ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS 2014

Achieve your full potential through learning

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Foreword by the Minister

I welcome the publication of the Department's Annual Report for 2014, which outlines the significant work undertaken by the Department during the year. I was honoured to have been appointed Minister for Education and Skills in July 2014. Throughout my career, education has always been a priority for me – I have a great belief in the power of education to transform lives and create a more equal society. In order to achieve the best outcomes possible for all, we are implementing an extensive programme of reform, which focuses on the themes of learning for life; improving quality and accountability; supporting inclusion and diversity and building the right systems and infrastructures.

Positive educational experience in the early years is key to setting the foundations for successful life-long learning, and to promote this, the Department continued to work closely with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs during the year to develop the workforce in the early years sector and to ensure the provision of high quality early education through programme evaluation and improvement. The appointment of an Early Years Education Advisory Group will further develop this work during 2015.

Delivering real equality of opportunity through education is a clear priority for me. In support of this goal, the drafting of the Education (Admissions to Schools) Bill, which aims to provide greater equality of access to schools, was progressed and approved by Government in 2014, and has recently been published. I also welcomed the publication, during the year, of evaluations of the DEIS programme, the Department's main policy initiative to address educational disadvantage in schools, which showed encouraging trends in terms of attainment levels and pupil retention and attendance rates. Other initiatives to support inclusion and diversity, incorporating the improved participation of parents in our schools and enhancing supports for children and young people with special educational needs, have been implemented or are underway.The success of all of these initiatives will provide great benefits for our society.

Ensuring that students at all levels of the education system are experiencing positive educational outcomes and are being equipped with the necessary skills for successful participation in society is at the core of a quality education system. To this end, on-going curriculum reform and programme development remains a priority for me, involving consultation with relevant agencies and stakeholders.

The success of the implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy is already evident. The National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics at primary level have now shown the first improvements since 1980, with overall primary level targets having been reached. Meanwhile, Project Maths and the introduction of bonus points for Higher Level Maths have continued to have a positive impact, with ever greater numbers of students taking higher level mathematics at Leaving Certificate Level.

Reform at Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle continues to be progressed with the introduction and development of new subject specifications. Supports and resources are being made available to teachers and schools to facilitate the implementation of this reform and the Department has engaged in intensive discussions with stakeholders to progress it. Changes to the grading bands at Leaving Certificate level, and to the CAO points system will be significant changes which will be developed during 2015.

The further education and training (FET) sector saw the publication of the first ever 5 year strategy for the sector, along with the development of an integrated FET Services Plan and an Apprenticeship Implementation Plan. The Department is committed to engagement with employers to ensure that the FET sector is aligned with the needs of the economy and maximises the potential for learners to participate in the labour market. The higher education sector is also undergoing extensive reform with the implementation of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 and the development of the Higher Education System Performance Framework 2014-2016.

For the first time in recent years, in late 2014, I was pleased to be able to announce that the education budget would rise. I am committed to on-going further investment in our education system, which I am confident will result in many dividends for society.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff of the Department, along with those working in our agencies and at all levels throughout the wider education sector, for your continued hard work and commitment in 2014. It gives me great pleasure to report on your achievements during the year and I welcome your continued support in 2015.

***Jan O'Sullivan*, Minister for Education and Skills**

Statement from the Secretary General

I am pleased to introduce the Department's Annual report for 2014, which affords us all the opportunity to reflect on what we have achieved over the last year. As a Department, our key objective is to support a system of education and training that enables each learner to achieve their full potential and contribute to Ireland's economic, social and cultural development. Our over-arching goal is to improve the quality of learning and teaching at all levels of the education and training sector and improve educational outcomes over time.

We worked hard to progress our goals in 2014 as we continued to implement a comprehensive programme of reform. In doing so we have adopted a "whole system" approach to strategic planning and implementation across the education sector as we believe that this is the most effective way to deliver meaningful change and to achieve the best outcomes for all. This approach enables us to plan and implement our reform programme while continuing to meet the demands of supporting and sustaining the operation of our education and training system.

During the year, the reform agenda across the education and training sector was managed and implemented through the Department's Integrated Reform Delivery Plan (IRDP) 2014 and the Shared Service and External Service Delivery (ESD) Plans 2014 – 2016. The Public Service Reform (PSR) Programme Office within the Department promoted the development of strong governance structures, in addition to the use of programme and project management structures and methodologies across the Department and the sector. To ensure better value for money the PSR Office coordinated initiatives such as the establishment of the Schools Procurement Unit and the Education Procurement Network.

The Department met all of its targets in respect of the transition of transactional human resources and pension functions to the Human Resources Shared Service Centre **PeoplePoint,** leading to significant changes to the delivery of HR services to staff in the Department. We also actively participated in both the Financial Management Shared Services project and the Shared Payroll project, which will result in the transfer of payroll and travel and subsistence functions to a shared services platform in 2015.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) system improvements during the year included a number of enhancements to our school employee payrolls and the financial management system (FMS) to allow for the implementation of Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act 2001, new sick leave arrangements for school employees and SEPA (Single European Payments Area).

Work also continued on the development of a new primary learner online database, POD, which when fully implemented will provide data for programme evaluation and evidence based policy formulation. The ongoing implementation of the post-primary learners database (PPOD) has streamlined the annual October returns process, while enhancements to the Summer Works Scheme application have increased its efficiency.

A priority for the Department is the provision of quality customer service. With this in mind, we continued to review our service provision. As part of this work, enhancements were made to our website, including the launch of a new website platform for the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) to make it easier for parents, schools and educationalists to access NEPS information, resources and publications. New initiatives were also implemented to increase awareness of the work of both the Minister and the Department through the wider publication of material on the website. Our focus on on-going business process improvement remains a priority to ensure increased efficiency and better service provision.

While our economy is beginning to grow, as a Department we continue to operate with diminished resources. Despite this, the commitment and hard work of the Department's staff and those working throughout the education sector has allowed us to deliver on and progress our goals. I would like to thank you all for your on-going commitment, collaboration and flexibility in meeting targets and embracing change. New targets and strategies have been set in our Statement of Strategy for 2015-17 and I look forward to working with you all to achieve these goals.

Seán Ó Foghlú, **Secretary General**

1 Review of the Year

On-going significant progress was made by the Department in many of its priority areas in 2014.

1.1 Early Years Education

In order to promote high quality early education provision, the Department liaised with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs on a range of measures to endeavour to ensure that graduates of early education programmes are equipped to work effectively in the area. These included steps towards increasing the minimum qualifications required by staff, along with the initiation of a review of early education programmes. Further information in relation to early education initiatives in 2014 can be viewed at paragraph 4.1.

1.2 Curriculum Reform in Schools

Development of the education system through curriculum reform to provide optimum outcomes for learners and society continued to be a priority for the Department.

1.2.1 Primary Level

At primary level, the Department worked closely with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in relation to the implementation of significant reform. This included the development of a new integrated language curriculum, along with the commencement of work in the area of mathematics at primary level. Standardised tests were implemented for the third year in a row as part of the continued implementation of the National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy.

1.2.2 Post-Primary Level

At post-primary level, Leaving Certificate students sat examinations which covered the entirety of the new Project Maths curriculum, while at Junior Certificate level, students were examined in strands 1-4. Due to both the introduction of the new Leaving Certificate Project Maths syllabus, along with the provision of bonus points, there has been a significant increase in the number of students presenting for the higher level (HL) Mathematics paper.

As part of Junior Cycle reform, the new English subject specification was rolled out to schools, a number of short courses were finalised and work continued on the development of new specifications for a number of other subjects.

Intensive negotiations on the implementation of the new Junior Cycle continued with all stakeholders.

Work continued on the development of new specifications for a number of subjects as part of Senior Cycle reform.

The development of a languages strategy to consider the role of foreign languages in the post-primary, further and higher education sectors was also commenced

See paragraphs 4.2-4.10 for further information on curriculum reform.

1.3 Promoting Inclusiveness and Student Well-being in Schools

The Department provided on-going support to tackle bullying in schools through the continued implementation of the Action Plan on Bullying, including the provision of funding for training

sessions for parents, introduction of resources such as UP2US and continuing professional development for teachers to develop their ability to tackle bullying.

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) developed guidelines for the establishment or review of Student Support Teams in 2014. The role of Student Support Teams is to support students with social, emotional and behavioural issues and they are also a focal point for training, support and advice from the NEPS psychologist assigned to the school.

1.3.1 School Patronage

The report ***Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector: Progress to Date and Future Directions*** was published on 1st July 2014. This paper gives an update on the progress made to date on implementing the recommendations of the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the primary sector, with a particular focus on good practice and options for promoting diversity in primary schools.

1.3.2 School Admission Policies

In March 2014, the Government approved the drafting of the Education (Admission to Schools) Bill, which aims to provide an over-arching framework to ensure school enrolment policies are more structured, fair and transparent and that every child receives a school place. The Bill is at an advanced stage of drafting and is on the Government legislative programme for publication early in 2015.

For further information on all of the above see paragraph 4.14.

1.4 Enhancements to Teacher Education

Further Improvements to initial teacher education (ITE) and enhancements to the provision of continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers were implemented in 2014. These included the full implementation of the changes to the content and duration of all ITE programmes in line with the Literacy and Numeracy strategy by the end of 2014. See paragraph 4.20 for further information.

1.5 Teacher Supply

In 2014, the Teaching Council approved a roadmap towards a sustainable model of teacher supply and established a technical working group, to pilot a draft model for teacher supply. A consultative forum for all interested stakeholders was also established. An Interim report on the work of the technical working group was received in December 2014 and a final report is due in late 2015.

1.6 Proposed New Model for Allocating Teachers for Students with Special Educational Needs

The National Council for Special Education (NSCE) published its *Report on a Proposed New Model for Allocating Teachers for Students with Special Educational Needs* on 18th June 2014. The Report was prepared by a working group which was appointed by the NCSE and included representatives from disability organisations and parent representative bodies. Further information is available at paragraph 4.17.5.

1.7 Teaching Council (Amendment) Bill – Vetting of Teachers and Fitness to Teach

In April 2014, the Government approved the drafting of the Teaching Council (Amendment) Bill.

The Bill caters for two main overarching aims: underpinning the central role of the Teaching Council in the forthcoming statutory vetting arrangements for registered teachers and amending and strengthening the statutory provisions relating to the Teaching Council's fitness to teach function. It is envisaged that the Bill will be published in 2015. See 4.22.2.

1.8 Inspectorate Activities

In conjunction with its extensive programme of inspection, during the year, the Inspectorate also advanced work on the Department's review of Gaeltacht education. A draft report on the review of national research on Gaeltacht education was completed, as was a draft report on case studies carried out by the Inspectorate on a sample of Gaeltacht schools. The Inspectorate also carried out case study visits on a sample of primary and post-primary schools as part of the Department's review of exemptions from Irish.

1.9 Developments in the Further Education and Training (FET) Sector

A number of reforms relating to the Further Education and Training Sector were further progressed in 2014, including the establishment and development of SOLAS and the 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs).

