Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

CUMASÚ
Empowering through learning

Action Plan for Education 2019

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

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Cumasú

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Minister's Foreword

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.

This means that we are using education and training services in a flexible, adaptive and innovative way, so as to prepare people for the future. We are building on our progress and looking at what we need to do next, in order to serve the best needs of learners and society, and linking in with other national initiatives such as "Future Jobs Ireland".

Approximately one out of every four people across the country can be classed as a student, which gives us an idea of the relevance of education in peoples' lives and on the national agenda. It matters to people and this is reflected in the level of investment placed in learners by the Government. This year, the education budget is €10.8 billion; the third year of a major reinvestment in the sector, and the highest ever level of Government expenditure on education and skills. This highlights the Government's strong belief in, and commitment to, the power of education.

Of course, with such levels of investment, we are committed to transparency, evaluation and measurement. Staff in the Department are fully committed to this, and the Action Plan for Education framework gives a comprehensive picture of how we will be investing the budget over the course of the year. But more importantly, it gives a clear view of the range of activity and reform going on right across the education and training sector, affecting all learners. It allows us to measure different areas to see where we are making solid progress but, equally importantly, those areas where we need to focus our efforts. If we are to ensure that education truly empowers people, then we need to be ambitious about what we can achieve.

From early times, we have been recognised as a nation of scholars and it is important that we recognise our past and learn from it. Education serves as a crucial gateway to the past, with education leaders serving as custodians of our heritage, culture and language, and enabling more creative ways (through digital technology) to bring our rich history to life. It's very true to say that "ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine"- we live in each other's shadows.

Central to all our work and deliberations must be how we treat each other and a recognition of the importance of the wellbeing of all those dealing with our education and training services. It is quite evident that, now more than ever, dignity and respect must be at the heart of our education system.

Over the past few years, using the Action Plan framework, great progress has been made and I want to thank everyone who was involved. I see the education and training sector as a united one, where we engage in a common effort to nurture the next generation. Following extensive consultation with our partners, I am committed to continuing with the reforms underway, in a carefully managed and paced way. I want to ensure that there is a logical sequence to what's being implemented on the ground.

We must still challenge ourselves and be ambitious about what we can achieve. I believe that the Action Plan roadmap provide a fair balance. By following it in a unified way, we can make great progress in enhancing learners' potential and enabling them to thrive. We can improve our society, our environment and our global contributions. I'm enthusiastic about what we can achieve and I look forward to working together as we do this.

Joe Mc Hugh TD
Minister for Education and Skills

Forewords by Minister of State Halligan and Minister of State Mitchell O'Connor

I'm delighted to have the opportunity to highlight all of the work ongoing in the skills area. Over the course of 2019, we will be placing a particular focus on improving life-long learning, by looking at new and exciting ways to encourage people to upskill and engage with different options. Linked to that, we will be working to improve the impact of further education and training programmes and schemes, looking at research opportunities, working with the Regional Skills Fora and strengthening the apprenticeship and traineeship systems by enhancing the range of courses and increasing the number of student places.

These are just some of the measures that we will be working on this year, all with a view to making our education and training system more flexible, innovative and responsive over the entire course of a person's life. We are moving away from the traditional learning routes and adapting more to what is required in society today and into the future. This element of future proofing is important and the further education and training services offer a fantastic way to respond to these new opportunities. I look forward to continuing the already excellent engagement with all of the partners in this work, and to establishing new relationships as we deliver on these actions.

John Halligan TD
Minister of State for Training, Skills, Innovation and Research and Development

The higher education sector is undergoing a huge transformation at the moment, very much mirroring society at large. This is exactly as it should be: education services should reflect the societies they operate in, and offer a proper response for learners. During 2019, we will be building on existing access measures, for example, by developing an evidence base for access measures to increase the participation rates of under-represented groups. This is to ensure that students are more representative of the national population. Similarly, we will be working to improve gender balance amongst staff in higher education institutes. We will build on the successful establishment of Ireland's first Technological University, TU Dublin, by further developing this model, and reviewing and updating the overall strategic framework for higher education and further education and training.

Just as we are personally enriched in a connected, empathetic society, so the education landscape is better for having greater linkages. Learners are better served by these connections and so I am delighted that this is a priority focus for the higher education sector in particular during 2019. We will build on existing relationships and forge new ones as we increase our offerings for students.

Mary Mitchell O'Connor TD
Minister of State for Higher Education

Statement by the Secretary General

The 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 sits with the wider action plan framework, is driven by the goals and ambitions set out in our Statement of Strategy 2019-2021. Both documents represent the Department's commitment to interdepartmental and whole of Government reform programmes.

With the appointment of Minister McHugh to the Department, it was timely that we examined our use of the Action Plan framework model. We looked at how we used the model within the Department and across the sector, including in our work with agencies and other partners. We see the value that it adds to our oversight functions and the way it allows us to pace and sequence activities, whilst still making progress in delivering improved services.

This year, we have a new Statement of Strategy, which sets out our vision, mission, values and goals for the next three years. These are the foundations of the Action Plan, which remains our high level work programme for the year. The Plan provides a link between the range of reforms that we have already begun and changes which are planned in order to further enhance the education and training system. It allows us to consider the best timing for change, so that we can embed what we're doing, and pace the introduction of new initiatives. This will be a key focus throughout the year.

The Action Plan has been developed in a strong partnership approach. I firmly believe that this is the key to success. The education and training sector is all the richer for having such a diversity of voices, and I wish to acknowledge all of the contributions that we received during the consultation and development process.

Over the course of 2019, we will continue to work with our many partners. I would very much like to thank you all for what we have already collectively achieved, and I believe that by continuing with this approach, we can together deliver an education and training system that meets learners' needs, and the needs of society, enterprise and the economy.

Seán Ó Foghlú
Secretary General

Our Vision Statement, Mission and Values

Vision Statement

Cumasú Empowering through learning

A progressive and equitable education and training system has the power to transform lives - the transformation begins with the individual, and moves outward: to family, to community, to society. It brings important social and economic benefits in the form of self-confident and dynamic communities – communities which foster social stability, independence, creativity and entrepreneurial endeavours.

The key to accessing this transformation is through the delivery of a quality learning experience that challenges each person to realise their potential, to raise their aspirations and to achieve their personal ambitions.

We want an education and training system which empowers learners to be confident in their national, cultural and individual identity, to be aware of their capability to achieve more and to take every opportunity that arises to be the best that they can be.

We want to empower learners by offering a wide range of learning opportunities and experiences, reaching out to all learners– including those impacted by disadvantage, learners who need additional educational supports and learners who wish to return to education to enhance their skills.

We have set out to deliver a learning experience to the highest international standards. We want to work with our education practitioners to support the development of their capability to drive continuous improvement and reform across education and training. We want to provide learning at all levels and to all age groups, which is enhanced through the richness of innovation, discovery and research.

The Department's work reflects the value that the Government places on education. We want to provide an education and training system, based on evidence-informed policies, that is designed to anticipate and respond to the changing needs of learners, society and the economy.

We will work in partnership with learners, parents, education and training providers and all our stakeholders to achieve our vision.

Our Mission

To facilitate individuals, through learning, to achieve their full potential and contribute to Ireland's social, economic and cultural development.

Our Values

We place the learner at the centre of education strategy and policy development and value learning as a public good, in light of its core role in the development, cohesion and wellbeing of an inclusive society.

We believe in the vital importance of open communication, consultation and collaboration with stakeholders, within the education and training sector and with the wider community.

We are committed to the principles of continuous improvement, innovation and evaluation which will underpin evidence-based policy development and programme delivery.

The achievement of our goals will be underpinned by the overarching values for the Civil Service, as set out in the Civil Service Renewal Plan.

We value our staff and create an environment where we learn, develop and contribute to the goals of the organisation.

We are accountable, open to change, customer-focused and respectful in our dealings with the public and work colleagues.

Introduction

Education matters in peoples' lives. It matters because it can transform lives and because it offers possibilities for fulfilling potential. The benefits of this are felt by learners, their families, and our wider society. They contribute to our social and economic activities, and help to raise standards in so many ways.

The Programme for Government recognises this, saying that education "is the key to giving every child an equal opportunity in life. No child should be left behind in economic recovery and we should use our strengthening economy to become a leader in the provision of world-class education and skills."

This is true right across the spectrum of education and training services, from early learning and care (ELC) to lifelong learning.

To ensure that no-one is left behind, we have to support learners to develop flexible skills, so that they can easily respond to the changing world around them. They must be prepared for the world of the future, where nobody knows exactly what will be required of learners and workers. However, we can lay solid foundations today, so that people are able to adapt more easily to what is required in the future.

We can be measured as a society by how we look after our most vulnerable and by the way we treat and respect each other. Within the education and training sector, we can influence this in many ways: working together to challenge a cyberworld in which shaming and harassment can often feature; teaching dignity, empathy and compassion; and developing learners' resilience so that they are empowered to achieve their full potential.

With the appointment of Joe McHugh TD as Minister for Education and Skills in October 2018, we used the development of a new Statement of Strategy to assess the value of the Action Plan framework. In doing this assessment and fully considering how it was used within the Department and across the sector, we were able to affirm its value.

At the heart of the model was quality and continuous improvement, inclusion and skills, as seen from the learner's point of view. The framework enabled us to easily see the full range of high level activity ongoing and planned, to look at the scheduling of this activity, and to see where we needed to better pace it. Importantly, it also enabled us to ensure that we remained focussed and ambitious in terms of improving services for learners, supporting educators, and having the right systems in place for the sector.

As a result, we are continuing to use the model and this document presents our high level work programme for the year, with all of our key activities clearly visible. We have built on the experience of previous Action Plans and the progress we have already made.

