



To Boards of Management and Principal Teachers, Teaching Staff of Primary Schools and Special Schools and CEOs of ETBs

Professional Development Support for the Primary Language Curriculum / Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile

and

Launch of Guidance on Preparation for Teaching and Learning

1. Professional Development Support for the Primary Language Curriculum / Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile

Since September 2019, much work has been done by schools in implementing the Primary Language Curriculum / Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile (PLC/CTB) for all children in primary schools and in special school settings. We are aware of the great efforts made by schools to continue implementation during the school closures and to engage in professional development support accordingly.

A comprehensive programme of professional development has been made available by the Department of Education to support teachers in their implementation of the PLC/CTB. Teachers are also advised to continue to become familiar with the range of supports found in the Primary Language Toolkit which includes Examples of Children's Language Learning / Samplaí d'Fhoghlaim Teanga na bPáistí, Support Materials / Ábhar Tacaíochta and Progression Continua / Contanaim Dul Chun Cinn available at www.curriculumonline.ie and to use these to inform their teaching of English and Gaeilge.

The purpose of this communication is to provide an update on a revised programme of professional development to support teachers as well as to highlight an information event to support the launch on Guidance for Preparation for Teaching and Learning. This supersedes previous communication sent to all schools on 17 December 2020.

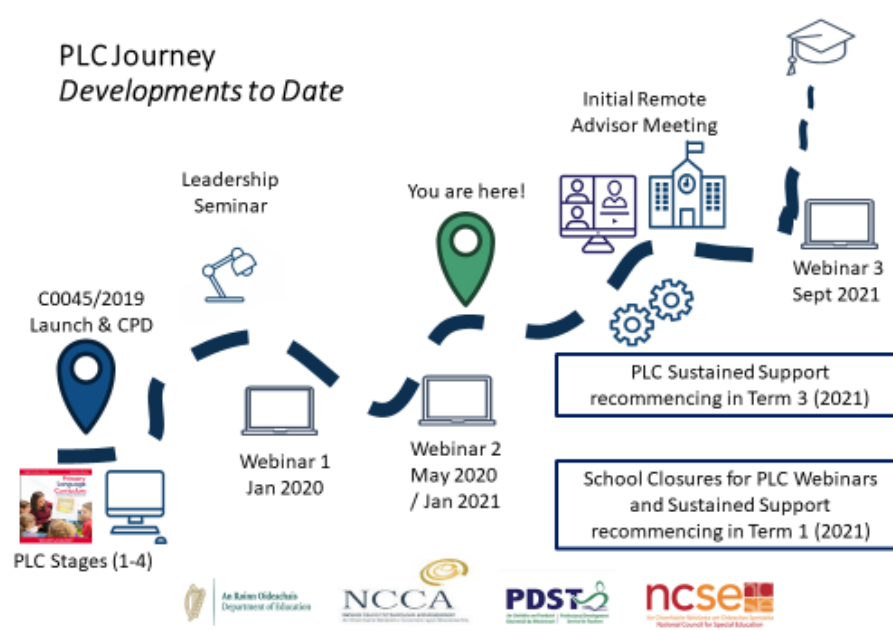
Developments to date

[Circular 45/2019](#) on the PLC/CTB outlines the programme of support for the implementation of the PLC/CTB, which began in the 2019/20 school year. This included a whole-staff seminar for all schools and two webinars which were released in January 2020 (PLC/CTB Webinar 1) and May 2020 (PLC/CTB Webinar 2). Many schools did not have the opportunity to engage with



PLC/CTB Webinar 2 during the school closures. This webinar was re-released in January 2021 and is currently available to all schools at <https://www.pdst.ie/primary/literacy/webinars> and <https://ncse.ie/cpd-plc-2019>.

In addition, the provision of sustained support began in January 2020 for the first cohort of schools. Due to the extended period of school closures, this sustained support was paused for Cohort 1 schools.



A communication was sent to all schools on 17 December 2020 providing updated information on professional development support for the PLC/CTB and Guidance for Preparation for Teaching and Learning.

The Department recognises the volume of work being undertaken by teachers and school leaders in supporting the re-engagement of pupils with face-to-face learning following the re-opening of schools in March 2021. The initial focus is on children and teacher's health, safety and wellbeing. In order to prioritise the support for the children to re-integrate back into school life there is a need for uninterrupted face-to-face teaching and learning for the remainder of this school year. As a result, the programme of school closures to support implementation of the PLC/CTB which was planned to recommence in Term 3 of the 2020/2021 school year will now be postponed until Term 1 of the 2021/2022 school year.



Revised plans for Professional Development Support

All schools are encouraged to use PLC/CTB Webinars 1 and 2 to support implementation during Term 3 2020/2021 available at <https://www.pdst.ie/primary/literacy/webinars> and <https://ncse.ie>.

Furthermore, all schools will be encouraged to engage with PLC/CTB Webinar 3 when it is released in Term 1 2021/2022. This will be supported by a half-day school closure in Term 1 2021/2022.

Sustained support is being provided by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) in the case of primary schools and/or the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) in the case of all special schools in three cohorts.

- **Cohort 1:** An advisor from the relevant support service will contact each of the Cohort 1 schools during Term 3 2020/2021 to arrange and conduct the initial remote support. The initial remote support is to facilitate each school to identify their unique needs, set goals for implementation and agree on a professional learning plan that will support this. This school support will not involve school closure.
- **Cohort 2:** Applications for Cohort 2 will be open in April 2021 and a communication will issue from the PDST in the case of all primary schools and NCSE in the case of all special schools with details of how to apply. Where possible some schools involved in Cohort 2 will be offered an initial remote meeting as above, during Term 3 2020/2021, while the remainder will be contacted about an initial meeting in Term 1 2021/2022.
- **Cohort 3:** Applications for sustained support for a third Cohort of schools will open in Spring 2022 for support to commence in the 2022/2023 school year.