The first ever five year *Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 -2019* was published by SOLAS in May 2014, along with the first integrated Further Education and Training Services Plan for the sector.

Following on from the publication of the Review of the Irish Apprenticeship system in 2013, an Apprenticeship Implementation Plan was also published in June 2014. Among the main recommendations from the Review was the establishment of an Apprenticeship Council to oversee the development of apprenticeships in new areas. The Council was formally launched in November 2014 and has issued a call for proposals for new apprenticeships, which will be considered in 2015. Further information in relation to the above and other developments in the FET sector is available at Goal 2 pages 28-32.

1.10 Developments in the Higher Education Sector

The Higher Education System in Ireland is undergoing a programme of unprecedented modernisation and reform. The on-going implementation of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, aims to develop the higher education system to equip people with the knowledge and skills necessary to live fulfilled and rewarding lives, and to meet the social and economic challenges facing Ireland. A System Performance Framework, stating national priorities and key objectives of Government for higher education was set out by the Minister for 2014-2016.

With a view to improving students' experience, a further key part of the reforms underway is to support a better transition from second-level to higher education. Key stakeholders and agencies across the second and third level sectors are at an advanced stage in agreeing a package of proposals that will achieve this objective.

Due to pressures on the higher education system, as a result of the continuing growth in student numbers, an expert group was established in 2014 to identify approaches that would achieve a sustainable funding base to address continual expansion of the sector, while maintaining quality education.

More information in relation to developments in the higher education sector can be found under Goal 3 pages 32-36.

1.11 Public Service Reform

In 2014, the Public Service Reform Programme Office within the Department coordinated the establishment of the Schools Procurement Unit and the Education Procurement Network. The implementation of the Shared Service Plan 2014 – 2016 saw the completion of the Higher Education Payroll Shared Service Baseline Report and the ETB Payroll Shared Service Business Case. In early 2014, an initial review of all Education for Sustainable Development Projects was also completed.

The Department met all of its targets in respect of the transition of transactional human resources and pension functions to the Human Resources Shared Service Centre **PeoplePoint** in February 2014.

The Department was also an active participant in both the Financial Management Shared Services project and the Shared Payroll project. The Department's staff payroll and travel and subsistence functions are due to transfer over to a shared services platform in March 2015.

1.12 Dealing with Past Abuse

The Department continued to support the work of Caranua, the Residential Institutions Statutory Fund established to oversee the use of the cash contributions of up to €110 million pledged by the religious congregations to support the needs of some 15,000 survivors of residential institutional child abuse. Caranua began accepting applications in January 2014 and by the end of the year it had received some 3,829 applications and spent €8.9m on the provision of a range of approved services for former residents.

In December 2014 the Government approved proposals to offer out of court settlements to those bringing cases of historical school child sexual abuse against the State where the cases come within the terms of the European Court of Human Rights Decision in the Louise O'Keeffe case and meet certain other requirements.

2 General Corporate Information and Data

This section of the Report provides general corporate data. Data in relation to specific initiatives can be found from paragraphs 4.1 to 8.8 of the Report. Key education statistics can be found on the statistics page of the Department's website via the following link:
www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/

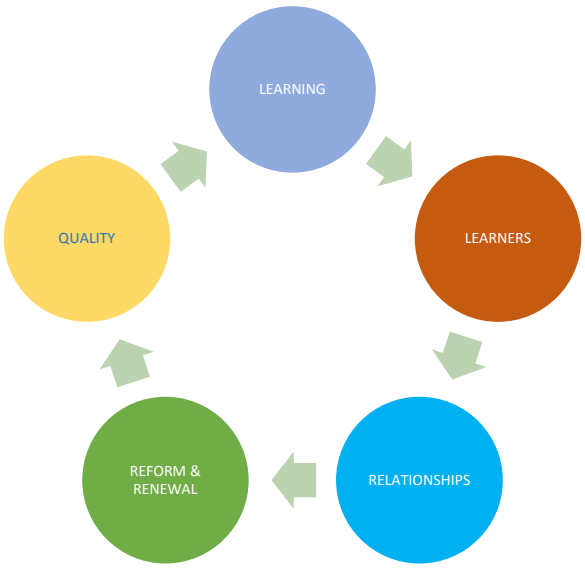
2.1 Our Mission

Our mission is to facilitate individuals to achieve their full potential through learning to enable them to contribute to Ireland's social, cultural and economic development.

2.2 Our Vision

Our vision is to have an internationally recognised education and training system based on evidence-informed policies designed to anticipate and respond to the changing needs of learners, society and the economy.

2.3 Our Values



- We value **learning** as a public good and recognise its role in the development, cohesion and well-being of society
- We value all of our **learners** and their place at the centre of policy development
- We value **relationships** and working in collaboration with the education sector and the wider community
- We value **quality** and are committed to the principle of continuous improvement and being open to external ideas, challenges and debate
- We are committed to the implementation of the civil service **renewal** plan and the public sector **reform** plan

2.4 Our Approach

We take a "whole-of-system" approach to strategic planning and implementation across the education and training sector. This "joined up" approach enables us to plan and implement an extensive programme of reform while continuing to meet the demands of supporting and sustaining the operation of our education and training system.

3 Our Goals

3.1 Supporting the Parliamentary Process in 2014

Supporting the Parliamentary Process in 2014
➢ **3,786** Parliamentary Questions were responded to
➢ In the region of **8,000** new ministerial representations were received, along with on-going correspondence related to existing case files and constituency matters.
➢ **38** Topical Issue Debates were replied to in the Dáil and **42** Adjournment Debate motions were replied to in the Seanad.

3.2 Information Services

Information Services in 2014
➢ **6,724** emails were received through info@education.gov.ie
➢ **1.9** million visitors viewed over **7** million pages on our website www.education.ie.
➢ The Department continued to use social media as a platform to communicate with external stakeholders and the Department's followers on Twitter increased from over 4,000 in January 2014 to over **14,000** at the end of 2014.
➢ **303** requests under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2014 were received and **300** decisions were made on FOI requests.
➢ The Press Office published **134** press releases and **38** speeches

3.3 Annual Programme of Inspection in Schools and Centres for Education

Further information on school inspections and the work of the Inspectorate can found at paragraph 4.19.

The Inspectorate completed a total of 4,459 inspections or advisory visits to schools in 2014 as outlined in Tables 1 to 4 below.

Table 1: Summary of inspections and evaluations, 2014

Summary of inspections	**2014**
Inspections in primary schools (including inspections of the work of teachers on probation)	2945
Inspections in post-primary schools and centres for education	746
Other inspections of provision for students and young people	135
Total inspections in schools and centres for education	**3826**
Total school self-evaluation advisory visits	633

Table 2: Inspections and evaluations in primary schools, 2014

Primary Inspection/evaluation activity	**2014**
WSE: Primary	266
Incidental inspections	503
Follow-Through inspections	141
DEIS evaluations	10
Inspections of newly qualified primary teachers: probation of teachers (primary) for the school year 2012/13	2025
Total of school inspection visits	**2945**
School self-evaluation advisory visits to schools	491

Table 3: Inspections and evaluations in post-primary schools, 2014

Post-primary Inspection/evaluation activity	**2014**
WSE-MLL (Post-Primary)	75
Subject Inspection	317
Programme Inspections	29
DEIS evaluations	10
Evaluation of Centres for Education (Youthreach, Senior Traveller Training Centres)	4
Incidental inspections	210
Follow-Through inspections	101
Total of school inspection visits	**746**
School self-evaluation advisory visits to schools	142

Table 4: Other inspection activities in 2014

Other inspections/evaluations of provision for students and young people	2014
Evaluation reports on Irish Gaeltacht (Summer/Easter) colleges (Coláistí Gaeilge)	32
Evaluation of schools for other purposes including: *Review of Gaeltacht Education and Review of Exemptions from Irish*	26
Evaluations of Early Childhood Care and Education settings	19
Evaluation of special schools attached to High Support Units, Special Care Units, and Children Detention Schools	9
Inspections of literacy summer camps for children	4
Inspections of campaí samhraidh for children	5
Inspection of summer CPD courses for primary school teachers	40
Total other evaluation activity	**135**

3.4 Table of Prompt Payments in 2014

Prompt Payments[1] Summary January to December 2014			
Details	**Number**	**Value €**	**Percentage (%) of total payments made (Number)**
Number of payments made within 15 days	10,767	366,747,620	90.68%
Number of payments made within 16 days to 30 days	1,042	5,757,052	8.78%
Number of payments made in excess of 30 days	65	96,528	0.55%
Total payments made in 2014	**11,874**	**372,601,200**	**100.00%**
Total Disputed Invoices in 2014	39	240,900	

Source: Summary of 2014 Quarterly reports for the Department pursuant to Government Decision No.S29296 of 19th May 2009

[1] Payments made on or before the date on which payment is due under the terms of a written contract, or where there is no written contract, or if the written contract does not specify a payment date, within 45 days of receipt of the invoice or delivery of the goods or services, whichever is the later.

Progress on our High Level Goals in 2014

4 Goal 1 – Provide a quality inclusive school and early years education system, with improved learning outcomes

The overall aim of the Department in its provision of supports to the school and early years education system is to enable education providers to deliver quality outcomes for all learners in an inclusive environment. To achieve this goal the Department provides on-going teaching, financial, policy, legislative, regulatory and curricular supports, while also seeking to address educational disadvantage and special educational needs. The Inspectorate of the Department provides an assurance of quality and public accountability in the education system by carrying out inspections and evaluations in schools, while promoting best practice and school improvement through the provision of advice to, teachers, principals, boards of management in schools, policy makers in the Department and the wider education sector.

4.1 Supporting a High Quality Early Years Education System

During the year, the Department continued to work with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) on improving the quality of early childhood education. ~~The quality improvement~~ The quality improvement agenda includes the introduction of education-focussed inspections in settings participating in the Free Pre-school Year Scheme. Work began on the development of an appropriate inspection model in 2014 and the inspections, to be carried out by the Inspectorate of the DES at the request of the Ministers for Education and Skills and Children and Youth Affairs, will commence in 2015. A further dimension of the quality agenda is focussed on developing the workforce in the early years sector. In this regard, the DCYA is committed to increasing the minimum qualification requirement so that all staff have to have a relevant Level 5 National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) qualification and pre-school leaders have to have a Level 6 NFQ qualification. The Department worked closely with the DCYA and POBAL on establishing the criteria for a learner fund which would support this upskilling.

In order to adequately equip graduates with the skills, knowledge and dispositions to work in the area of early years education, the quality of education and training programmes leading to qualifications in early years care and education is crucial. A review of all such education and training programmes was initiated in 2014.

The quality improvement agenda also saw the development of a professional specialist support and mentoring service as part of the Better Start initiative. The support service consists of 36 staff, jointly managed by DCYA and Pobal with 30 Early Years Specialists working directly within early years settings.