Since 2016, our high level progress includes:

Measures to **enhance the quality of education and training provision**, such as introducing education-focussed inspections to improve quality and standards in the emerging ELC sector; establishing the Schools Excellence Fund, with several strands all designed to encourage schools to work in clusters to explore and apply new innovative solutions and to improve learning outcomes; updating child protection procedures disseminated to schools and the trial implementation of Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections to monitor school compliance with requirements under the Children First Act; implementing a new strategy to support Gaeltacht schools to provide high-quality, Irish-medium education to children; undertaking quality reviews of further education and training (FET) programmes (Youthreach, Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme/Specific Skills Scheme (SSS) and Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)) and implementing the recommendations of the PLC review and agreements between the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and higher education institutions (HEIs) setting and monitoring progress against targets in the System Performance Framework 2018-2020.

Initiatives to **strengthen leadership, teaching and workforce planning**, including commencing the Fitness to Teach provisions of the Teaching Council Act to enhance the reputation of the teaching profession and to increase openness and transparency; implementing a new Strategy on Teacher Supply (including baseline data collection and analysis and a focus on the immediate gaps in certain areas); introducing new graduate and undergraduate programmes to enhance the diversity, quality and supply of primary, post-primary and FET teachers and to deliver high quality education and training; and establishing the Centre for School Leadership (CSL) with a package of associated supports (coaching, mentoring and a new postgraduate qualification in School Leadership).

A key **focus on Wellbeing** for students and the wider school community, with the implementation of the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2018-2023), which aims to build learning environments that promote health, wellbeing and personal development, supported by an increase in the number of National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) psychologists.

The **continuation of curricular reform**, with the roll out of the new Framework for Junior Cycle (JC) giving students the opportunity to develop a wider range of knowledge and skills; introducing the new Primary Language Curriculum (Irish and English) to further develop bilingualism in young learners; implementing the "Languages Connect, Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-2026" to improve proficiency, diversity and immersion in foreign languages amongst students; delivering under the "STEM Education Policy Statement 2017-2026" (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths), to equip learners with analytical, creativity and critical thinking skills to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world; setting new targets for literacy and numeracy following a review of the "Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life" strategy, building on existing progress; implementing a new grading system and common points scheme, to support students moving from second-level into higher education and commencing a review of Senior Cycle (SC), to explore the learning experiences of students and provide a strong base from which to shape a curriculum that genuinely meets the needs of all learners for years to come.

Solid developments in the area of **education inclusion**, with a new Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) Plan being implemented to concentrate delivery in key areas (including standards and retention) to ensure better outcomes and to develop better progression pathways; a new methodology being used to identify DEIS schools so that children at the greatest risk of disadvantage are included and resources matched to identified needs; introducing a new model for allocating Special Education Teaching Resources to mainstream schools, to end the unfairness which existed previously, when many parents were unable to access the assessments need to qualify for educational resources and introducing the Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH) Fund as part of the "National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2021".

Becoming a market leader in attracting international student talent and being internationally recognised for the development of global citizens through our **internationalised education system**, by delivering the "International Education Strategy 2016-2020".

Developing **strong structures** across the education and training landscape, by commencing a number of provisions in the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 to ensure that admissions processes are structured, fair and transparent; commencing the Technological Universities Act and establishing the first Technological University, with a focus on vocationally and professionally oriented science and technology programmes that address regional needs and implementing a new approach to determining the patronage of new schools, to provide greater choice for parents and guardians.

Increasing our **digital abilities**, by implementing the Digital Strategy for Schools to realise the potential of digital technologies to enhance teaching learning and assessment; having Technology Enhanced Learning Plans in each Education and Training Board (ETB) to provide for infrastructure, pedagogy and staff training and development and introducing a range of digitalised and online services such as a pilot digital e-hub for students attending Gaeltacht post-primary schools to provide a wider and more equitable choice of subjects through Irish, online school transport appeals and payment of State exam fees and the piloting of online marking of State exams.

Improving our **skills offerings**, implementing the "National Skills Strategy 2025" (including establishing the National Skills Council and Regional Skills Fora (RSF) to strengthen engagement between education and training providers and employers and enterprise) and delivering under the "Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship in Ireland 2016-2020", to further strengthen the partnership between employers and education and training providers and to promote work-based learning.

This progress has been funded by a strong level of investment in the sector. This year is 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 marks the 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.

Achievements during this period have been driven by our key strategies and initiatives:

STEM Education Policy Statement 2017-2026
Languages Connect, Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-2026
National Strategy: Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020
Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship in Ireland 2016-2020
Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025
Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020 Enhancing Teaching, Learning and Assessment
Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022
Irish Educated Globally Connected an International Education Strategy for Ireland, 2016-2020
Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019
National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030
Framework for Junior Cycle
Education for Sustainability' National Strategy on Education for Sustainable development in Ireland 2014-2020
20-Year Strategy for the Irish language 2010-2030
Education and Training Sector Shared Services Plan 2017-2020
DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) 2017
Teacher Supply Action Plan
National Síolta Aistear Initiative
Strategy for Technology-Enhanced Learning in Further Education and Training 2016-2019.
Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018–2023
National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2021
The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030
Model for Allocating Special Education Teaching Support to Mainstream Primary Schools

As we undertake our work in 2019, we will build on our achievements, and within the framework of these strategies and associated reviews, seek to continuously improve. This year, we will particularly focus on collaboration, further development of STEM, foreign languages, creativity, wellbeing and increasing subject choices, strengthening supports for learners with special education needs, managing performance and workforce development, strengthening data interpretation and analysis to facilitate evidence-informed policy and ensuring that the education and training system meet the skills needs of students, society and the economy.

Critical thinking, adaptability, innovation, resilience and wellbeing are important and are very much a focus of what we intend to deliver this year. They are an integral element of our approach not only within the curriculum but also in broader education and training policy.

Whole of Government Commitments

In progressing towards our overall ambition and in supporting Government wide reform and strategy, we work with a range of other Government Departments and their agencies. Drawing on the underlying principles of the Programme for a Partnership Government, we will continue to deepen this engagement in order to deliver in priority areas during 2019.

This includes working with:

Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) to implement "Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures, the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020" and "First 5 - The National Early Years Strategy", to progress implementation of the Government's Action Plan for Online Safety, in our role as Chair of the Sponsors Group in collaboration with other key Departments, to improve the school engagement, participation and retention levels of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, through the delivery of TUSLA's integrated delivery model for educational welfare, to develop and evaluate a demonstration model for the provision of Therapy Services in school and ELC settings during the 2018/19 school year/ Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) year, and to promote the wellbeing of children and young people through the implementation of our Wellbeing Policy.

Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE) to improve schools connectivity, service delivery and learner outcomes (and other relevant National Broadband Plan actions). We will work collaboratively to implement the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development 2014-2020, which is linked to the "Our Sustainable Future" Policy Framework, to implement the "National Sustainable Development Goals Implementation Plan 2018-2020", in the delivery of the All of Government Climate Plan and to progress implementation of the Government's Action Plan for Online Safety.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to advance the International Trade Strategy, Regional Trade Strategies, the Global Ireland 2025 Initiative, post-Brexit planning arrangements, the Development Education agenda, and EU Policy and Budget matters.

Department of Rural and Community Development to progress the literacy and numeracy agenda through collaboration with library services, and to implement the Department's commitments in "Realising our Rural Potential: The Action Plan for Rural Development".

Department of Health (including the Health Service Executive (HSE)) to implement the pilot of the In-School Speech and Language Therapy Service, to advance the education elements of "Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery 2017-2025" (a health led response to drug and alcohol use), to continue work on the National Taskforce on Youth Mental Health and to progress implementation of the Government's Action Plan for Online Safety.

Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI) on the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, the Inter-Departmental Group Review of Economic Migration Policy, and implementing Future Jobs Ireland, Regional Enterprise Plans, Innovation 2020 and Technology Skills 2022 and to progress implementation of the Government's Action Plan for Online Safety. We also participate in the DBEI group on implementation of Industry 4.0.

Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DCHG) to advance the education elements of the "20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language, 2010- 2030", the national Audio-visual Action Plan and Creative Ireland's "Creative Youth" plan, and to collaborate on Commemorations and Decade of Centenaries projects.

Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) to implement the student housing aspects of the Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness and a co-ordinated approach to homelessness as part of the Homelessness Interagency Group, assist with purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) elements of the Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Bill 2018, to plan school infrastructure and build on existing cooperation through the statutory land use plan processes, and to cooperate on construction skills issues supporting the implementation of Rebuilding Ireland and the National Development Plan.

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) to implement relevant reforms associated with the civil and public service reform programmes in the Civil Service Renewal Plan and Our Public Service 2010 and actions set out in the Build to Share Strand of the Public Service "Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy" (including ePQs, eSubmissions, and eCorrespondence).

Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) to support unemployed and economically inactive people into employment, through engaging on planning literacy, numeracy and basic skills provision, particularly in the context of the implementation of the European Council recommendation of Upskilling Pathways for Adults.

Department of Justice and Equality (DJ&E) to facilitate education provision for refugees and asylum seekers, to advance the "Migrant Integration Strategy", the "National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy", the" National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020", the "National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021" and the "Comprehensive Employment Strategy 2015-2024", to progress implementation of the Government's Action Plan for Online Safety, and the development of the "Youth Justice Strategy".

Our Goals

GOAL 1

We will shape a responsive education and training system that meets the needs and raises the aspirations of all learners.

GOAL 2

We will 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.

GOAL 3

We will equip education and training providers with the skills and support to provide a quality learning experience.

GOAL 4

We will intensify the relationships between education and the wider community, society and the economy.

GOAL 5

We will lead in the delivery of strategic direction and supportive systems in partnership with key stakeholders in education and training.

Goal 1

We will shape a responsive education and training system that meets the needs and raises the aspirations of all learners.

