included developing a framework for an integrated strategic approach to tertiary education, reporting on the findings of rolling reviews in aegis bodies and developing lessons learnt from these, working to align Department funded support services with the Education Centre Governance Framework, and publishing the terms and conditions of employment for teachers and SNAs to support staff and school leaders.

We improved the **interpretation and analysis of our data holding and the evidence base for planning purposes.** This included publishing county-based preliminary enrolments and the sector-wide "Education Indicators for Ireland", and developing regional enrolment projections and a model to understand teacher supply and demand. We also worked collaboratively with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to further strengthen the evidence base regarding public expenditure on education and skills.

Following on from the introduction in 2018 of the **General Data Protection Regulation** (GDPR), a key focus in 2019 was on ensuring GDPR compliance. We strengthened the governance and management of the Department's data resources by developing Corporate Data Governance and Data Management Frameworks, a Data Strategy and a Data Governance Compliance programme.

We continued to respond to the potential impact of Brexit on the sector and oversaw, with partners, the implementation of the "Shared Education" objective under the EU PEACE IV Programme (2014-2020) in the target region of Northern Ireland and the six border counties.

5.1   Key indicators of progress and success for Goal 5 in 2019

Policy area	Indicator	Measure

Capacity and routes for School Transport	Number of school transport routes	6,856 (2018)
	Number of mainstream pupils on school transport	104,704 (2018)
	Number of SEN pupils on school transport	12,751 (2018)
Number of schools	Number of primary schools	3,240 (2019)
	Number of post-primary schools	723 (2019)
Number of FET and HE providers	Number of QQI registered FET providers	365 (2018)
	Number of third level Institutions and colleges funded by the HEA	18 (2018)
	Number of third level Universities funded by the HEA	7 (2018)
Capital Programme	Number of additional permanent places (primary)	6,718 (2019)
	Number of additional permanent places (post-primary)	4,287 (2019)
	FET, HE	10 projects in construction, of which 2 were completed (2019)