The Department's work with the Thematic Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC,) established under the auspices of the European Commission, concluded in 2014 with the publication of a *Proposal for key principles of a quality framework for early childhood education and care*.

Continued support for the Early Start Programme, which is a pre-primary initiative in designated areas of urban disadvantage, was provided by the Department. In 2014, 1,261 children availed of the programme. The Department also continued to provide funding for the Rutland Street pre-school project.

A Focussed Policy Assessment of the Early Start Programme was published in June 2014. This assessment identified measures to strengthen the future operation of Early Start by improving efficiency and effectiveness. The recommendations and findings were discussed at a forum held in November 2014, which was attended by 100 Early Start unit teachers, child care workers and

principals.

4.2 Curriculum and Assessment in Schools

Throughout 2014, the Department continued its work with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the State Examinations Commission (SEC) in relation to curriculum development and prioritised the continued implementation of the National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy, Project Maths and Junior Cycle Reform.

4.3 Curriculum Reform at Primary Level

The Department worked with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) to initiate a significant programme of curriculum reform at primary level. This included the commencement of the development of a new integrated language curriculum for junior infants to second class inclusive, and the commencement of the development of a new subject entitled 'Education about Religions and Beliefs and Ethics'. Developments in these areas were progressed in 2014 and will be finalised in 2015. Work also commenced in relation to Primary Mathematics.

4.4 Improving our Literacy and Numeracy Skills

The implementation of the National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011 to 2020, which was published in July 2011, continued in 2014.

Standardised tests were conducted in 2nd, 4th and 6th classes for the third year in May/June 2014. The aggregated results of these tests were returned to the Department for analysis.

4.5 Teaching and Learning of Irish and through Irish in Schools

The Department provided continued support to An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) who provide advice, research, resources and texts in Irish and support services for the teaching of Irish and through Irish.

Improvements to the assessment of literacy in Irish (L1) in Irish-medium schools, as outlined in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, were implemented.

The revision of the contents of the Irish (L2) curriculum for mainstream English schools, using a learning outcomes approach clearly specifying the expected achievements of children at each stage of the primary cycle, took place.

As referred to at 1.8 in the Review of the Year, a review of education in the Gaeltacht has also commenced. This work is due to be completed in 2015.

4.6 National Assessments

In 2014, the Educational Research Centre (ERC) carried out the National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics on a representative sample of over 8,000 pupils in 150 primary schools, using secure tests. The previous baseline tests were carried out in 2009 and the results of the 2014 tests, which will be available during 2015, should show progress since then.

All reports, studies and assessments produced by the ERC are available on **www.erc.ie**

4.7 Transition from primary to post-primary

A suite of materials was developed to support the reporting and transfer of pupil information from primary to post-primary schools. The materials were presented under the umbrella title of Education Passport and are available at www.ncca.ie/transfer.

From 2013/2014, the material was available to schools to support the reporting and transfer of student information. The standard report or transfer card was developed by the NCCA, following an extensive period of engagement with stakeholders, to support the dual purpose of reporting to parents and transferring student information to post-primary schools post-enrolment.

4.8 Curriculum Development at Post-Primary Level

4.8.1 Project Maths

All five strands of Project Maths were rolled out to mainstream schools in September 2012. In June 2014, Leaving Certificate students sat examinations which covered the entirety of the new curriculum (strands 1-5) while at Junior Certificate level, students were examined in strands 1-4. Due to both the introduction of a new Leaving Certificate Project Maths syllabus, and also the provision of bonus points, there has been a significant increase in the number of students presenting for the higher level (HL) Mathematics paper over the past four years. Some 27% of the Mathematics cohort presented for HL in 2014, compared to 25.6% in 2013.

Improvements are also being noted in the Junior Certificate, where 54% of Mathematics students took the higher level paper in 2014, which is up from 52% in 2013.

The target participation rates, as set out in the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy are higher level participation of 30% at Leaving Certificate and 60% at Junior Certificate by 2020.

4.8.2 Impact of Project Maths as a Curriculum Reform Intervention

The Educational Research Centre (ERC) published a report on the initial impact of Project Maths as a curriculum reform intervention using the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012 as an assessment tool. The purpose of this analysis was to compare the performance of students in the 23 initial Project Maths schools, which is the first cohort of schools to roll out Project Maths, with those in the non-initial schools using data from PISA assessments. There is evidence from the report that Project Maths is having an initial positive impact on student achievement in Maths.

4.8.3 Junior Cycle Reform

In September 2014, the English subject specification for the new Junior Cycle was rolled out to schools.

Short courses in Civic, Social and Political Education, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education, Chinese, Coding, Caring for Animals (for children with special needs), CSI: Exploring Forensic Science (for children with special needs), Digital Media Literacy and Artistic Performance were also finalised in 2014.

Work also continued on the development of new specifications in Science, Irish and Business Studies.

Intensive negotiations on the implementation of the new Junior Cycle continued with all stakeholders, in particular, teacher unions who opposed aspects of the reform, particularly as they related to school based assessment. To address stakeholder concerns, a number of changes were made to the implementation plan, including an amendment to the timetable for implementation

and an agreement to continue to assess significant elements of all subjects by examinations set and marked by the State Examinations Commission. The Minister presented a proposal to the Teacher Unions in November, as a way forward, but this was not accepted.

Full information is available at www.juniorcycle.ie and www.education.ie

4.8.4 Senior Cycle Reform

Work continued on the development of new specifications for Economics, Art, Physical Education (P.E.), Applied Mathematics and Agricultural Science. Completed specifications for Chemistry, Physics and Biology were submitted to the Minister. These will be trialled prior to national roll-out. The work of the Transition Reform Steering Group will influence work with Senior Cycle reform.

4.9 Modern Foreign Languages Strategy

Work began on the development of a languages strategy to consider the role of foreign languages in the post-primary, further and higher education sectors. The consultation process ran from August to October 2014 and stakeholders were asked to respond to a background document and key questions.

Almost 80 submissions were received and these were carefully considered in advance of a stakeholder forum to be held in 2015.

4.10 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

The fifth cycle of PISA took place in Ireland in March 2012 and the PISA 2012 results for Ireland were analysed and published at the end of 2013 by the Educational Research Centre (ERC). In 2012, problem solving was included as an optional assessment in PISA. It was a 40 minute computer-based assessment of problem solving. In Ireland, 1,303 15 year olds in 183 schools participated. The results from this were published in April 2014.

Ireland ranked 17th of the 28 OECD countries that took part in the study, and 22nd out of all 44 participating countries. Countries like the United States, Norway, Denmark and Sweden performed similarly to Ireland; while Canada, Australia, Finland and the UK performed significantly better than Ireland. The top six performing countries are in Asia, with Singapore ranked first.

Both the lowest and highest performing students in Ireland for problem solving scored similarly to the OECD average. There is no significant difference between the performance of male and female students. While the performance of students from immigrant backgrounds was significantly higher than the corresponding average for the OECD, it was still significantly lower than those for native students.

4.11 Supporting the Examinations Process

The Department continued to provide support to the State Examinations Commissions (SEC) in 2014. The SEC provides examinations to candidates across all examination programmes, including examinations in curricular and non-curricular examination subjects. A range of measures were provided to facilitate candidates with particular needs to participate in the State examinations. The work of the SEC includes the examination of individual test items such as written examination scripts, artwork, project pieces and oral tests. The SEC also awards examination results and processes appeals.

4.12 Education for Sustainable Development

The National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development was published by the Department in July 2014. The Strategy contains 44 recommendations that relate to the following 8 key priority areas:

- Leadership and coordination
- Data collection and baseline measurement
- Curriculum at pre-school, primary and post-primary.
- Professional development
- Further Education and Training
- Higher Education and Research
- Promoting participation by young people.
- Sustainability in action

Progress was made in 2014 in implementing the recommendations in the Strategy. One of the first recommendations to be implemented was the establishment of an Education for Sustainable Development Advisory Group. This Group, which is chaired by the Department of Education and Skills, met for the first time on 29th October 2014.

4.13 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Schools

4.13.1 ICT in Schools Programme

The ICT in Schools Programme is focused on the integration of ICT into teaching, learning and assessment and promotes the development of pupils' digital literacy.

The programme supports and promotes the development of digital content which is relevant to the Irish curriculum and provides access to broadband connectivity to schools. It also supports the development of a comprehensive national programme of continuing professional development for teachers to assist them in integrating ICT into learning and teaching. Strategies are pursued through the work of the Department and the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) Technology in Education, in collaboration with other agencies, support services and representative bodies as appropriate.

4.13.2 Digital Strategy for Schools

Work is continuing on the development of a new digital strategy for schools. A comprehensive research and consultation process concluded in 2014 and the findings from this will inform recommendations in the Strategy.

4.13.3 Living Schools Lab

The two-year Living Schools Lab project with a participation of 15 partners, including the Department, promoted a whole-school approach to ICT use, scaling up best practices in the use of ICT between schools with various levels of technological proficiency. The participating schools, of which there were seven from Ireland, were supported through peer-exchanges in regional hubs, pan-European teams working collaboratively on a number themes and a variety of opportunities for teachers' ongoing professional development. The project was funded by the European Commission and ended in September 2014.

The observations of schools in 12 countries have led to the production of a report and recommendations on the mainstreaming of best practice and the development of whole-school approaches to ICT.

4.13.4 Broadband in Schools

The Schools Broadband Access Programme provides for the supply of internet connectivity for all primary schools that wish to avail of this service.

The roll out of the Schools High Speed 100Mbit/s Network to all post-primary schools was completed at the end of 2014. The project is a joint venture between the Department and the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR).

Schools broadband connectivity is being routed to the Internet through a National Broadband Network. It provides centrally managed services for schools such as security, anti-spam/anti-virus and content filtering. A national helpdesk has been established to interface between the network, the Broadband Service Access Providers and schools.

4.13.5 Scoilnet

Scoilnet is the Department's official portal for education in Ireland. Originally launched in 1998, the website is managed by PDST Technology in Education on behalf of the Department.

A new version of the Scoilnet website was launched on 27th May 2014 which supports and encourages teachers to add and share their own educational materials on the website. The site currently contains over 11,000 web links and resources that are mapped to the Irish curriculum.

4.14 Promoting Inclusiveness in Schools

4.14.1 Action Plan on Bullying and the Development of Anti-Bullying Procedures

Work continued in 2014 on implementing the actions in the Action Plan on Bullying. The actions in the Plan, which was launched in 2013, focus on support to schools, education and training, research and awareness raising.

Funding was made available for 199 anti-bullying training sessions for 4,300 parents. These were run jointly by the National Parents Council (primary and post-primary).

A new resource to tackle cyberbullying called UP2US was launched through the internet safety initiative, Webwise, and an UP2US social media roadshow was run in collaboration with Beat 102-103.

A study on "The Prevalence and Impact of Bullying Linked to Social Media on the Mental Health and Suicidal Behaviour among Young People", which was commissioned by the Department and the National Office for Suicide Prevention, was published in May 2014.