A quality learning experience that supports learners in reaching their potential is the key to giving learners the choices and opportunities to be the best they can be. The learning experience must promote an individual's wellbeing needs and provide a broad range of engaging and stimulating curricula so that learners can respond to the changing opportunities they will face in the future.

In seeking to deliver the best possible learning experience for learners, we will measure ourselves against best practice abroad and seek to continually adapt our approach to incorporate successful methods that will work in an Irish context.

The successful delivery of this goal means that Wellbeing measures will be further rolled out and positively impact on more learners, key strategies in the areas of languages, digital, STEM and literacy and numeracy will continue to be delivered, curricular reforms will be continued, the position of the Irish language will be strengthened in Gaeltacht schools, and learners will be supported as they move between education settings.

Our Strategic Actions under this goal are to:

1. Foster and promote the wellbeing of learners in the education and training system in order to support success in learning and in life.
2. Review and reform the curricula from Early Years to senior cycle level to enhance quality learning and support learners' physical and intellectual development.
3. Improve proficiency in, and increase the diversity of take up of, languages to provide greater opportunities to learners and meet skills needs.
4. Implement the Gaeltacht education policy and improve the quality of Irish-medium educational provision in line with the 20 Year Strategy for Irish.
5. Ensure the education system meets the current and future needs of learners participating in an economy, labour market and society being transformed by technology.

Goal 1
During 2019, we will deliver the following actions:

Action No.		Actions/sub-actions for 2019	Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
1		Oversee the roll-out of the implementation of the DES Wellbeing Policy, which aims to foster and promote the wellbeing of all children and young people, and ensure that wellbeing is at the core of the ethos of all schools and centres for education		
	1.1	Commence the strengthening and alignment of structures within the department and between departments and other relevant bodies to promote the coordinated implementation of the DES Wellbeing Policy and Framework for Practice	Q4	HSE, Tusla/ Education Welfare Services (EWS), National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
	1.2	Finalise the development of a plan for national roll out of CPD to support implementation of the Wellbeing Policy Statement	Q4	Junior Cycle for Teachers Support Service (JCT), PDST, HSE
	1.3	Commence the development of an aligned and easily accessible programme of support for all schools and centres for education to address school-identified wellbeing promotion needs	Q4	
	1.4	Commence a review of the supports and support structures for vulnerable children and young people at key points of transition within and between education settings	Q4	
	1.5	Complete Phase 3 of the roll-out of teacher programmes to DEIS schools by NEPS psychologists that build capacity to promote social and emotional competence, resilience and school connectedness for all learners	Q4	
	1.6	Complete Phase 2 of training for schools on the revised NEPS Critical Incident Guidelines and resources to schools, prioritising the completion of critical incident training to post-primary school teachers	Q4	
	1.7	Roll-out Phase 3 of the Student Support Team Project in DEIS Post-Primary schools	Q4	

Goal 1

Action No.		Actions/sub-actions for 2019	Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
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	Q3	
3		Support the welfare and well-being of higher education students		
	3.1	Complete the drafting of a consent framework for deployment by the higher education institutions	Q1	
	3.2	Support DHPLG on the implementation of legislation providing for rent predictability measures in PBSA	Q2	DHPLG
4		Further development of the Primary Curriculum		
	4.1	Publish a report on coding and computational thinking in the primary curriculum	Q2	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)
	4.2	Publish the new Primary Language Curriculum/Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile for junior infants to sixth class both online and in hardcopy	Q3	NCCA
	4.3	Publication of overview of a redeveloped primary curriculum, based on extensive research including a series of seminars, for public consultation	Q3	NCCA
5		Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle		
	5.1	Publish a review of the optional nature of History under the new Framework for Junior Cycle	Q2	NCCA
	5.2	Scope a longitudinal study of the impact of the changes made as a result of the introduction of the Framework for Junior Cycle	Q2	NCCA
	5.3	Introduce the final phase of Junior Cycle specifications in Technology subjects, Religious Education, Jewish Studies and Classics	Q3	NCCA
	5.4	Complete a review of the Junior Cycle Schools Programme (JCSP)	Q4	
6		Review Senior Cycle and progress the development and implementation of Leaving Certificate subject specifications		
	6.1	Complete an advisory report on the Review of Senior Cycle	Q2	

Goal 1

Action No.		Actions/sub-actions for 2019	Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
	6.2	Commence a review of draft Leaving Certificate subject specifications for Biology, Chemistry and Physics, including a new coursework assessment component	Q2	NCCA
	6.3	Commence consultation on draft Leaving Certificate subject specifications for Gaeilge (one for Irish-medium schools and one for English-medium schools)	Q4	NCCA
	6.4	Complete a new Leaving Certificate specification for Mandarin Chinese for non-native speakers	Q4	NCCA
	6.5	Complete new Leaving Certificate specifications for Polish, Lithuanian and Portuguese for heritage speakers	Q4	NCCA
	6.6	Scope the nature of a review of work experience following on from the publication of the NCCA report on the Review of Senior Cycle	Q4	NCCA
7		Advance actions that cross curricular areas		
	7.1	Complete the report of the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education in the curriculum	Q2	NCCA
	7.2	Complete an audit of Traveller history and culture in the curriculum	Q2	NCCA
	7.3	Publish results of 2018 Wellbeing and Lifeskills survey to inform policy development in a range of areas	Q3	
	7.4	Support the Government's Healthy Ireland agenda through promotion of healthy eating and physical activity.	Q4	DoH, Healthy Ireland
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	Q3	
	8.2	Increase the uptake in Erasmus programme	Q4	HEA, Léargas
9		Progress implementation of the "STEM Education Policy Statement 2017-2026" and the Implementation Plan 2017-2019		

Goal 1

Action No.		Actions/sub-actions for 2019	Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
	9.1	Develop a work plan as part of a coordinated response to increase the numbers of females participating in STEM, including the establishment of a females in STEM subgroup	Q2	
	9.2	Develop a work plan in relation to the integration of Arts education into all STEM learning experiences	Q2	
	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	Q3	
	9.4	Implement STEM advertising campaign aimed at learners, teachers, school leaders and parents, in order to increase participation levels in STEM subjects	Q4	
10		Implement the "Digital Strategy for Schools 2015 -2020" to enhance teaching, learning & assessment		
	10.1	Commence the longitudinal study of the Digital Learning Framework and its implementation in Schools	Q1	Professional Development Service for Teachers-Technology in Education, (PDST-TiE), Education Research Centre (ERC)
	10.2	Produce Working Group Report with recommendations for the provision of ICT technical support in schools	Q3	
	10.3	Support the 3 year Schools Excellence Fund Digital (and STEM) programme, including external evaluation, hosting of a showcase event and producing an interim report on progress to date	Q4	PDST-TiE
11		Progress implementation of the Education Chapter of the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030 as set out in the 5 year Action Plan for Irish 2018 - 2022		
	11.1	Complete a scoping paper on implementation of Content Language Integrated Learning in both Irish and Foreign Languages and establish a working group to plan the development of pilot projects	Q2	
	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	Q3	

Action No.	Actions/sub-actions for 2019		Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
12	Implement the Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022 on a phased basis			
	12.1	Monitor the commencement and operation of an Irish-medium initial teacher education BEd programme to support the provision of high quality Irish-medium education in schools	Q4	
13	Implement the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme			
	13.1	Provide guidance for naíonraí and primary schools on the development of links between naíonraí and primary schools, including exemplars of good practice	Q4	
	13.2	Deliver a pilot e-Hub Transition Year online module on higher-level Leaving Certificate Physics through Irish from e-Hub Gaeltacht schools to students in post-primary Gaeltacht schools and commence the delivery of an online higher-level Leaving Certificate Physics course through Irish from e-Hub Gaeltacht schools to students in other post-primary Gaeltacht schools	Q4	
	13.3	Publish Circulars, revised Guides and report on exemplars of good practice in immersion education to support schools in implementing the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme	Q4	
	13.4	Commence a research review to inform the development of a guide to support children/students with special educational needs in Gaeltacht immersion education settings and disseminate relevant information among professional and para-professional staff working with these children.	Q4	
14	Evaluate the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme in primary and post-primary schools			
	14.1	Develop inspection model, evaluation instruments and guide for the evaluation of immersion education in schools participating in the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme and commence the first phase of evaluation of immersion education in participating primary and post-primary schools	Q4	ERC
15	Support the transition of students across different levels of the education system			
	15.1	Pilot supportive processes for pre-schools and schools to raise awareness and build capacity to use online reporting templates	Q4	DCYA, NCCA
	15.2	Develop proposals to support transition of children with a disability from pre-school into primary school	Q4	DCYA, NCSE

Goal 1: Indicators

The following indicators will be used to measure our progress during 2019:

Indicator	
Range and reach of training for teachers and leaders to support and promote Wellbeing	Number of teachers and principals trained in Wellbeing-related programmes per annum
The provision, take up of and success of post primary students in STEM subjects	Achievement in Higher Level and Ordinary Level Maths among girls and boys
	Provision of STEM choices by school type (girls/boys/ mixed)
	Take-up of STEM subjects among girls and boys
The provision, take up and success of post primary students in foreign languages	Achievement in Leaving Cert in foreign languages
	Provision of foreign language choices by schools
	Take-up of foreign languages among girls and boys
Retention rates to Leaving Certificate	% of Students sitting Leaving Cert
Transition rates from post-primary to Higher Education	% transitioning from post-primary to Higher Education

Goal 2

We will 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.

All learners should have the opportunity to reach their potential, and we are committed to helping them do so. Those with additional needs should receive the right supports at the right time. We are already heavily committed in this area in terms of funding and support services, with almost €1.75 billion invested in Special Education in 2018, nearly one fifth of the overall education budget. We are also committed to using education and training services to help break the cycle of disadvantage. Under this goal, we are aiming to support the progress and improve the educational outcomes of learners at risk of educational disadvantage or learners with special educational needs (SEN), and to ensure that access to tertiary level is broadened.