The table below summarises the range of opportunities for professional development support for the PLC/CTB that are available to primary schools over the coming months and years.

| Cohort | Webinars | Sustained Support |
|---|---|---|
| Cohort 1 (Note: Cohort 1 schools re-commencing sustained support with | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage with PLC/CTB Webinars as they are released (one per term during the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 school years), starting with PLC/CTB | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Re-commence sustained support via remote meeting(s) with PDST or NCSE Advisor during Term 3 2020/2021 |



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>initial remote meeting in Term 3 2021/2022. Sustained support to run to June 2022)</p> | <p>Webinar 3 in Term 1 2021/2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>From September 2021</i>, avail of one half-day school closure per webinar per term (led by schools themselves) to support this engagement. To note two webinar half days cannot be combined to result in a full day closure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDST or NCSE advisors will offer up to five visits in 2021/2022 school year per school for sustained support, one of which may comprise a half day school closure. <p><i>Note: From September 2021, schools involved in sustained support may combine a half-day webinar closure (led by the schools themselves) with the half-day sustained support closure, resulting in one full-day's closure, while following public health advice. However, schools are not permitted to take school closures alongside school/public holidays.</i></p> |
| <p>Cohort 2</p> <p>(Note: Cohort 2 schools commencing sustained support with initial remote meeting in Term 3 (where possible) or Term 1 2021/2022. Sustained support to run to June 2022)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with PLC/CTB Webinars as they are released (one per term during the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 school years), starting with PLC/CTB Webinar 3 in Term 1 2021/2022. • Avail of one half-day school closure per webinar per term (led by schools themselves) during this time to support this engagement. To note two webinar half days cannot be combined to result in a full day closure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commence sustained support with PDST or NCSE Advisor during Term 3 2020/2021 or Term 1 2021/2022 via remote meeting(s), or face-to-face engagements if public health guidelines permit. • PDST or NCSE advisors will offer up to six visits in 2021/2022 school year per school for sustained support, one of which may comprise a school closure. Schools that receive an initial remote meeting in Term 3 2021 will be offered five visits during the 2021/2022 year. <p><i>Note: From September 2021, schools involved in</i></p> |



| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | | <p><i>sustained support may combine a half-day webinar closure (led by the schools themselves) with the half-day sustained support closure, resulting in one full-day's closure, while following public health advice. However, schools are not permitted to take school closures alongside school/public holidays.</i></p> |
| <p>Cohort 3</p> <p>(Note: Applications for this cohort will open in Spring 2022)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with PLC/CTB Webinars as they are released (one per term during the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 school years), starting with PLC/CTB Webinar 3 in Term 1 2021/2022. • Avail of one half-day school closure per webinar per term (led by schools themselves) during this time to support this engagement. To note two webinar half days cannot be combined to result in a full day closure. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commence sustained support with PDST or NCSE Advisor from Term 1 2022/2023. • PDST will offer up to six visits in 2022/2023 school year per school for sustained support, one of which may comprise a school closure. <p><i>Note: During sustained support, schools may combine a half-day webinar closure (led by the schools themselves) with the half-day sustained support closure, resulting in one full-day's closure. However, schools are not permitted to take school closures alongside school/public holidays.</i></p> |

Public health advice should be followed in planning and organising any engagements with professional development, including engagements with PDST and/or NCSE advisors (either remotely or in a face-to-face context) and also with regards to school closures to facilitate engagement with webinars. Schools will have the autonomy to plan their school closures as best suits their needs and context. These closures will facilitate collaborative discussion and reflection, and to allow schools to prepare for the next stages of implementation of the PLC/CTB in their own context.



All webinars supporting the PLC/CTB are available, and future webinars will continue to be made available, at the links provided above.

2. Launch of Guidance on Preparation for Teaching and Learning

As set out in the communication from the Department of Education on the 17 December 2020, the Department, including the Inspectorate, and in collaboration with the NCCA, the PDST and the NCSE, has led the development of Guidance on Preparation for Teaching and Learning for all primary and special schools. This guidance is to assist teachers in their planning and preparation for the entire curriculum, including the PLC/CTB.

Teachers have been central to the development of the Guidance on Preparation for Teaching and Learning. By working through a collaboration led by the Department of Education, with the NCCA, the PDST and the NCSE, teachers have described their experiences of ‘planning’ and their sense of increased paperwork. This Guidance aims to reduce the emphasis on paperwork, by capturing and valuing the broad range of activities teachers engage with before, during and after teaching.

The guidance aims to support teachers and school leaders in all school contexts by providing a renewed understanding of preparation for teaching and learning which includes invisible, visible and documented aspects which are all of equal importance.

An online information event for all primary and special school teachers and school leaders will take place on **Tuesday, 27 April from 3:30-4:45pm** to support the launch of the Guidance. This event will present the key messages of the guidance through an inter-agency video, and provide a space for teachers and school leaders to respond to the guidance by describing how it will support their work.

Registration for the online event will be open on April 16 2021 with communication through social media promotion and the NCCA website (www.ncca.ie) from 19 to 23 April. Registration will close on 26th April. The information event provides a good opportunity to engage with this guidance both individually and, collectively, as a whole staff. A recording of the event will be made available on the afternoon of Tuesday 27 April for teachers/principals who are not in a position to attend.

Whole School Planning



The agencies involved in developing this guidance for Preparation of Teaching and Learning will be looking at the development of guidance in respect to Whole School Planning in due course.

Evelyn O'Connor

Evelyn O'Connor
Principal Officer – Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

12 April 2021