Also in May 2014, the then Tánaiste and Minister for Education and Skills re-launched the Anti-Bullying Centre as the National Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre.

Other activities included, developing and delivering a programme of CPD in relation to the Action Plan, supporting awareness-raising initiatives such as Safer Internet Day, the Stand Up! Awareness Week Against Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying in second level schools and the ISPCC Shield Campaign.

4.14.2 School Admission Processes

In March 2014, the Government approved the drafting of the Education (Admission to Schools) Bill. The objective of the Bill is to provide an over-arching framework to ensure school admission policies are more structured, fair and transparent.

To improve access to schools for all pupils, the framework proposes new powers for the National Council for Special Education and the Child and Family Agency to designate a school place for children who cannot get any school place.

The Bill will also provide that the Minister may make regulations, which will be drafted in consultation with the education partners.

4.14.3 Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector

Work continued on implementing the Minister's Action Plan in response to the Report of the Advisory Group to the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism. A follow-up paper to the Forum Report, entitled *Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector: Progress to Date and Future Directions,* was published on 1 July 2014. The paper, which was informed by a public consultation process involving parents in particular, sets out the main developments in relation to the implementation of the Forum's recommendations, including updates on the establishment of new schools, divesting of patronage, enrolment legislation and the development of programmes of education about religion, beliefs and ethics. The paper also outlines good practice and options for promoting diversity in all schools.

4.14.4 Report of the Working Group on Substance Use Educational Materials

The *Report of the Working Group on Educational Materials for use in Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), with particular reference to Substance Use Education* was published in July 2014. The report sets out a series of recommendations aimed at assisting teaching staff and schools or centres for education in the delivery of the SPHE programme with a view to complementing actions specified in the National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016. Implementation of the recommendations is ongoing.

4.14.5 Cross-Departmental Issues

During 2014, the Department continued to contribute to a significant number of cross-departmental committees dealing with economic and social issues including the National Drugs Strategy, the National Women's Strategy and the National Disability Strategy.

The Department also responded to the examination of Ireland's Fourth Periodic Report under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which took place during the UN Human Rights Committee's 111th session in July 2014.

4.15 DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) Programme

DEIS, the Action Plan for Educational Inclusion is the Department's main policy initiative to address educational disadvantage. The aim of DEIS is to ensure that the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities are prioritised and effectively addressed.

All primary and post-primary schools participating in DEIS receive a range of additional resources including additional staffing, funding, access to literacy and numeracy programmes and assistance with activities such as school planning. As part of the School Support Programme, interventions such as the Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL) and the School Completion Programme (SCP) are available to DEIS urban primary schools and to DEIS post-primary schools.

There are currently 849 schools participating in the DEIS Programme. This total comprises of 336 urban primary schools, 321 rural primary schools and 192 post-primary schools. The overall cost to the Department of all the elements of the DEIS Programme in 2014 was €96m.

4.15.1 Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL) and School Completion Programme (SCP)

The HSCL and SCP, which are key elements of DEIS, are delivered by the Educational Welfare Service of the Child and Family Agency. 528 DEIS urban primary and post-primary schools have access to the HSCL, with 400 posts allocated for the deployment of teachers to the role of Co-ordinator. There are 124 SCP projects comprising 470 primary schools and 224 post-primary schools targeting in the region of 36,000 children and young people.

The report *Retention Rates of Pupils in Second Level Schools 2008 Entry Cohort* shows that the improvement in DEIS schools' retention rates in recent years has been significantly higher than the overall improvements nationally, up from 68% to 82.1%.

4.15.2 DEIS Evaluation

In order to ensure that DEIS intervention is effective, both the Educational Research Centre (ERC) and the Department's Inspectorate have conducted a series of evaluations on aspects of the DEIS programme. The focus of this research is to ensure the successful implementation of DEIS and that the best possible approaches to measuring its progress and outcomes at both local and national level are being used.

Evaluations, which were published in 2014, include *A Report on the Evaluation of DEIS at Second Level (ERC); The Organisation of the Delivery of Learning Support and Resource Teaching in a Sample of Urban Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Pupils (ERC); An Evaluation of Action Planning for Improvement in DEIS Primary Schools (Inspectorate);* and *An Evaluation of Action Planning for Improvement in DEIS Post-primary Schools (Inspectorate).*

Findings from the ERC reports show encouraging trends in terms of attainment levels and pupil retention and attendance rates. There is also a significant upward trend from 2009 onwards in terms of attainment levels in both English and Mathematics at Junior Certificate level.

4.15.3 Inspectorate Evaluation of DEIS

The Inspectorate presented the findings of DEIS primary and post-primary evaluations conducted in 2013 and 2014 at a DEIS seminar organised by the Department in May 2014. The Inspectorate also contributed to the Economic and Social Research Institute's (ESRI) review of DEIS in December 2014 and prepared two DEIS composite reports for publication in 2015.

The Inspectorate reports show engagement with the DEIS planning process is impacting positively in schools and that a combination of a whole-school focus and a targeted approach is necessary to bring about required improvements. Findings also show that the prevailing atmosphere in DEIS schools is positive for pupils and welcoming of parents. However, there are elements of the DEIS planning process that require further development, in particular target-setting, data analysis as well as monitoring and measuring impact. Overall, trends are positive, but DEIS schools continue to require additional supports and resources.

4.15.4 ESRI Consolidated Report – Learning from DEIS

A consolidated report on the Learning from DEIS was commissioned in 2014. This report will incorporate information in relation to the various inputs, processes and educational outcomes contained in the findings from all the DEIS research and evaluations conducted to date by the ERC and the Inspectorate. It will also review other related Irish and international research on educational disadvantage. The report, which is being prepared by the ESRI, will assess the main findings of this research and provide advice to inform future policy direction in relation to educational disadvantage including DEIS. It is expected to be published in 2015.

4.16 Cooperation with the Irish Youth Justice Service

The Department assisted in the claiming of European Social Fund monies from the European Commission for Irish Youth Justice Service and Garda Youth Diversion Projects in 2014. These projects have been delivered through the Department of Justice and Equality and are targeted at young people who may have little engagement with the more established routes into education, training and employment and focus on the provision of IT and personal development skills.

4.17 Catering for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

The Department provides for a range of educational supports and services for children with special educational needs in mainstream and special schools including teachers, special needs assistants (SNAs), assistive technology, specialist equipment, enhanced capitation and special transport arrangements.

The Department is committed to ensuring that all children with special educational needs can have access to an education appropriate to their needs, preferably in inclusive mainstream school settings through the primary and post-primary school network. Where children with special educational needs cannot be provided for in mainstream settings, the Department provides for specialised special class and special school places.

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is responsible for processing applications from schools for supports for children with special educational needs.

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) provides support to schools in identifying pupil strengths and needs and in planning for, and reviewing, interventions appropriate to those needs.

4.17.1 Targeted Supports for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

As of 31st December 2014, there were 10,700 whole time equivalent learning support or resource teachers in mainstream primary and post-primary schools. In addition, over 1,100 teachers provided education to children attending special schools with reduced pupil teacher ratios ranging from 6-1 to 11-1 depending on disability categorisation.

Children with special care needs are also supported by special needs assistants (SNAs). 11,110 whole time equivalent SNA posts were provided for at the end of 2014, with a further 225 SNA posts to be provided in 2015 to provide for the care needs of children with special educational needs attending primary, post-primary and special schools.

Approximately 1,140 grants issued to primary and special schools in 2014 for the purchase of specialist equipment to assist children with special needs in the classroom. The type of equipment provided includes soundfield systems for children with hearing impairment, or software and computer facilities for children with communicative disability.

An additional 130 special classes or units were established for the 2014/15 school year, providing 860 special classes or units in total.

15,835 places were provided for CPD for teachers of children with special educational needs by the Special Education Support Service in 2014.

338 places were provided on college based programmes in learning support and special education.

4.17.2 Home Tuition Scheme

The Home Tuition Scheme provides funding to parents to provide education at home for children who, for a number of reasons such as chronic illness, are unable to attend school. The scheme was extended in recent years to facilitate tuition for children awaiting a suitable educational placement and to provide early intervention for pre-school children with autism.

1,309 pupils availed of home tuition during the 2013/14 school year.

4.17.3 July Education Programme

The July Education Programme provides for special classes to cater for children with autism who choose to extend their education services through the month of July. The Department also provides for a July Programme for pupils with a severe or profound general learning disability. Where school-based provision is not feasible, home-based provision may be grant-aided through the Home Tuition Scheme.

There has been a steady increase in the number of schools offering the July Programme since it was introduced in 2001. 180 schools participated in the programme in 2014. Approximately 3,850 pupils availed of the home-based July Programme provision in 2014.

4.17.4 Proposed New Model for Allocating Teachers for Students with Special Educational Needs

In accordance with a recommendation in the National Council for Special Education's (NCSE) publication of May 2013 on *Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs in Schools*, the NCSE published its Report on a *Proposed New Model for Allocating Teachers for Students with Special Educational Needs* on 18th June 2014.

The Report was prepared by a working group, appointed by the NCSE, which included representatives from disability organisations and also parent representative bodies.

An extensive consultation process was undertaken by the working group, with stakeholders, to inform the development of its report. Consultation meetings were held with the Health Service Executive, teachers, principals, union officials, parents, school management bodies, NEPS, advocacy groups, the Inspectorate, and special educational needs organisers.

Work will continue in 2015 to develop the proposed model and to address the range of concerns which were identified through the consultations which have taken place so far.

The Department is to design a pilot of the new model, which schools could opt into on a voluntary basis. Continuing consultation with stakeholders will form a vital part of this ongoing work.

4.17.5 Policy Advice on Autism

In 2014, the Minister requested the NCSE to provide policy advice on educational provision for children with autism spectrum disorders. The NCSE has advised that the policy advice will be delivered in early 2015 and will draw upon findings gathered from an extensive consultation process. The advice will also draw upon new research commissioned by the NCSE for this purpose, as well as any other research which may be available and which the NCSE considers merits consideration. It is expected that the NCSE's final report will reflect the broadest possible range of views and provide recommendations which will assist the development of policy for future years.

4.17.6 Middletown Centre for Autism Project

The Middletown Centre for Autism project is a jointly funded initiative between the Department of Education in Northern Ireland and this Department aimed at supporting the promotion of

excellence in the development and harmonisation of education and allied services to children and young people with autistic spectrum disorders. Further information about the Centre is available at www.middletownautism.com.

2014 saw the second year of the two-year phased expansion of services at the Middletown Centre for Autism agreed by the North South Ministerial Council education sector meeting on 15th June 2012. Alongside increasing the number of users that have benefited from the Centre's services, an important aim of the expansion of services was to further embed the Centre as an essential delivery body of the range of services available to support children with autism on an all-island basis.

The expansion of the Centre's services in the South has enabled the Centre to pilot the provision of direct support to children, the completion of targeted research projects in order to inform future policy development and an increase in the number of training places offered to both parents and professionals, particularly highlighting key life stages for a child with autism.