The successful delivery of this goal means that learners requiring extra support will receive the right supports at the right time, that investment in this area is evaluated and informs policy, that performance gaps between learners in DEIS and non-DEIS schools are closed, and that the profile of learners progressing through the education system is more representative of the population in general.

Our Strategic Actions under this goal are to:

1. 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 HE and FET.
2. Explore innovative approaches to improving the outcomes for learners at greatest risk of educational disadvantage.
3. Progress the implementation of a school inclusion model to deliver the right supports at the right time to students with additional care needs.
4. Further progress the move towards a needs-based, responsive set of State supports for students with special educational needs, with a focus on improved measurable outcomes.
5. Implement strands of the National Access Plan to ensure that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population.

Goal 2
During 2019, we will deliver the following actions:

Action No.		Actions/sub-actions for 2019	Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
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		
	16.1	Conduct further analysis to examine other variables known to be strong predictors of educational disadvantage in the context of resource allocation under the DEIS Plan	Q1	
	16.2	Develop a new resource allocation model for application to all School Support programme (SSP) schools, to include a more tailored system of resource allocation, within which there are more grades of disadvantage identified and resources allocated accordingly in response to the needs of individual schools	Q2	
	16.3	Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to generate data on resource allocation, to ensure that inputs are linked to outputs and outcomes and to share knowledge and successful initiatives to support better practice	Q2	
	16.4	Continue collaboration with Tusla and Traveller Representative Groups on measures to improve Traveller engagement with education in the context of the "National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy"	Q2	TUSLA, Traveller Representative Groups, DJ&E
	16.5	Launch School Excellence Fund Tranche 3 for DEIS schools	Q2	
	16.6	Publish review and recommendations of Out-of School report	Q2	
	16.7	Develop a phased approach to the allocation of resources based on the new identification process	Q4	
	16.8	Develop guidelines for schools to support successful transitions at key stages of the education spectrum to facilitate an integrated model of access from pre-school to primary and primary to post-primary school	Q4	DCYA, TUSLA
	16.9	Commence the roll-out in DEIS schools of an action research project in the implementation of evidence-based approaches and programmes, to help reduce the gap in literacy achievement between pupils in DEIS and non-DEIS schools	Q4	

Goal 2

Action No.	Actions/sub-actions for 2019		Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
17	Progress the implementation of a School Inclusion Model to deliver the right supports at the right time to students with additional care needs			
	17.1	Inform schools, through the NCSE, of their Special Needs Assistant (SNA) allocation before the end of the school year	Q2	NCSE
	17.2	Progress proposals for the implementation of the recommendations of the Comprehensive Review of the SNA Scheme	Q4	NCSE
	17.3	Resolve all SNA allocation appeals as soon as practicable following their receipt by the NCSE	Q4	NCSE
18	Embed the Special Education Teacher model which provides a unified allocation model for special educational support teaching needs to each school, based on the school's educational profile, to ensure support is available for all pupils who require it			
	18.1	Review the model for allocating Special Education Teachers to schools by ensuring that data are available and there is engagement with the sector so that school profiles can be updated to enable new allocations to be made for the 2019/20 school year	Q2	
19	Develop the In-School Speech and Language Therapy Service to develop greater linkages between educational and therapy supports, to assist schools to develop their capacity to support children with speech and language needs in schools			
	19.1	Continue to implement the pilot of the In-School Speech and Language Therapy Service	Q4	NCSE
	19.2	Complete an evaluation of the pilot of the In-School Therapy Demonstration Project	Q4	NCSE
20	Progress development of guidelines for management of crisis student behaviour		Q3	
21	Progress policy advice on special classes and special schools		Q4	NCSE
22	Progress plans to respond to commencement of Disability Act provisions in 2020		Q4	
23	Initiate the development of an evaluation framework through which outcomes of students with special educational needs are measured		Q1	
24	Implement Brexit related changes to the student support architecture		Q1	

Goal 2

Action No.		Actions/sub-actions for 2019	Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
25		Implement strands of the "National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2021", and oversee the delivery of the targets for HEIs so that HE becomes more representative of the population in general		
	25.1	Commence the development of an action plan for increasing Traveller participation in HE	Q1	HEA
	25.2	Commence an evaluation of certain initiatives funded under the PATH programme	Q2	HEA
	25.3	Commission independent research into first time mature and part-time students participation in HE, in order to provide an evidence base for access measures to increase their participation rates	Q2	HEA
	25.4	Progress strands of the Data Plan to support the "National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2021"	Q4	HEA
26		Lead the interdepartmental implementation of the recommendations in "An Independent Review to Identify the Supports and Barriers for Lone Parents in Accessing Higher Education"	Q4	
27		Begin a review the 2018 Pilot Support Scheme for those in the Protection System	Q2	

Goal 2: Indicators

The following indicators will be used to measure our progress during 2019:

Indicator	
Gap in retention rates between DEIS and non-DEIS schools	% retention rates in post-primary DEIS and non-DEIS schools
Comparison on Overall Performance Score in Junior Cycle	Overall performance Score in Junior Cycle (DEIS)
	Overall Performance Score in Junior Cycle (non-DEIS)
Number of early school leavers post-primary	Number of early school leavers – started 5th year but did not sit Leaving Cert
Access to Higher Education by under-represented groups	Total number of people with a disability that are new entrants to Higher Education
	% Mature entrants of total entrants in HE (first-time, full-time undergraduate)
	% of 20 year olds in disadvantaged areas who are students (Census)
Special Education Needs (SEN) Size and Capacity	Number of SNAs
	Number of special schools
	Total number of pupils in special classes and special schools
	% of students with special needs in special classes in mainstream schools

Goal 3

We will equip education and training providers with the skills and support to provide a quality learning experience.

The quality of teaching and leadership in education settings is a critical success factor for the best possible learner outcomes. In recognising this, we want to strengthen the system's capacity as a whole to continuously improve and to deliver the highest quality education and training services. As a country, we are fortunate to have a highly skilled and dedicated teaching and training profession. Those involved deliver to high standards and have a strong international reputation. However, we need to ensure that sufficient numbers are being trained and available to work in education settings.

The successful delivery of this goal means that leadership, management, quality frameworks, teaching methods, and initial and continuing training will be supported to operate to the highest standards across the spectrum of education and training provision, with a range of inspection and evaluation models providing transparency and quality assurance. Teacher supply will be addressed at both primary and post-primary levels and supports implemented, professional qualifications will be strengthened in the ELC sector, steps will be taken to improve gender balance in HE, and innovation and excellence will be recognised, with experiences shared and celebrated.

Our Strategic Actions under this goal are to:

1. Improve teacher education to provide practitioners with the right skills for 21st century teaching, learning and assessment.
2. Use internal and external evaluation to improve quality and promote excellence in early years settings, schools, centres for education and other provision.
3. Build strong leadership practice in schools and promote innovation and excellence in leadership.
4. Support the further enhancement of professional qualifications and standards within the ELC sector and enhance the quality of learning experiences for young children in the ELC sector through the implementation of the quality framework, Síolta and the curriculum framework, Aistear.
5. Increase the alignment of higher education and further education and training to achieve a more integrated tertiary education system.

Goal 3
During 2019, we will deliver the following actions:

Action No.	Actions/sub-actions for 2019		Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
28	Support the implementation of Síolta (the national quality framework) and Aistear (the early childhood curriculum framework) via the National Síolta Aistear Initiative, in partnership with DCYA, Better Start and the NCCA			
	28.1	Introduce a new model for delivery of mentoring and training supports under the National Síolta Aistear Initiative through the establishment of the new National Síolta Aistear Implementation office in Better Start	Q1	DCYA, NCCA
	28.2	Oversee the implementation of the Síolta and Aistear, including the rollout of the new National Aistear CPD programme and the development of a self-evaluation framework and appropriate research activity	Q4	DCYA, NCCA
29	Implement a national programme of Early Years Inspections to provide advice and to support progressive improvement in standards, leadership and learning activities			
	29.1	Review the Early Years Education Inspection Model to encompass education provision in Early Years settings 0-6 years and to respond to the objectives of "First 5- The National Early Years Strategy"	Q4	
30	Mainstream quality assurance mechanisms for inspection work in schools			
	30.1	Implement a set of proposals that will further strengthen the quality assurance processes of the Inspectorate's work	Q4	
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	Q2	
	31.2	Review the model of SSE Advisory visits to primary and post-primary schools	Q3	
32	Undertake a planned programme of inspection and advisory visits in schools and alternative education settings			
	32.1	Begin a programme of Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections in primary and post-primary schools	Q1	
	32.2	Begin to implement the new model of Special Educational Needs Inspections in post-primary schools	Q1	

Goal 3

Action No.		Actions/sub-actions for 2019	Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
	32.3	Prepare a composite report on the findings of evaluation reports published in 2018 as they relate to the Resource Allocation Model for pupils with Special Education Needs in mainstream primary and post-primary schools	Q2	
	32.4	Develop a composite report on the findings of an evaluation of special classes for pupils with autism in mainstream primary and post-primary schools	Q4	
	32.5	Prepare a composite report on the findings of DEIS evaluations conducted on a cross-sectoral basis	Q4	
	32.6	Develop a thematic inspection report on Digital Learning in primary and post-primary schools and early years settings in order to provide both evaluative information and guidance on digital learning	Q4	
	32.7	Develop a guide to good practice on Modern Foreign Languages in post-primary schools based on inspection findings from Modern Foreign Languages curricular evaluations and whole-school type inspections in post-primary schools	Q4	
	32.8	Develop a guide to good practice to STEM based on inspection findings from STEM curricular evaluations and whole-school type inspections in primary and post-primary schools and early-years settings	Q4	
	32.9	Advance proposals for the better involvement of student and parent voices in school evaluations	Q4	
33		Publish inspection reports in every quarter in accordance with agreed arrangements for the various inspection models, including new inspection models for primary and post-primary schools	Q4	
34		Manage interventions in poorly performing schools through the School Improvement Group and oversee the monitoring of schools requiring improvement	Q4	
35		Support implementation of the Schools Excellence Fund to promote excellence and innovation		
	35.1	Implement the Schools Excellence Fund Step-Up project in post-primary schools in conjunction with the JCT	Q4	JCT
36		Advance proposals for the better involvement of principals with inspection teams in primary and post-primary schools		

Goal 3

Action No.		Actions/sub-actions for 2019	Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
	36.1	Develop new forms of collaborative working with leadership teams in schools	Q4	
37		Support the further enhancement of professional qualifications and standards within the ELC sector		
	37.1	Publish award Criteria and Guidelines for Initial Professional Education in undergraduate programmes for Early Years Practitioners	Q1	
	37.2	Develop and finalise revised professional awards at levels 5 and 6 of the National Framework of Qualifications in ELC	Q3	Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
38		Support the Teaching Council in its role in regulating and promoting the teaching profession	Q4	Teaching Council
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	Q3	DCYA
	39.2	Finalise a comprehensive Workforce Development Plan for the ELC sector and identify working groups for implementation areas	Q4	DCYA
40		Implement the Teacher Supply Action Plan		
	40.1	Hold a National Forum to engage with stakeholders on issues of teacher supply and demand	Q2	Teaching Council
	40.2	Review and update the Teacher Supply Action Plan to ensure alignment of teacher supply and demand	Q3	Teaching Council, HEA, School Management Bodies, HEIs, Irish Universities Association (IUA)
	40.3	Launch a Teacher Recruitment Portal to assist schools in recruiting for all teacher vacancies, including substitutes	Q3	Teaching Council
	40.4	Progress the development of a Teacher Workforce Data Model to facilitate future planning for teacher supply and demand	Q4	Teaching Council, HEA
41		Continue the reform of initial teacher education to ensure teachers are equipped with the right skills for 21st century teaching, learning and assessment		

Goal 3

Action No.		Actions/sub-actions for 2019	Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
	41.1	Complete the review of the reconfigured programmes in initial teacher education (ITE) and develop proposals for revised accreditation Criteria and Guidelines for ITE programme providers	Q4	Teaching Council
	41.2	Review of student teacher school placements in ITE, with a particular focus on school/HEI partnerships and capacity of schools to support placements	Q4	Teaching Council
	41.3	Finalise a policy statement for ITE, taking account of plans to implement the remaining recommendations in the "Report of the International Review Panel on the Structures of Initial Teacher Education" and the follow up review	Q4	Teaching Council
42	Develop the work of the Centre for School Leadership (CSL) in accordance with agreed targets			
	42.1	Commence the 18 month cluster programme "Excellence through Collaborative Leadership and Management Scheme"	Q1	CSL
	42.2	Introduce team coaching for school leadership teams building on the introduction of one to one coaching for school leaders in February 2017	Q1	CSL
	42.3	Develop a Quality Assurance Framework for school leadership support	Q4	CSL
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	Q3	
44	Support the growth phase of "Droichead", the national induction process for all Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) in collaboration with the Teaching Council			
	44.1	Continue to provide support to schools and NQTs through the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) support service and in-school release time	Q4	NIPT
45	Review the effectiveness and efficiency of the Teacher Professional Network (TPN) Scheme			
	45.1	Begin a review of the TPN Scheme, following a tender process	Q2	NIPT
	45.2	Publish the review of the TPN Scheme	Q4	
46	Provide dedicated professional support to teachers to support the implementation of curricular change and Department policy			

Goal 3

Action No.		Actions/sub-actions for 2019	Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
	46.1	Implement the agreed Framework for STEM professional development programmes and teaching and learning resources in the development of new STEM CPD	Q2	Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) JCT
	46.2	Develop a programme of CPD to support the introduction of the Primary Maths Curriculum	Q3	PDST
	46.3	Provide CPD to support the ongoing implementation of the Primary Language Curriculum	Q4	PDST
	46.4	Provide CPD to support new SC examinable subjects: Computer Science, Politics & Society and Physical Education	Q4	PDST
	46.5	Provide CPD to support the implementation of JC reform across all new subject specifications	Q4	JCT
47		Review the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme		
	47.1	Begin a review of the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme, following a tender process	Q2	
	47.2	Publish the review of the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme	Q4	
48		Take steps to improve the gender balance at the senior academic level in HEIs		
	48.1	Monitor the impact of the Senior Academic Leadership Initiative to improve the gender balance at the senior academic level in the higher education sector	Q4	HEA
49		Improve the impact of further education and training programmes and schemes		
	49.1	Publish the Review of the Youthreach programme	Q1	SOLAS
	49.2	Publish the Review of VTOS and SSS	Q3	SOLAS
	49.3	Publish the Impact Study of an Education and Training Board (ETB)	Q3	SOLAS
	49.4	Publish the Specialist Training Provider Evaluation	Q4	SOLAS
50		Strengthen quality of Tertiary Education		
	50.1	Secure Government approval for the publication of the General Scheme of the HEA Reform legislation	Q2	HEA
	50.2	Enact the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Amendment) Bill	Q2	
	50.3	Publish a review of the quality assurance system in Higher Education	Q3	
	50.4	Introduce the International Education Mark (IEM) to ensure a quality standard and best international practice for international learners in Ireland	Q4	QQI

Goal 3: Indicators

The following indicators will be used to measure our progress during 2019:

Indicator	
Early Years Inspections	Number of inspections of ECCE centres
Inspections in primary and post-primary schools	Number of inspections in primary schools including probation
	Number of inspections in post-primary schools
Other inspections including School Self Evaluations (SSE)	Number of advisory visits
Publication of inspection reports	Number of EYEI reports published
	Number of primary and post-primary inspection reports published
Schools' and teachers' participation in training provided by the Professional Development Service for Teachers and the Junior Cycle for Teachers Support Services	Total training hours
	% of recognised primary/post-primary schools participating in training

Goal 4

We will intensify the relationships between education and the wider community, society and the economy.

Communities and industries benefit from the results of the education and training system. In turn, learners benefit from strong links with communities and industries, and the experiences and knowledge this can provide them with. There is huge scope for collaboration and knowledge sharing for mutual enrichment. This can be facilitated through establishing even stronger links between education and training services and the wider world. We have a strongly established global reputation in terms of attracting and retaining top international companies, and are developing a reputation for the quality of our start-up enterprises and their ability to innovate and internationalise. In order to support this, against fast paced technological change, we need even closer collaboration between education and training and enterprise and industry in areas such as research and skills development. This also involves close cooperation in developing Creative Ireland, Sustainable Ireland and an Ireland with balanced regional development.

The successful delivery of this goal means that there will be improved links between education and communities (particularly parents, employers and the international community), in order to benefit learners, society and the economy. There will be more school choice, and closer engagement with industry and employers will enhance our talent base, provide a greater range of learning and upskilling and reskilling opportunities, enable learners to meet skills needs in critical areas, and attract international talent to our higher education institutions.

Our Strategic Actions under this goal are to:

1. Strengthen the role of learners and parents in their engagements with the education and training system.
2. Progress the diversity of school type in order to offer parents and learners more choice.
3. Accelerate the restructuring of the higher and further education and training landscape to achieve regional socio-economic and development priorities and provide enhanced opportunities for communities and individuals.
4. Maintain and improve standards of research and innovation in our higher education institutions, develop individual and collaborative talent and ensure there is tangible and positive impact upon society and the economy.
5. Promote and encourage lifelong learning and up-skilling and strengthen partnerships between employers, higher education and further education and training providers.

Goal 4
During 2019, we will deliver the following actions:

Action No.		Actions/sub-actions for 2019	Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
51		Make progress towards increasing the diversity of school type in order to offer parents more choice		
	51.1	Finalise protocols for the Implementation Phase of the Schools Reconfiguration for Diversity process	Q2	DCYA, NCCA, Better Start
	51.2	Complete the Identification Phase process for the phase 1 pilot of the Schools Reconfiguration for Diversity process and publish the identification phase reports	Q2	DCYA, NCCA, Better Start
	51.3	Assess the demand for increased provision for Irish-medium schools as part of the Schools Reconfiguration for Diversity Process	Q4	
	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	Q2	DCYA
	51.5	Explore opportunities for expanding Irish-medium education outside the Gaeltacht in the context of the establishment of 42 new schools, which will afford particular consideration to the establishment of Gaelscoileanna, Gaelcholáistí, and Aonad Lán-Ghaeilge as part of the new patronage process	Q4	
52		Consult with relevant stakeholders on the detail of regulations required for commencement of certain sections of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018.	Q4	
53		Introduce a stronger complaints procedure and charter for parents and students		
	53.1	Publish, in conjunction with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (OPC), the Education (Parent and Student) Charter Bill	Q2	
	53.2	Progress the Education (Parent and Student) Charter Bill	Q3	
54		Consult with relevant stakeholders for the purpose of revising the Governance Manual for Primary School 2015-2019 in line with the change of Boards of Management of primary schools in 2019	Q4	
55		Establish an implementation task force within the Department to drive the proposed reforms arising from the career guidance review		
	55.1	Publish the Indecon Report on the review of career guidance	Q1	
	55.2	Prioritise which of the other actions in the Indecon Report on the review of career guidance might be progressed and progress implementation of priority actions	Q4	