4.18 School Transport Scheme

One of the functions of the Department is to provide a safe, efficient and cost effective transport service for eligible children to and from school, and to ensure the timely payment of grants to assist eligible families with school transportation costs in circumstances where it is not feasible or economic to provide school transport services**.**

Some 114,000 children, including 9,000 children with special educational needs, were transported safely to school in the 2013/14 school year. 82 million kilometres were travelled, covering 42 million journeys using some 6,000 routes.

Over 2,000 families received some €3.2 million in grant payments during 2014.

The outturn for the service amounted to €172 million, which was some €2 million in excess of the allocation of €170 million.

4.19 Inspection and Quality Assurance in Schools

The Department's Inspectorate contributes to the provision of a high quality inclusive school system through its annual programme of inspection in schools and centres for education, its development of new and improved models of inspection and its contribution to Department policy across a range of areas.

4.19.1 Annual Programme of Inspection in Schools and Centres for Education

The Inspectorate completed a total of 4,419 inspections or advisory visits to schools in 2014 as outlined in Tables 1-4 on pages 9 and 10.

The Inspectorate continued with its development of a range of tools to support the quality assurance of its inspections and to improve its customer service. These tools include: the ongoing piloting of quality assurance surveys of principals and teachers following a whole-school evaluation in a sample of schools at primary and post-primary levels; the use of a personal reflection sheet by inspectors following evaluation or advisory activities and ongoing participation by the management of the Inspectorate in inspection and advisory work. The Code of Practice for the Inspectorate was revised to better reflect the breadth and scope of the organisation's work beyond school inspection. External consultation with partners was conducted and the revised Code is expected to be formally accepted in 2015.

4.19.2 School Self Evaluation (SSE)

The Inspectorate organised a national seminar on SSE to provide an international perspective on SSE and to enable schools to share their experience and to disseminate good practice. Inspectors continued to conduct SSE advisory visits to schools and published two primary and two post-primary SSE Updates to assist and support schools to engage in the SSE of teaching and learning.

4.19.3 Development of New and Improved Models of Inspection

The Inspectorate aims to continually improve its coverage of schools and centres for education and the quality of its work. In 2014, it completed the development of a focussed model of inspection of special educational needs (SEN) provision in primary schools, as well as a model for the evaluation of specific aspects of the primary curriculum. Pilots of both models are currently underway in a number of primary schools.

A pilot of the Follow-through Model of Evaluation was completed and reports from Follow-Through inspections conducted since March 2014 have been published on the Department's website.

4.19.4 Inspectorate Support for the Action Plan on Bullying

Under action 5 of the *Action Plan on Bullying*, the Inspectorate engaged in research to identify the dimensions of schools' provision for students' wellbeing and in 2014 a collaborative research project on this theme got underway in a number of primary and post-primary schools.

In 2014, under action 4 of the *Action Plan on Bullying,* the questionnaires which are routinely administered to parents and pupils/students as part of whole-school type evaluations have been amended to include a number of statements, which ask them for their views on aspects of the school which contribute to a positive school culture.

4.19.5 Inspectorate Contribution to Policy and Curriculum Reform

The Inspectorate contributes to curriculum reform on an ongoing basis and provided input into the circular on Junior Cycle that was circulated to schools in early 2014. It also chaired the Junior Cycle Advisory Group with the Department and advised on the development of the new specifications for Science and the drafting of the new specifications for Business Studies and Irish. In addition, the Inspectorate advised on the development of the Junior Cycle CPD programmes for English and Science and provided advice on the development of the new language curriculum at primary level.

The Inspectorate also contributed to a number of policy areas including work on issues related to special education provision, school autonomy and social inclusion.

The Inspectorate also developed domains and standards for school leadership as part of its contribution to the leadership group appointed by the Department's Management Advisory Committee. These domains and standards will guide the work of the new Centre for School Leadership and will be developed to support School Self-Evaluation of leadership and management in schools.

4.20 Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development

4.20.1 Initial Teacher Education Programmes

The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020, launched in July 2011, aims to ensure that teachers and schools maintain a strong focus on literacy and numeracy skills, within a broad and balanced curriculum and sets out a wide-ranging programme of reforms in initial teacher education courses at primary and post-primary levels. Close consultation took place between the Department and the Teaching Council in relation

to implementation of the strategy and the proposed changes to teacher education were incorporated into the Teaching Council's Policy Paper on the Continuum of Teacher Education and Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers, which were published in 2011.

Improvements being made to initial teacher education courses include the setting of new higher entry requirements for teacher education courses and the reconfiguring of the content and duration of courses to ensure the development of teachers' skills in literacy and numeracy teaching.

With effect from September 2014, all consecutive (post-graduate) programmes of initial teacher education must be of two years duration amounting to 120 European Credit Transfers leading to the full implementation of the changes to content and duration of all ITE programmes in line with the literacy and numeracy strategy by the end of 2014.

The Department continues to engage and communicate efficiently and effectively with the colleges of education on a range of matters relevant to initial teacher education, in particular in relation to the Bachelor of Education Degree and the Professional Masters in Education for primary teaching.

4.20.2 National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT)

The main objective of the National Induction Programme for Teachers is to support the professional development of newly qualified teachers at both primary and post-primary level by way of systemic support at the beginning of their teaching career, thus laying the foundations for subsequent professional growth and development.

Droichead, a period of supported professional practice, is a central feature of a new model of induction and probation which is being piloted in a number of schools over the three years 2013-2014, 2014-2015 and 2015-16. Following satisfactory completion of the *Droichead* process, newly qualified teachers will be confirmed by their fellow professionals as having met certain criteria and the Teaching Council will remove the *Droichead* condition from their registration. The Department has responsibility for the management of the National Induction Programme for Teachers, while the Teaching Council has responsibility for the Droichead programme.

The Department's Inspectorate supported the *Droichead* project by providing advice and attending cluster meetings and shared learning days in 2014.

4.20.3 Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST)

The main aim of the PDST is to ensure quality, consistent and cohesive continuing professional development (CPD) support in response to national priority areas and emerging local needs.

The PDST is charged with leading the provision of support for teachers in relation to the Department's Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, including School Self-Evaluation. This work continued in 2014, with a focus on the delivery of a series of school improvement seminars, which aim to promote meaningful links between literacy and numeracy improvement and the school self-evaluation process.

The PDST also took a lead role in a collaborative process to review existing CPD provision in the area of anti-bullying. Subsequently a three-phased approach was put in place to provide a comprehensive programme of support for teachers in primary and post-primary schools. Phase 1 concentrated on the development of policies and procedures with a webcast, policy template and a toolkit resource made available to all schools. Phase 2 included local workshops and working

with pilot schools to harness good practice and in-school support was provided where necessary. Phase 3 concentrated on raising awareness, prevention and intervention strategies.

These national priorities continued to dominate the landscape for PDST in 2014.

4.20.4 Education Centre Network

The 30 education centres nationwide are key partners in the provision of teacher CPD. Under the remit of the Department, they hosted national programmes of curriculum reform and offered support services and courses covering a large range of subjects relating to teaching and learning in 2014.

4.20.5 Continuing Professional Development to Meet Special Educational Needs

The need for additional continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers to enable them to meet the needs of students with special educational needs continues to be a high priority in the education system. Funding for the provision of places for teachers to pursue post-graduate qualifications in special education in third level institutions continued in 2014.

All teachers are also encouraged to seek assistance from the Special Education Support Service (SESS) and to pursue specialised CPD in relation to the teaching of students with special educational needs. In 2014, the SESS provided approximately 15,835 CPD teacher training places and a further 338 places were made available on post-graduate programmes in special education.

4.20.6 Teacher Supply

In line with their statutory remit, the Teaching Council is to advise the Minister on the issue of teacher supply. In 2014, the Teaching Council approved a roadmap towards a sustainable model of teacher supply and established a Technical Working Group, chaired by Mr Ciarán Flynn, to pilot a draft model for teacher supply. The Higher Education Authority and the Department are represented on this Group. A consultative forum for all interested stakeholders, which will offer advice and feedback on proposals developed by the Technical Working Group, has also been established. An Interim report on the work of the Technical Working Group was received in December 2014 and a final report is due in late 2015.

4.21 Teacher Allocations in 2014

In 2014, just over 62,000 teaching posts were allocated at primary and post-primary level.

The redeployment process in 2014 involved the redeployment of 360 permanent teachers at primary level and 75 permanent teachers at post-primary level.

After the permanent teachers are redeployed, the redeployment process at primary level involves the supplementary redeployment panel for filling any remaining permanent posts. In 2014, there were over 1,600 teachers on the supplementary redeployment panel.

4.22 Employment Terms and Conditions for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants

In 2014, the Department regulated the employment terms and conditions governing teachers and special needs assistants in recognised schools, developed policy in the area and monitored compliance in order to promote effective utilisation of human resources across the primary and post-primary schools sector.

4.22.1 Enactment of Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act 2001

The Minister for Education and Skills signed the commencement order for Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act 2001 on 1st November 2013 to take effect from the 28th January 2014. From

this date, the paymaster general is prohibited by law from paying any person who is employed as a teacher in a recognised school unless he/she is registered with the Teaching Council. This is an important development in the history of the Irish Education system allowing for a fully regulated teaching profession. This is in the interest of providing the best possible education to our schoolchildren and supporting the status of the teaching profession through fair and transparent regulation.

The Teacher/SNA Terms and Conditions team played a key role in the implementation of the Public Service Management (Sick Leave) Regulations 2014 through the publication of sick leave circulars for Teachers and SNA's in July 2014. The regulations for Teachers and SNA's commenced on 1st September 2014.

4.22.2 Teaching Council (Amendment) Bill

Since the arrangements for the Garda vetting of school staff were introduced in September 2006, the Teaching Council has undertaken a key role in the operation of the vetting arrangements for teachers.

In April 2014, the Government approved the drafting of the Teaching Council (Amendment) Bill.

The Bill caters for two main overarching aims: underpinning the central role of the Teaching Council in the forthcoming statutory vetting arrangements for registered teachers and amending and strengthening the statutory provisions relating to the Teaching Council's fitness to teach function.

It is envisaged that the Bill will be finalised during the spring/summer session in 2015.

4.23 The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

All mainstream primary and post-primary schools have access to a NEPS psychologist, who provides a consultative service to address the priority needs of schools and this service is supported by the provision of assessments in certain instances through the Scheme for Commissioning Psychological Assessments (SCPA), which are approved and paid for by NEPS.

NEPS provides, upon request, assistance to schools and school communities that experience critical incidents. NEPS also processes applications for Reasonable Accommodation in Certificate Examinations (RACE) and responds to queries in relation to individual children from other sections of the Department and from specialist agencies.

In 2014, NEPS continued to assign a psychologist to every primary and post-primary school, with the exception of those Special Schools receiving services from other sources and, where necessary, assessments are provided through the SCPA. This resulted in a NEPS psychologist being made available to 98% of schools or 99.3% of pupils.