Goal 4

Action No.		Actions/sub-actions for 2019	Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
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	Q3	SOLAS, HEA
	56.2	Grow apprenticeship and traineeship registrations to meet identified skill needs through developing new programmes and expanding participation in existing programmes. Focus strongly on growing employer engagement in existing and developing apprenticeships and traineeships	Q4	SOLAS, HEA
	56.3	"Generation" apprenticeship campaign to continue with a stepped up focus on employers	Q4	SOLAS
57		Support the Regional Skills Fora and the "Skills for Growth" Initiative by developing new partnerships to make it easier for more employers to identify their future skill needs	Q4	
58		Ensure that the higher and further education systems meet the skills needs of students, the economy, and society		
	58.1	Publish the "ICT Skills Action Plan 2019-202"	Q1	
	58.2	Publish the "Entrepreneurship Education Policy Statement"	Q3	
	58.3	Oversee development of, and annual calls for, Springboard+	Q3	HEA
	58.4	Design a new pilot programme for first time upskilling SMEs	Q3	
59		Support and promote lifelong learning and upskilling		
	59.1	Expand the EXPLORE programme, which helps to address the issue of Ireland's low level of participation in lifelong learning amongst the workforce.	Q4	
	59.2	Commence implementation of the "Skills to Advance" programme enhancing the skills of adults currently with low skills levels	Q4	SOLAS, ETBs
	59.3	Support the implementation of "Upskilling Pathways – New Opportunities for Adults", the EU Initiative to help low skilled adults acquire basic levels of literacy, numeracy and digital skills	Q4	SOLAS, ETBs
	59.4	Expand Skillnet Ireland provision in key skill areas, including the establishment of new learning networks, providing training to small business owner managers and developing new certified programmes	Q4	Skillnet Ireland
60		Conduct a review of "Irish Educated, Globally Connected; An International Education Strategy for Ireland 2016-2020"		

Goal 4

Action No.		Actions/sub-actions for 2019	Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
	60.1	Conduct a cost benefit analysis of internationalisation to both Government and HEIs, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, and to include an assessment of how best to improve the impact on the economy from international education	Q4	
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.	Q3	HEA
62		Promote creativity in our learners through the implementation of the Creative Youth Plan		
	62.1	Commence the rollout of pilot Local Creative Youth Partnerships	Q1	ETBs
	62.2	Commence the establishment of new Music Education Partnerships as part of the national expansion of Music Generation	Q1	Music Generation
	62.3	Increase the number of schools participating in the Creative Schools initiative	Q3	Arts Council, DCHG
63		Contribute to the national effort to implement the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 - Education		
	63.1	Report on implementation of the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development 2014-2020 including increased alignment with the SDGs, in collaboration with key stakeholders	Q4	DCCAE, DFAT/Irish Aid, DCYA, NCCA, State Examinations Commission (SEC), HEA, SOLAS, An Taisce (Green Schools), Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
	63.2	Report on the education sector's actions outlined in Ireland's first "National Sustainable Development Goals Implementation Plan 2018-2020"	Q4	DCCAE

Goal 4: Indicators

The following indicators will be used to measure our progress during 2019:

Indicator	
Catholic ethos schools	% of total school enrolment in Catholic ethos primary schools
	% of total school enrolment in Catholic ethos post-primary schools
	Number of Catholic ethos primary schools
	Number of Catholic ethos post-primary schools
Irish Medium schools	% of total school enrolment in Irish medium primary schools
	% of total school enrolment in Irish medium post-primary schools
	Number of Irish-medium primary schools
	Number of Irish-medium post-primary schools
Number of multi denominational schools	Number of multi denominational primary schools
	Number of multi denominational post-primary schools
Alternative Leaving Certificate pathways	% Students taking Leaving Cert Applied
	% Students taking Leaving Cert Vocational Programme
Skills, upskilling and re-skilling	Number of Springboard+ places
	Number of Skillnet learners
Research	Total number of postgraduate researchers (full-time, part-time, Masters and PhD)
	Number of PhD full-time and part-time
	Number of research masters full-time and part-time
Apprenticeship	Total number of apprenticeship places
Lifelong Learning	% of adults aged 25-64 who participated in formal and or non-formal learning, annual average (Eurostat)
International students	Number of international students in Irish public and private Higher Education Institutions
	Number of Higher Education students from Ireland participating in Erasmus+
	Number of English language students studying in Ireland

Goal 5

We will lead in the delivery of strategic direction and supportive systems in partnership with key stakeholders in education and training.

With approximately one quarter of the national population directly engaging in education, our role in providing strategic leadership, developing policy and delivering services across the sector has a huge impact. This requires cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders, including the political system, government departments, agencies and others.

To carry out this role properly, we have a responsibility to ensure that the right systems and supports are in place, right across early learning and care, primary, post-primary, further education and training and higher education sectors. One of the key aspects of this goal is the capital programme of the Department, which is based on the "National Development Plan 2018-2027" and forms part of "Project Ireland 2040". At €941 million for 2019, the capital programme represents a very substantial commitment of resources, in order to develop our physical learning infrastructure.

The successful delivery of this goal means that we are working with our agencies to create the right structures and system-wide supports, use the right funding instruments, address demographic demand for school places and facilities in tertiary education, increase the use of fit-for-purpose shared services, gather and use the right data to inform policy development, and deliver effectively and efficiently.

Our Strategic Actions under this goal are to:

1. Implement the National Development Plan 2018-2027 and Project Ireland 2040 in respect of the schools' sector, higher education and further education and training.
2. Support the operation of high quality education and training services through sustainable funding models and other supports, based on data and agreed criteria.
3. Improve the quality of services across the sector through supporting a more integrated, shared and digital environment to support an efficient and effective service delivery.
4. Provide greater strategic direction in the Department's governance, management and use of data.
5. Advance the development of standards of excellence in governance and accountability across the education and training sector.

Goal 5
During 2019, we will deliver the following actions:

Action No.	Actions/sub-actions for 2019	Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
64	Review and update the Overall Strategic Framework for Higher Education and Further Education and Training		
	64.1 Develop a framework for an integrated strategic approach to tertiary education	Q4	HEA, SOLAS
	64.2 Publish a new five year strategy for the FET sector	Q4	SOLAS
	64.3 Publish a mid-term review of ETB progress in delivering on their strategic performance agreements	Q4	SOLAS
65	Assist technological university development by establishing a TU Research Network and developing a future funding framework for TU development	Q2	HEA
66	Monitor the implementation of the Department's "Statement of Strategy for Education 2019-2021" and the "Action Plan for Education 2019"		
	66.1 Promote the use of sectoral indicators to demonstrate the effectiveness of major activities under each of high-level goals of the "Statement of Strategy"	Q1	
	66.2 Publish quarterly progress reports on the "Action Plan for Education 2019"	Q4	
67	Rollout of actions in response to the 2017 "Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey"		
	67.1 Organise manager behaviour focus groups in the Department and compile a summary report of findings for submission to DPER	Q1	
	67.2 Rollout of pilot mentoring programme for Assistant Principal Officers and a pilot "Buddy System" for new recruits	Q1	
68	Provide payroll and pension services to teachers and school staff in all schools (except the ETB sector)	Q4	
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	Q3	
70	Publish SNAs terms and conditions of employment in a consolidated publication to support and assist SNAs and their school managers/Principals	Q4	
71	Reform the appointment procedures of Principals and Deputy Principals to consolidate on the changes previously introduced in 2018 (under Action 61) to the Middle Management structure in Post Primary schools	Q4	

Goal 5

Action No.	Actions/sub-actions for 2019		Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
72	Lead industrial relations negotiations on behalf of the Department and the education and training sector and provide industrial relations and employment law advice to the Minister, Departmental colleagues and sector employers		Q4	
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		Q3	DPER
74	Support the operation of a high quality school system through the annual provision of teaching and financial supports to schools, based on agreed criteria and enrolment data.		Q4	
75	Commence partial restoration of Capitation funding		Q3	
76	Implement the recommendations of the review of the National Training Fund (NTF) in accordance with the published implementation plan			
	76.1	Design a structured process to secure employer input on key expenditure decisions related to the NTF	Q2	
	76.2	Establish a NTF evaluation framework, including the metrics and approach to data gathering and publish performance criteria	Q2	SOLAS, HEA, Skillnet Ireland, other NTF recipients
77	Continue reform of Higher Education Funding Model			
	77.1	Develop Higher Education Performance Fund	Q1	HEA
	77.2	Implementation of fund for Leadership and Capacity Building in HEIs	Q1	HEA
	77.3	Implementation of fund for Teaching and Learning Capacity Building in HEIs	Q2	HEA
	77.4	Implementation of a new research and innovation fund for IoTs and TUs	Q2	HEA
	77.5	Finalise terms of reference and commence review of the Free Fees scheme (Higher Education)	Q2	HEA
78	Continue to develop future funding model for Higher Education			
	78.1	Implement the Human Capital Initiative announced in Estimates 2019	Q2	HEA

Goal 5

Action No.		Actions/sub-actions for 2019	Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
	78.2	Undertake the economic analysis of the options included in the Expert Group Report on Future Funding for Higher Education requested by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education	Q4	European Commission Structural Reform Support Service
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		
	79.1	Report on the findings of rolling reviews in aegis bodies and develop lessons learnt for all aegis bodies	Q2	
	79.2	Scope the requirements for a PCR process in line with DPER advice	Q3	
	79.3	Implement a PCR in an aegis body	Q4	
80		Progress the governance modernisation programme of work for Education Centres		
	80.1	Introduce a standarised financial statement template for the Education Centres which is in accordance with financial reporting standards	Q1	
	80.2	Develop and introduce Performance Delivery Agreements for all Education Centres to document and agree their activities	Q4	
	80.3	Evaluate existing arrangements and implement actions required to align Teacher Education funded Support Services with the Education Centre Governance framework	Q4	
	80.4	Introduce a new financial management system in Education centres to replace the existing system and better meet the Centres' requirements	Q4	
81		Engage with ETB Management and Staff to pursue a revised ETB organisational structure	Q2	
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	Q3	
83		Deliver a Review of Pilot Public Private Partnership (PPP) Schools	Q4	National Development Finance Agency (NDFA)

Goal 5

Action No.	Actions/sub-actions for 2019		Time-frame	Lead agency/partner
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	Q3	
	84.2	Continue the site acquisition programme so that sites are available to meet the demand for new school buildings	Q4	
	84.3	Address the demand for new school buildings and substantial extensions including extra classrooms under the Large Scale Projects and Additional Accommodation Schemes	Q4	NDFA, Office of Public Works, Grangegorman Development Agency (GDA)
	84.4	Operate an Emergency/Contingency fund to address unanticipated infrastructure demands	Q4	
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	Q3	HEA
	85.2	Commence procurement of PPP Programme to advance capacity in Technological Universities/Institutes of Technology	Q4	HEA, NDFA
	85.3	Advance construction of Grangegorman PPP Projects	Q4	NDFA, GDA
	85.4	Ensure that climate action priorities are integrated into the development of higher education infrastructure	Q4	HEA
86	Conduct a survey of a representative sample of schools on the use of school buildings to facilitate after school care/clubs, the results of which will be used to inform a review of the Guidelines on the use of School Buildings outside of School Hours		Q4	
87	Review the post-primary school transport system with reference to the growth in concessionary passenger numbers		Q2	
88	Improve the quality of services across the sector through the introduction of shared services			
	88.1	Begin the transition of the Wave 1 ETBs as part of the phased implementation of Payroll Shared Service for ETBs	Q2	

Goal 5

Action No.		Actions/sub-actions for 2019	Time-frame	Lead agency/ partner
	88.2	Develop the Education Shared Business Services Centre in readiness for the commencement of the operation of the Payroll Shared Service for ETBs	Q2	
	88.3	Commence Operation of the Payroll Shared Service for ETBs	Q2	
	88.4	Develop detailed mapping and analysis of the current payroll and related human resource management processes in the Higher Education sector	Q3	
	88.5	Progress the plan for the phased implementation of Finance Shared Service for ETBs	Q4	
	88.6	Develop preferred solution to upgrade the Department's payroll function to shared service standards, including peer review of business case and procurement of technical expertise to design payroll application	Q4	
	88.7	Develop appropriate implementation plan to progress shared services within the Higher Education sector based on the approved business case	Q4	
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	Q3	SEC
	89.2	Implement online marking of examinations in an expanded range of subjects	Q3	SEC
90		Foster a culture of innovation in the Department		
	90.1	Launch the "Innovation in the Department of Education and Skills" (IDEAS) Initiative within the Department with two distinct streams: Secretary General's Challenge and the IDEAS Bank.	Q1	
	90.2	Provide regular updates on the progress of pilot projects under the two streams of the IDEAS Initiative	Q4	
91		Provide greater strategic direction in the Department's governance, management and use of data		
	91.1	Produce Corporate Data Governance and Data Management Frameworks setting out clear roles and responsibilities for using data	Q1	

Action No.		Actions/sub-actions for 2019	Time-frame	Lead agency/partner
	91.2	Develop a Data Governance Compliance programme (incorporating Data Protection compliance)	Q3	
	91.3	Develop a Data Strategy for the Department	Q4	
92		Improve the interpretation and analysis of the Department's data holding and the evidence base for planning purposes		
	92.1	Publish county based preliminary enrolments along with county based press releases	Q1	
	92.2	Develop model of demand for post-primary schools by analysing patterns of transfer from Primary to Post-primary	Q1	
	92.3	Develop Regional Projections of Primary and Post-primary enrolments	Q2	
	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	Q3	
	92.5	Develop a model to understand teacher supply and to predict demand for teachers at both primary and post-primary with a regional dimension if feasible	Q3	
93		Subject to the approval of the Government, publish the Retention of Records Bill 2019 and submit it for consideration by the Oireachtas	Q1	
94		Further develop the Department's response to the potential impact of Brexit on our education system	Q4	
95		Oversee, 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	Q4	Léargas

Goal 5: Indicators

The following indicators will be used to measure our progress during 2019:

Indicator	
Capacity and routes for School Transport	Number of school transport routes
	Number of pupils on school transport
Number of schools	Number of Primary schools
	Number of Post Primary schools
Number of FET and HE providers	Number of QQI registered FET providers
	Number of third level Institutions funded by the HEA
	Number of third level Universities funded by the HEA
Capital Programme	Number of additional permanent places (Primary)
	Number of additional permanent places (Post Primary)
	Number of projects approved to proceed in HEIs

Appendix 1
Bodies under the aegis of the Department

An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta

Skillnet IRELAND

The Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse

HEA | HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS

IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn

ncge | Lárionad Náisiúnta um Threoir san Oideachas National Centre for Guidance in Education

Residential institutions Redress Committee

QQI Quality and Qualifications Ireland Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

An Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta The Teaching Council

CARANUA support for survivors of institutional abuse

NCCA National Council for Curriculum and Assessment An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta

SOLAS learning works

Grangegorman Development Agency Gníomhaireacht Forbatha Ghráinseach Ghormáin

Residential Institutions Redress Board

Educational Research Centre Foras Taighde ar Oideachas

léargas

Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

ncse An Chomhairle Náisiúnta um Oideachas Speisialta National Council for Special Education

Appendix 2
Acronyms

CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSL	Centre for School Leadership
DBEI	Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation
DCCAE	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
DCHG	Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DEASP	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DHPCLG	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government
DJ&E	Department of Justice and Equality
DPER	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
ELC	Early Learning and Care
EPSEN (Act)	Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (Act)
ETB	Education and Training Board
EWS	Education Welfare Services
FET	Further Education and Training
GDA	Grangegorman Development Agency
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEI(s)	Higher Education Institution(s)
HSE	Health Service Executive
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDEAS	Innovation in the Department of Education and Skills
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
IUA	Irish Universities Association
JC	Junior Cycle
JCT	Junior Cycle for Teachers support service
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NDFA	National Development Finance Agency
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
NIPT	National Induction Programme for Teachers
NQTs	Newly Qualified Teachers
PATH	Programme for Access to Higher Education
PBSA	Purpose-built student accommodation

PCR	Periodic Critical Review
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
PDST- TIE	Professional Development Service for Teachers- Technology in Education
PLC	Post Leaving Certificate
PPP(s)	Public Private Partnership(s)
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
SC	Senior Cycle
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SEC	State Examinations Commission
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SOLAS	An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna
SSE	School Self-evaluation
SSS	Specific Skills Scheme
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
TU	Technological University

Appendix 3
DES commitments arising from the Programme for a Partnership Government

Below are commitments assigned to Department of Education and Skills as the Lead Department.

Com No.	Commitment Description
3.2.3	Invest in skills and training, to allow all to benefit from new opportunities in a recovering economy
4.3.5	To protect the sustainability and viability of rural communities we will not close any small school without the consent of parents. Existing support schemes will remain open for new infrastructural investment in schools.
4.3.7	In partnership with the Apprenticeship Council and industry we will double the number of apprenticeships to provide a total of 31,000 places by 2020 through an annual call for new proposals. We will target over 100 different apprenticeship schemes spread across sectors of the economy and in every region in Ireland.
4.3.21	We will prioritise those institutions with clear ambitions and plans for the furthering of industry-relevant technological research and education. The requirement of a mandatory merger of existing institutions can be reviewed, if a case can be proven, that for geographical reasons, a merger isn't feasible.
6.3.1	An increasing concern in schools and for families, we need to promote awareness and prevention in our education system rather than reacting to incidents. In 2017, Wellbeing willbe introduced as a subject in the new Junior Cert curriculum and this is a positive step in raising understanding and awareness amongst teenagers. However, a more thorough understanding of students' own emotional Wellbeing is also required
6.3.3	For teaching staff also, we will invest in SafeTALK and ASIST courses
7.4.2	We will examine the adequacy of current special education access and funding provision, in particular for children with Down syndrome and other conditions. We will request the National Council for Special Education to advise on how best to address this. We will also consult with stakeholders to see how best to progress sections of the EPSEN Act that were introduced on a non-statutory basis.
8.1.6	We will also invest additional resources in the National Educational Psychologists Service (NEPS) to ensure earlier intervention and access for young children (and also teenagers).
8.2.8	We must utilise our primary school buildings for afterschool care provision for school age children to offer more options and flexibility to parents. We will link additional capitation to the provision of buildings for afterschool care, where demand exists. Community groups and private providers will be invited to tender to use school facilities (outside school hours).
8.3.2	The introduction of a new Leaving Certificate P.E. syllabus, as a full optional subject.
8.3.7	For teaching staff also, we will support SafeTALK and ASIST courses.