During the year, NEPS psychologists were involved in casework, which includes assessment and intervention, in relation to over 8,012 named students, and provided advice to teachers regarding interventions for approximately a further 15,000 un-named students. Additionally some 1,628 assessments were funded under the SCPA in the period.

NEPS psychologists also made recommendations on some 5,000 pupils under the Reasonable Accommodation in Certificate Examinations (RACE) scheme on behalf of the State Examinations

Commission and attended at some 120 critical incidents in schools at the request of school authorities.

Following its involvement with the development, production and promotion of the *Well-Being in Post-primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention,* NEPS developed guidelines for the establishment or review of Student Support Teams in 2014. Student Support Teams have an important role in the identification, support and the onwards referral, where necessary, of students with social, emotional and behavioural issues. The Teams are also a focal point for training, support and advice from the NEPS psychologist assigned to the school.

NEPS reviewed its Critical Incident Strategy in 2014, updating guidelines and support materials for schools in preparation for their publication in 2015.

NEPS also reviewed its communication strategy with schools, re-organised its web presentation on the Department's website and engaged in more active communication with schools.

4.24 North South Cooperation

Areas of North-South co-operation in education designated under the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement cover educational underachievement, teacher qualifications, special education needs, and school youth and teacher exchanges.

In 2014, the Minister for Education and Skills participated at Education Sector and Plenary North South Ministerial Council meetings in Armagh and Dublin, and held bilateral meetings with Ministers of the Northern Ireland Executive, and Northern Ireland Assembly members, on matters of mutual benefit and shared concern in education in both jurisdictions.

The Department and the Department of Education, Northern Ireland (DENI) advanced cooperation at official level in sharing best practice in school inspection, addressing educational underachievement and inclusion, enhancing school leadership and facilitating cross-border access to primary and secondary education.

The Department and DENI continued to support and jointly fund a range of externally provided cross-border initiatives to promote literacy and numeracy in 2014. This included Maths Week which took place in October. Maths Week Ireland is an all-island celebration of mathematics and is a partnership of over 50 groups including universities, institutes of technology, colleges, museums, libraries, visitor centres, and professional bodies North and South. Some 250,000 people are estimated to have participated in events across all counties.

High-level engagement continued between the Department and the Department of Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland. Officials of both Departments advanced joint initiatives on measuring and analysing cross-border further and higher education student flows; facilitating access to further and higher education North and South of the border; and cross-border cooperation between the respective apprenticeship systems.

In late 2014, the Department began a review of long-standing cross-border education programmes to establish the extent to which funded projects are meeting their current objectives of cross-border cooperation in education, are delivering value added to the education systems in terms of curriculum and pedagogy, and represent value for money. This work will continue in 2015.

During the year, the Department was designated an Accountable Department, along with DENI, for the purposes of implementing the "Shared Education" strand of a new EU Programme for PEACE and Reconciliation 2014 – 2020 (PEACE IV). The Shared Education strand has a budget of

€53m of which the Department will contribute approximately €11.5m, with 85% of this amount recoupable from the European Commission. In September 2014, the Government approved the draft programme and submission to the EU Commission. Roll-out of Peace IV is expected to begin in 2015.

The table below sets out the number of participants in North/South school and youth-based educational exchange projects funded by the Department in 2014. The figures provided reflect the total numbers of schools, youth groups, teachers, students and young people from Ireland and Northern Ireland that were involved in the relevant projects.

Participants	2014
Total No. of Schools	2052
Total No. of Youth Groups	35
Total No. of Teachers/Trainers	2,425
Total No. of Students	221,678
Total No. of Young People	8,806
No. of 3rd Level Institutions	58

5 Goal 2 – Provide opportunities for upskilling and reskilling that meet the needs of individuals and the labour market

5.1 Further Education and Training in Ireland

The Department aims to provide a further education and training (FET) infrastructure that supports economic development, increases social inclusion and provides a high quality learning experience with better outcomes to meet the needs of all learners and communities. FET developments in 2014, including continued major reform of the sector, are set out below.

5.2 Progress on Reform of the Further Education and Training Sector in 2014

A number of reforms relating to the Irish further education and training sector have been implemented, including the establishment of SOLAS and 16 education and training boards (ETBs); dissolution of FÁS and the transfer of the former FÁS training centres to education and training board governance and the transfer of all SOLAS training centres to relevant ETBs by July 2014.

All the key structural reforms of the FET sector have now been put in place and the system is now fully focused on service planning and delivery. The corporate change programme will continue to run for a considerable period beyond the establishment of the new bodies and the transfer of functions.

5.3 ETB/SOLAS Programme Board and Project Management Office

The ETB/SOLAS Programme Board continued to actively support and enable the implementation of the overall reform programme for the ETB/SOLAS sector. The Programme Board is chaired by the Secretary General of the Department and its membership includes members of the Department's senior management team, along with the General Secretary of Education and Training Boards Ireland, the Director General of SOLAS and the chief executives of two ETBs.

The Programme Board is assisted by a Project Management Office (PMO), which supports the implementation of long-term strategic objectives as well as immediate, operational matters arising from the change agenda for both ETBs and SOLAS.

During 2014, the Programme Board approved an ETB/SOLAS Programme Plan containing 19 specific sector wide reform projects. The PMO identified and progressed a number of key projects from within the ETB/SOLAS Programme Plan. Work on a proposal for a new organisational structure is at an advanced stage and significant progress has been made with streamlining back-office functionality, generating visible savings. The number of payrolls has been reduced from 33 to 20, while the transition of a number of payrolls to a managed service has commenced. A business case and implementation roadmap has been approved for an ETB Payroll Shared Service and a baseline exercise has commenced in preparation of business case and implementation roadmap approval for an ETB Financial Shared Service. Increased IT network and broadband capabilities were also introduced.

Ministerial Orders were made governing the representation of local authorities on each ETB. Staff election regulations were made and elections were held in June incorporating significantly reduced board memberships.

In order to inform staff working in the ETB/SOLAS sector of the Department's position on some key matters, the PMO issued 5 newsletters during 2014.

5.4 Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019

The first ever five year Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 -2019 was published by SOLAS in May 2014. This strategy sets out five high level goals as a roadmap for the FET Sector as follows:

1. Skills for the Economy,
2. Active Inclusion including a Literacy and Numeracy Strategy,
3. Quality Provision,
4. Integrated Planning and Funding,
5. Standing of FET

The FET Strategy commits the FET sector to respond more effectively to the needs of employers at local and regional level.

SOLAS also published an integrated Further Education and Training Services Plan for 2014 with the full cooperation and participation of the 16 Education and Training Boards.

5.5 Review of the Irish Apprenticeship System

Following on from the publication of the Review of the Irish Apprenticeship system in 2013, an Apprenticeship Implementation Plan was published in June 2014, which gave a detailed account of how and when the recommendations of the review would be implemented.

Among the main recommendations from the review was the establishment of an Apprenticeship Council to oversee the development of apprenticeships in new areas. The Council, which was formally launched in November 2014, is enterprise-led and has representatives from business, trade unions, and further and higher education bodies as well as the Department.

5.6 Engagement with Employers and other relevant stakeholders

Employers have long been involved in national structures in areas such as examining skill needs, developing qualifications and managing the apprenticeship programme. More recently, the Department has been discussing issues and opportunities with employers in our Enterprise Engagement Forum. Employers have had a key role in the review of apprenticeship and contributed to the development of the Further Education and Training Strategy.

5.7 Skills to Work

As part of the Government's *Action Plan for Jobs* initiative, this Department in tandem with the Departments of the Taoiseach and Social Protection, and relevant State agencies, developed the *Skills to Work* brand. The new brand, which was launched in early 2014, represents a coordinated approach to presenting the range of enterprise-focused targeted education and training programmes available to jobseekers. The following programmes, administered by this Department are included in the initiative: Springboard, Momentum and Skillnets. Together with JobBridge and JobsPlus programmes, administered by the Department of Social Protection, these schemes are all under the *Skills To Work* umbrella.

The *Skills to Work* campaign includes a new online guide to help people establish which programme they qualify for and the website *skillstowork.ie*, which make it easier for both jobseekers and employers to easily access information on the range of skills and training options available to them. Online advertising on key media websites in Ireland also helped to draw attention to this campaign.

A *Skills To Work* stand was also erected at key employment and small business events, where teams from all five programmes worked together to advise job seekers and employers on how

they can avail of these Government supports. The official campaign launch took place on 19th May 2014.

5.8 Springboard

Springboard is a specific initiative that strategically targets funding of free, flexible reskilling opportunities at higher education level for unemployed and previously self-employed people in areas of emerging skills needs. During 2014, 8,569 participants were supported on Springboard courses. The total spend in respect of Springboard in 2014 was €23m.

A recent evaluation of Springboard showed that 40% of the 2012/13 graduates had returned to employment or self-employment within 6 weeks of graduating, rising to 52% within 6 months of graduation.

5.9 MOMENTUM

MOMENTUM, a scheme for education and training interventions, supports the provision of free education and training projects to allow long term jobseekers to gain skills and to access work opportunities in identified growing sectors. 2014 saw the announcement of an additional budgetary provision to fund a second iteration of the Momentum programme. The programme will provide up to 6,000 education and training places for the long-term unemployed. In line with our commitment to the Youth Guarantee initiative, up to 2,000 of these places will be ring-fenced for those who are under the age of 25.

5.10 ICT Skills Graduate Conversion Programme

During 2014, the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation launched a revised Government/Industry *ICT Skills Action Plan 2014 – 2018*. The aim of the Plan is to meet the objective set out in the *Action Plan for Jobs* to make Ireland the most attractive location in the world for ICT Skills availability.

As part of the plan, a further round of the ICT skills conversion programme was announced. During 2014, 1,210 participants were supported on the ICT skills conversion programme. The total spend in respect of these programmes in 2014 was €4.8m.

5.11 European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF)

The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is an EU funding instrument which co-finances EU Member State labour market activation programmes in guidance, training, education and enterprise in support of workers made redundant due to the effects of globalisation**.**

The Talk Talk EGF Programme provided some 1,126 individual interventions to 353 redundant workers from the former Talk Talk facility in Waterford over the period September 2011 to February 2014. This included guidance and career planning, training courses, further and higher education courses, internships and business start-up assistance. Examples of measures implemented under the programme include a Course Expenses Contribution scheme and the design and delivery of an innovative accelerated Bachelor of Science in Pharmaceutical Science and Good Manufacturing Practice from May 2012 to February 2014. Final expenditure on the programme amounted to €3.79m.This measure has been publicised by the European Commission as an example demonstrating effective use of EGF monies http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7725&type=2&furtherPubs=yes).

Ireland was one of the first EU Member States to utilise a new provision of Regulation (EU) No 1309/2013 governing the Fund to include young persons not in employment, education or training

in an EGF application. The relevant application for redundant jewellery manufacture workers in Rathkeale, Co. Limerick was approved by the EU institutions in November 2014.

The website www.egf.ie is a valuable information resource dedicated to publicising the EGF process in Ireland and detailing Irish EGF applications and programmes.

5.12 European Social Fund (ESF) and ESF Operational Programme

This Department assisted in the claiming of €22.1m of European Social Fund (ESF) monies from the European Commission during 2014. These ESF monies are co-financing the cost of eligible ESF activities delivered across various Government Departments. The ESF activities are mainly investments in human capital through education and training programmes.

The Department has drafted a European Social Fund Operational Programme for the years 2014-2020, which assesses the development needs and priorities in the areas of employment and social inclusion and identifies the relevant national priorities to support the National Reform Programme and the achievement of national targets for delivering the *Europe 2020 Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth.*

The draft *Operational Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning* was approved by Government and submitted to the European Union in July 2014. It contains a total budget proposed at €1.153 billion. The ESF allocation of €542.43 million is the largest component of the European Structural and Investment Funds allocated to Ireland over this period. An additional component of the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020 is the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) assisted by ESF funding, direct YEI funding and Exchequer funds (€68m from each of the three sources, i.e., Exchequer, ESF and YEI fund).

The thematic objectives for the 2014-2020 period for the ESF in Ireland are:

- Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility;
- Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination;
- Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning.

The draft Operational Programme proposes to allocate some 29% of the ESF to tackling unemployment, including the Youth Guarantee and enhancing labour mobility, some 36% to active inclusion measures, some 19% to education and lifelong learning measures and 18% to the Youth Employment Initiative. Agreement on the Programme is expected in 2015.

5.12.1 Supporting the implementation of the National Skills Strategy through ESF

This Department assisted in the claiming of European Social Fund monies from the European Commission for undergraduate skills activities in 2014. These activities have been delivered through the third level education providers to address identified shortages of skilled graduates in areas highlighted by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) and other reports, in particular in the ICT, engineering and science disciplines.

5.12.2 Supporting Literacy Training in Further Education and Training Programmes through ESF

This Department assisted in the claiming of European Social Fund monies from the European Commission for the delivery of further education and training programmes in 2014. The programmes are delivered through training and further education areas. The aim of these programmes is the development of the skilled workforce needed to meet Ireland's future needs, while also helping job seekers to obtain qualifications and employment.

6 Goal 3 – Provide high quality learning, research and innovation opportunities in the higher education sector

The Higher Education System in Ireland is undergoing a programme of unprecedented modernisation and reform. Through implementation of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, the aim is to develop the higher education system to equip people with the knowledge and skills necessary to live fulfilled and rewarding lives, and to meet the social and economic challenges facing Ireland.

6.1 Higher Education System Performance Framework 2014-2016

A System Performance Framework, stating national priorities and key objectives of Government for higher education was set out by the Minister for 2014-2016. During 2014, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) published the first Higher Education Annual System Performance Report against those objectives. Volume II of the report details the institutional and sectoral profiles for 2011-12. Each institution has now entered into a compact with the HEA, undertaking how it will contribute to national objectives from the position of its particular mission and strengths. The compacts provide for how performance is to be measured and a proportion of funding will, in future years, be contingent on performance. The reports may be accessed on the Department's website www.education.gov.ie .

6.2 Transition Reform Steering Group

The Transition Reform Steering Group, which has representatives from key education partners, made significant progress in exploring some of the issues that have been identified relating to the transition of school leavers into their first year undergraduate experience. The areas being addressed are outlined in the paper ***Supporting a Better Transition from Second Level to Higher Education - Key Directions and Next Steps***. An update on the work of the Transition Reform Steering Group was published during 2014 - ***Key Directions Update – Easter 2014-*** which elaborated further on these directions for change, particularly on Leaving Certificate grading. Both documents are published on the Department's website.

6.3 Equity of Access to Higher Education

The Department continued to provide targeted access supports to facilitate greater levels of educational participation in higher education by under-represented groups in 2014. The high level objective is to support students with a disability, mature students and those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds to access opportunities to progress to higher education.

The Third Level Access Measure, managed on behalf of the Department by the Higher Education Authority, comprises two sub-priorities; the Student Assistance Fund and the Fund for Students with Disabilities.

The Student Assistance Fund is administered on a local basis by participating higher education institutions and targets those students most in need. It provides institutions with additional resources to support full-time students who experience circumstances of hardship. 13,000 students benefited from the Fund in 2013/14.

The Fund for Students with Disabilities provides funding to both further and higher education institutions for the provision of services and supports to full-time students with serious sensory, physical and/ or communication disabilities. The Fund aims to support students in participating fully in their academic programmes and to ensure they are not disadvantaged by reason of a disability. A total of 8,807 students benefited from the Fund in the 2013/14 academic year.

6.3.1 Increased participation rates among under-represented groups

A wide consultation process was undertaken during 2014 to engage a wide range of stakeholders, both within and outside of the higher education sector in the development of a new national plan for equity of access to higher education. To facilitate this consultation process, the HEA and the Department published the consultation paper *Towards the development of a new National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education* in August, 2014. The up-to-date data and performance indicators in respect of equity of access were published in the consultation paper and all stakeholders were invited to give their perspective.

6.3.2 Student Grants

The Department provides funding to the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETB) for the administration of student grants by Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI).

6.3.3 Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI)

Building on the experience from its first two years of operations, SUSI introduced a number of further key improvements for the 2014/2015 academic year, including;

- Earlier opening of its application process -8th May in 2014 compared to 20th May in 2013
- Revised and more user-friendly website information at www.susi.ie;
- More automated validation of the online application form;
- Extended range of online services to applicants;
- More streamlined internal processing of applications;
- Extended data sharing with Government Departments and agencies;
- Increased stakeholder engagement; and
- The introduction of an online grant eligibility reckoner.

SUSI met or exceeded the performance metrics and targets outlined in the Management Framework Agreement between the Department and CDETB in relation to the processing and payment of student grants for 2014/15.

6.3.4 Student Grants Appeals Board

In 2014, the Student Grants Appeals Board sat on 31 occasions. Having come under the remit of the Office of the Ombudsman on 1st May, 2013, complaints in relation to the administrative actions of SUSI can be examined by that Office.

6.3.5 International Scholarships

The European University Institute (EUI) is a postgraduate research institution established by the member states of the European Union and based in Florence. The Department funds postgraduate scholarships for a number of Irish students in the EUI each year. Ireland completed its one year term of presidency of the High Council, the governing board of the EUI, in March 2014.

6.3.6 Expenditure 2014

Expenditure in 2014 on equity of access to higher education initiatives was as follows:

Schemes	No. of beneficiaries (2013/14 academic year)	Expenditure in 2014 Financial Year
Student Grant Schemes	78,965	€345,304,470
Third Level Access Schemes	21,807	€16,200,000
Scholarships/Bursaries	402	€1,820,000

In 2014, the maximum standard rate of maintenance grant was €3, 025. Students qualifying for the special rate of grant received a maximum of €5,915.

6.4 Higher Education Research and Finance

The Department allocates recurrent funding to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) for direct disbursement to the Universities, Institutes of Technology (IoTs) and designated colleges. The Department also funds a small number of higher education institutions directly.

Recurrent funding to the Universities, IoTs and other HEA designated institutions amounted to nearly €940 million in 2014. This funding includes the grant in lieu of the cost of undergraduate tuition fees which, overall to the sector, amounted to some €310 million in the 2013/14 academic year covering some 129,000 full-time students.

The Department also provides support for the development of research capabilities across the broad range of disciplines in third level institutions through the funding of human capital by the Irish Research Council. The provision also funds underpinning e-infrastructure for the research system. Nearly €38 million was provided in 2014.

6.4.1 Expert Funding Group

An Expert Group, under the chairmanship of Peter Cassells, was established in 2014 to examine our current funding arrangements for higher education, and to identify a range of approaches that, combined, will achieve a sustainable funding base to address the continual expansion of the sector while protecting the quality of education. The system has been under growing pressures in recent years as a result of steady growth in student numbers and falling staffing and financial resources. Demand for higher education places is going to continue to rise over the next 10-15 years placing further pressures on institutions to maintain a quality education experience.

6.4.2 Rate of Fee

In 2014 the Government agreed that EU/EEA/Swiss nationals, who did not meet the residency requirement of the Free Fees Initiative but had completed at least five academic years of study at either primary or post-primary in the EU/EEA/Switzerland, should be charged the EU rate of fee rather than the higher non-EU rate, which was the situation in some cases.

The Minister requested the HEA, in line with Section 40 of the Universities Act to advise the universities, and to also advise the designated colleges and Institutes of Technology, of the rate of fee which the Government feels should be charged to such students. This policy was requested to be put into effect from the 2014/15 academic year.

6.4.3 Research Strategy

A process designed to inform the development of a broad-based strategy, which would be the successor to the *Strategy for Science Technology and Innovation 2007-2013*, is underway. The formulation of the new strategy provides an opportunity to develop a new whole-of-Government strategy for research and innovation that can build on the progress made to date. An interdepartmental committee, which includes representatives from key Government Departments and the HEA under the chairmanship of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation is being formed to develop proposals for this new strategy. This committee is expected to complete its work in 2015.

6.4.4 Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Forum

The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education developed an initial roadmap for enhancing digital learning in the sector. The roadmap was published in May 2014 and a €2 million fund was put in place to support institutions in developing digital capacity.

6.5 Strategy to Enhance the Internationalisation of Irish Education Services

Work has continued on the implementation of the strategy to enhance the internationalisation of Irish education services. Key performance indicators on the roll-out of the strategy include a 60% increase in the number of international students in our publically and privately funded higher education institutions, a 16% increase in the number of students participating in our high quality English language sector and a 38% increase in the number of students coming to Ireland as part of the Erasmus+ programme.

6.6 Promoting Ireland Internationally as a Centre of Excellence in Education and Training

High level actions during the year to develop international education links and inter-governmental contacts included ministerial led education missions to the three priority markets of Saudi Arabia, China and India and a Secretary General led mission to the United States.

An international education agreement between Ireland and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was concluded during the Taoiseach's visit to the UAE. The Department also participated in joint economic commissions with Saudi Arabia, Russia and Korea and hosted visiting international delegations from Korea, Finland, Croatia, Lithuania and Vietnam.

In order to promote the *Education in Ireland* brand, the International Student Ambassador programme was enhanced and social media activity was increased with the development of tailored online campaigns to promote fairs and raise brand awareness. This resulted in over 3 million engagements with the brand.

6.6.1 Erasmus+

Erasmus+ is the EU Programme for Education, Training, and Sport for 2014-2020. It aims to contribute to meeting the key challenges facing Europe by boosting growth and jobs and fostering social equity and inclusion. Erasmus+ will provide opportunities for over 4 million Europeans, including around 62,000 Irish citizens, to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer abroad. At European level, €14.7 billion has been allocated for the seven-year Programme, 40% higher than levels in the previous generation of programmes. The allocation for Ireland within that is expected to be €169m.