10.0.1	We are committed to investing an extra €500million in education by 2021 through measures including childcare subventions, HSE Speech and Language Therapists, to bring the number up to 1,102 (a 25% increase) additional National Educational Psychologists (NEPs) to the bring the total to 238 (a 25% increase), reducing the pupil teacher ratio in junior and senior infants, annual increases in primary and secondary capitation rates, additional teacher CPD, a new School Excellence Fund, pay increases in accordance with the Lansdowne road Agreement and extra third level investment.
	We will also reduce primary school class sizes; reintroduce guidance counselling to secondary schools and increase financial supports for post graduate students with a particular focus on those from low income households. With this investment we will pursue the below principles of access, excellence, transparency and innovation.
10.0.2	We will produce a three year strategy for the Department of Education within the first 100 days and a framework for measuring its progress in consultation with stakeholders.
10.1.2	reduce the pupil-teacher ratio for junior and senior infants by providing smaller classes, which have the greatest beneficial impact on younger pupils. The gains from smaller class size in early years are shown to carry forward into future years. research shows pupils are more likely to stay in school longer and earn better results
10.1.4	Providing additional NEPS psychologists to support new intervention strategies for staff and pupils, and offer immediate support to schools in cases of critical incidents
10.2.3	School retention rates are increasing but more can be done to ensure a transition to work or further education for young school leavers. Additional supports to groups working with Early School Leavers will be examined.
10.2.4	We will publish a new updated Action Plan for Educational Inclusion, within 12 months, with particular focus on DEIS schools.
10.2.5	The provision of relevant educational programmes, specifically aimed at early leavers and second chance learners should be made available throughout the year, on a modular basis. We will support an increase in the number of flexible courses available; giving people the opportunity to attend courses part time, during evenings, in the summer and at weekends.
10.3.1	A road map has been agreed for a phased transfer of Catholic schools to new patrons, where the support of communities exists. We will work with all stakeholders to facilitate this process whilst also considering new approaches such as the potential of different patrons on a single site.
10.3.2	We will increase the number of non-denominational and multi-denominational schools with a view to reaching 400 by 2030.
10.3.3	We will publish new School Admissions and Excellence legislation taking account of current draft proposals (publication of school enrolment policies, an end to waiting lists, introduction

of annual enrolment structures, and transparency and fairness in admissions for pupils). We will seek to enact this legislation for the start of school year 2017-18.

10.3.4	role and power of an Ombudsman for Education, to whom a parent could complain and appeal on foot of a decision by a board of management, will be examined by the relevant Oireachtas Committee to ensure its consistency with the need to ensure better local decision making and accountability to parents.
10.3.5	We will ensure that no small school closes against the wishes of parents, while also facilitating those small schools who wish to amalgamate.
10.3.6	Within 3 months, we will commence a review of the teacher appointment thresholds in schools with 4 or less teachers.
10.3.7	We will review the concessionary charges and rules element of the School Transport Scheme prior to Budget 2017. We will review the criteria and guidelines for the School Transport Appeals Board.
10.3.8	We will review the options for standardised testing so that clear information is provided to teachers and parents. Parents should be able to receive annual reports on how their school is doing. Government should also be able to assess how new investments are progressing (e.g. reductions in pupil-teacher ratio, speech & language interventions).
10.3.9	We will introduce a stronger complaints procedure and charter for parents, and commence the Fitness to Teach provisions of the Teaching Council Act (10 years after its enactment).
10.4.1	In promoting excellence and innovation, we will introduce greater flexibility in our schools and pursue measures to achieve this. This may include nurturing different ambitions through new subject choices, greater engagement with enterprise on future skills needs, and increased flexibility in the day to day management of schools in order to improve outcomes. School leadership will be supported in identifying and introducing reforms that drive up educational standards, particularly in the fundamentals of reading, writing and arithmetic.
10.4.2	We will set out capitation rates to schools on a rolling 3-year basis, allowing for forward planning. School management will have the decision making power to allocate these resources as they deem appropriate, including to posts of responsibility.
10.4.3	We will establish a new Schools Excellence Fund, which rewards new approaches driven by teachers and by parents themselves to the benefit of pupils' education. Applications that seek to tackle educational disadvantage will be prioritised.
10.4.4	We will establish a pool of experts (educators, employers, accountants, business leaders, IT specialists etc.) to assist school initiatives, promote innovation and enterprise engagement especially at second level.
10.4.5	As part of the Digital Strategy, we will introduce new technology bringing remote learning into classrooms, ensuring all students have access to a wider range of subject choices and consistent quality education.

10.4.6	We will invest in additional continuous professional development for teachers, to ensure they are supported throughout their careers, and are best placed to respond to the developing challenges that their students face. Newly appointed school principals will take a preparation course in advance of taking up their role.
10.4.7	In order to improve student's outcomes and school performance, we will examine the potential for measures to assist teaching principals.
10.4.8	We will also incentivise voluntary school participation in new "Local Education Clusters" that encourage schools to improve student outcomes by sharing best practice and school improvement experiences, foster collaborative in and out-of-hours initiatives, staff peer mentoring and leadership, and that allow for cost reductions through economies of scale.
10.5.1	The curriculum is evolving. In 2016, we need to focus on the future needs, abilities and capacity of students. Focus must remain on literacy and maths, but new subjects should be introduced such as the arts, entrepreneurial education, and mental health awareness.
10.5.2	We will further accelerate the Digital and ICT agenda in schools by including a coding course for the Junior Cycle and introducing ICT/Computer Science as a Leaving Certificate subject.
10.5.3	We will also introduce a new Leaving Certificate P.E. syllabus as a full subject.
10.5.4	Guidance counselling at secondary level will be enhanced.
10.5.5	We will evaluate transition supports available to young people at all levels of the education, with a view to promoting initiatives which support young people at critical points in their lives. Transition Year, in particular, will be used to prepare young people with key skills before they make the transition to higher education or work. We will work with industry and colleges to open up new opportunities and programmes in transition year.
10.5.6	The relevant Oireachtas Committee will be requested to review the recommendations contained in the forthcoming STEM report and outline the way forward in implementing a National Strategy to develop competence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.
10.5.7	We will benchmark entrepreneurial activity in Irish higher education and work with the Higher Education Authority to ensure an ambitious and implementable plan to identify and address skills gaps, ICT and STEM needs.
10.6.1	We are committed to delivering a school capital investment programme for extensions/refurbishments, additional school places, and eliminating the use of prefabs. Significant funding has been secured as part of the Capital Plan.
10.6.2	We support an annual application process for the Minor Works and Summer Works schemes.
10.6.3	In addition we will introduce a new funding mechanism for low cost safety measures for primary schools such as car parks and bus lay-bys.
10.6.4	Schools buildings must be utilised out of hours if they are to remain at the centre of communities into the future, both throughout the day and throughout the year, including better utilisation of information technology. Afterschool care, homework clubs and other

	community activities should be permissible. Additional capitation funding will be linked to the availability of afterschool care options, where demand exists.
10.7.1	We will examine the adequacy of current special education access and funding provision, in particular for children with Down syndrome. We will request the National Council for Special Education advice on how best to address this. Where efficiencies are made as part of this review, consideration is to be given to the extension of the July Provision Programme to support families over summer months.
10.7.2	We will also consult with stakeholders to see how best to progress sections of the EPSEN Act that were introduced on a non-statutory basis.
10.7.4	We will also invest additional resources in the National Educational Psychologists Service (NEPS) to ensure earlier intervention and access for young children (and also teenagers), and offer immediate support to schools in cases of critical incidents.
10.8.1	We will change the structures of the Department of Education to ensure it operates as a dynamic policy leader focused on quality education and improving outcomes for every student.
10.8.2	We support the creation of Technological Universities, linked to industry and with the capacity to create and retain jobs in regions.
10.8.3	We will implement the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education, published in December 2015.
10.8.4	We will support an increase in the number of flexible courses and opportunities available; giving people the opportunity to attend courses part time, during evenings, in the summer and at weekends. We support the introduction of mid-degree "sandwich year" courses, whereby students spend their third year of university working in industry.
10.8.5	Together with the Apprenticeship Council, SOLAS, the Education and Training Boards, and industry, we will double the number of apprenticeships by 2020. We will also significantly increase the number of traineeship places. We will develop a mechanism to recognise a person's practical work experience and expertise in order to enable them to take on an apprentice.
10.8.6	Create financial incentives for the third level system to respond to skills gaps
10.8.7	Invite industry to partner in the delivery elements of the curricula at third and fourth levels
10.8.8	Create a strong system for the delivery and renewal of skills in newly emerging technical areas (including apprenticeships, traineeships, and in service progression)
10.8.9	Significant exchequer resources are invested in both current and capital spending in the Higher Education sector. Following the publication of the Expert Group report on the Future Funding of the Higher Education Sector, we will propose that the relevant cross party Oireachtas Committee review its recommendations and outline a proposed funding plan for this sector.

10.8.10	We will propose an examination of the efficiency and operation of SUSI in parallel with this report, including the potential of providing SUSI liaison personnel in each region
10.8.11	We support new flexibility for appropriate higher education institutions within strict budgets, transparency and new accountability agreements, to set their own staffing needs, hire the best lecturers, automate routine processes and adapt work practices to staff and student needs. By allowing universities more flexibilities and 'earned autonomy' they can prioritise and address issues themselves for the improvement of their institution, and the creation of a new relationship with students.
10.8.12	We will do this by initiating a review of the Further, Adult and Community Education sector by the Oireachtas Committee on Education and an implementation of reforms to ensure the effectiveness of the sector.
10.8.13	We will also commission an independent examination to identify the supports and barriers to accessing higher education for lone parents, and examine measures to increase participation. The recommendations of this report are to be published in advance of Budget 2017
11.14.1	We will examine the adequacy of current special education access and funding provision, in particular for children with Down syndrome. We will request the National Council for Special Education to advise on how best to address this. We will also consult with stakeholders to see how best to progress sections of the EPSEN Act that were introduced on a non-statutory basis.
11.14.2	We will publish an updated Action Plan for Educational Inclusion to narrow the gap between DEIS and non-DEIS schools, and examine how students outside of DEIS can be better supported.
11.15.1	We will publish new School Admissions and Excellence legislation providing families with fairer access to their local schools.
11.17.2	We will review implementation of the National Action Plan on Bullying in our schools.
14.1.9	We will publish a new updated Action Plan for Educational Inclusion, within 12 months, with particular focus on DEIS schools.
14.1.10	We will also implement a national access programme for higher education to boost college numbers from families without a history of third-level education, as well as mature students.

Rialtas na hÉireann
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Empowering through learning

Action Plan for Education 2019

Prepared by the Department of Education and Skills
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