This Department, and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs oversee the administration of the programme by the Higher Education Authority and Léargas in Ireland. Funding provided for the programme in 2014 was as follows:

2014 funding from the European Commission for Erasmus+	
Operational funding for Leargas:	€1,011,591
Operational funding for HEA:	€194,225
Erasmus+ schools:	€1,307,671
Erasmus+ VET:	€4,278,442
Erasmus+ adult education:	€1,644,297
Erasmus+ youth:	€2,898,321
Erasmus+ higher education:	€7,705,791

7 Goal 4 – Plan and provide appropriate infrastructure for learning environments

The Department aims to provide appropriate infrastructure for learning environments so that all learners have access to a modern learning environment. A primary focus of the Department's is the provision of accommodation to meet demand for school places in areas where enrolments are rising.

7.1 Building and Accommodation Programme in 2014

In 2014, a total of €438.5m was spent on schools' infrastructure. Outputs from this investment include 42 large-scale projects that were completed; 30 in the primary school sector and 12 in the post-primary school sector. A total of 10,432 permanent school places, of which 8,052 were additional permanent places, were provided in 20 new primary schools and 2,240 additional permanent places were provided in 10 existing primary schools.

In the post-primary school sector, 7 new schools and 5 large scale extension or refurbishment projects were completed in 2014. These projects delivered a total of 6,200 permanent school places, of which 2,600 were additional permanent places, as well as providing enhanced facilities for 7,200 pupils.

212 projects were completed under the Additional Accommodation Scheme and Prefab Replacement Initiative providing 6,359 permanent school places.

During 2014, a total of 772 applications were approved under the Summer Works Scheme and over 430 applications were approved under the Emergency Works Scheme.

12 sites were acquired in 2014, which will facilitate the provision of school accommodation for 9 primary schools and 6 post-primary schools.

7.2 Using Diverse Methodologies for the Construction of Major Projects

The Department's five year plan includes alternative methods of delivering projects including through the public private partnership process. Agencies such as the Office of Public Works, the Education and Training Boards and the National Development Finance Agency, as well as a number of local authorities, are all assisting with the delivery of 69 major school projects.

7.3 Completion of Higher Education Projects

In 2014, capital expenditure on higher education infrastructure of €79.094m was used to progress the consolidation of Dublin Institute of Technology at Grangegorman. It also enabled the delivery of new facilities to reach practical completion including at St. Patrick's College Drumcondra. A scheme of minor works in the institute of technology sector was also enabled with this funding.

7.4 Enhancing Financial Management, Audit, Appraisal and Asset Management Systems

The Online Inventory of School Accommodation (IOS) is being compiled by schools using the Esinet Portal as part of the overhaul of the central database of school accommodation. To date, 85% of schools have completed the inventory data.

An inventory of all primary and post-primary education infrastructure and related community assets was undertaken on a pilot basis in five areas of the country during 2012. A project team has since been appointed to progress the development of inventory data for the rest of the country.

A range of frameworks for consultancy appointments are in operation to facilitate larger, complex and urgent projects.

During the year, the Department carried out 116 inspections on schools that had received devolved funding and completed their projects by the end of 2013 to establish if works were carried out in accordance with Department guidelines.

7.5 Improving Communication and Coordination with External Stakeholders

As referred to at 5.2, arrangements are in place to diversify the delivery of projects including arrangements with education and training boards, County Councils, the Office of Public Works (OPW), the National Development Finance Agency (NDFA) and the Grangegorman Development Agency.

The Online Inventory of School Accommodation will improve coordination and communication in relation to projects.

7.5.1 Memorandum of Understanding with Local Authorities

The Department continued to work with officials across the local authority sector to progress the acquisition of sites in relevant areas during 2014 under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department and the County and City Managers' Association. The interactions resulting from the implementation of the MOU provide the Department with greater certainty in relation to planning outcomes associated with sites.

7.5.2 Publication of Project Information on the Department's Website

Lists of projects approved for delivery are published on the Department's website on a monthly basis. In the case of major projects, updates are provided on the progress through the various stages of delivery. In the case of smaller devolved projects information is published on a weekly basis listing the name of the school, the type of project and dates of approval.

7.5.3 On-Line Application System for the Summer Works Scheme

The on-line system whereby schools could submit applications for funding under the 2014 Summer Works Scheme, which was introduced in 2013, has brought significant enhancements to the application process generally and removed the need for paper based applications. Over 1,700 applications were submitted by schools using this facility.

7.6 Energy Efficiency in Schools

The Department is at the forefront of design with respect to sustainable energy efficiency in school buildings. Our Technical Guidance Documents (TGDs) continue to set the benchmark for sustainable design in school buildings with a clear focus on energy efficiency which is supported by a strong energy research programme with forty six research projects at various stages, including the energy website at ***www.energyineducation.ie***., in partnership with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, the *Passive schools project* and the *Near Zero Energy Building Projects*. All schools built in accordance with the TGDs are capable of achieving as a minimum an A3 Building Energy Rating (BER).

The energy website ***www.energyineducation.ie*** is designed for use in conjunction with the *Energy in Education Pack* as part of a range of supports designed to help school boards of management, principals, teachers, administrators, caretaking staff, pupils and parents to improve energy use practices and to reduce school operating costs while helping to protect the environment for future generations. It contains tested practical guidance on managing energy in schools and information on involving pupils in the process, along with case studies and training opportunities.

8 Improving our Efficiency and Effectiveness

The Department is committed to providing a high quality, efficient and value for money service to all of our customers and stakeholders.

8.1 Supporting the Reform Programme

In 2014, the Public Service Reform (PSR) Programme Office continued to manage and implement the reform agenda across the Education and Training Sector, through the development and implementation of the Integrated Reform Delivery Plan (IRDP) 2014, and the Shared Service and External Service Delivery (ESD) Plans 2014 – 2016. In late 2014, the IRDP was reviewed and a draft of the IRDP 2015 was developed.

The PSR Programme Office promoted the development of strong governance structures, in addition to the use of programme and project management structures and methodologies across the Department and the sector.

The governance arrangements for reform initiatives have been further embedded over the course of 2014 through the active efforts of the Education and Training Reform Board, the Higher Education Programme Board and the ETB/SOLAS Programme Board.

8.2 Improving our Information and Communications Technology

8.2.1 Internal Departmental ICT Upgrades

Following the acquisition of new servers and licences in 2013, the Oracle upgrade commenced in mid-2014 and by year-end a number of databases were upgraded and migrated from the old AIX servers to the new Windows servers. In October, the pensioners' payroll underwent Oracle and CorePay upgrades. It is anticipated that by mid-2015, all databases and payrolls will be upgraded and migrated to the new servers.

8.2.2 Development of the Primary Online Data (POD)

In 2014, work continued on the development of a new primary learner database, POD (Primary Online Data). In September 2014, phase 1 of POD went live for all primary schools, with the exception of special schools, to facilitate the inputting of pupil data by schools by the end of March 2015. The second phase of POD was released in December 2014, to allow for multiple enrolments and inter-school transfers. Further phases of POD, will be released in 2015. This application is being developed to synchronise with administration software purchased by schools, from external suppliers. When this application is fully implemented, it will provide data for programme evaluation and evidence based policy formulation.

8.2.3 Development of Post-primary Online Data (PPOD)

The post-primary learners' database, PPOD (Post-Primary Online Data), went live across the post-primary sector in early 2014. PPOD information sessions were held nationwide during the year for prospective PPOD users in order to provide as much information as possible on the new application. The Department also worked with school management bodies and PPOD users to facilitate its implementation and improve the operation of the application.

The implementation of PPOD has streamlined the annual October returns process by validating data upon entry and eliminating the need for the Department to follow up with school data anomalies and issues. The data recorded on PPOD in 2014 was used in the allocation of teaching posts and funding to schools. Student data for examination cohorts at Junior and Leaving Certificate level was shared with the State Examinations Commission to assist with planning and organising the 2015 State examination.

8.2.4 Updating our IT Systems

In 2014, there were a number of significant enhancements to the school employee payrolls, including the implementation of Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act 2001 with effect from the 28th January 2014 and new sick leave arrangements for school employees, with effect from the 1st September 2014.

SEPA (Single European Payments Area) was implemented on the school employee payrolls and FMS, in mid-2014.

8.2.5 Other ICT Developments

The Summer Works Scheme went live in late 2013, allowing schools to apply online for grants under the scheme and also to upload photographs and reports from architects/engineers. The system was enhanced in 2014, to enable schools to login and see the outcome of their applications for grants and also to accept grants offers and associated conditions online.

Work commenced on the development of a mobile application for the inspectorate in 2014, to facilitate the collation of data on schools inspections, while working away from their office base. This application will be piloted in late 2015, prior to going live in early 2016.

A technical upgrade of the intranet took place, in advance of a project for its redevelopment.

Work continued on the roll-out of VoIP to regional or local offices along with the deployment of 0761 numbers.

SolarWinds was implemented to improve the monitoring of the ICT infrastructure.

The roll-out of hybrid tablets or laptops also took place.

8.2.6 Website Update

During the year, the Department continued to review and improve its website content. In September 2014, we launched a new website platform for the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). The new platform makes is easier for parents, schools and educationalists to access NEPS information, resources and publications.

8.3 Improvements to our Internal Legal Services

Legal Services Unit completed and published the *Guidelines on the Legislative Process* in 2014. This is available to Department staff on the Department's Intranet and aims to assist service delivery by informing internal customers working on the preparation of legislation.

8.4 Press Office Enhancements

During the year, the Press Office began uploading videos of the Minister speaking at events and to journalists, to increase awareness of the work of both the Minister and the Department.

A decision was made in 2014 to publish online ministerial replies to oral parliamentary questions (PQs). Accordingly, the Press Office worked to publish historical 2014 replies, and now publishes replies within 36 hours of them being issued by the Minister. These are available on the Department's website. In 2014, replies to 289 PQs were published.

Linked to this, the Press Office began publishing the text of adjournment and topical debates relating to education on the Department's website. The texts of 16 debates were published in 2014.

8.5 Expenditure by the Department in 2014

The Department's budget allocation for 2014 took account of savings measures decided by Government, estimated to yield savings of €33 million during the year. The allocation, however, did provide for a net increase in teacher numbers of 1,400, in response to demographic pressures and to provide for additional resource teachers, and for an additional 390 Special Needs Assistants. Provision was also made for an initiative to support the further extension of book rental schemes to cover all primary schools, for the continued rollout of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, Junior Cycle reform and the provision of high-speed broadband to second level schools. Ring-fenced funding was also provided for a minimum of 2,000 training places for out-of-work under 25s, under a follow-up to the Momentum programme.

A supplementary expenditure estimate of €103 million was agreed for the Department for 2014 to cover increased pension costs and a technical adjustment of expenditure between 2013 and 2014. Provisional net Voted expenditure of €7.941 billion for the year came in some €11 million under the allocation of €7.952 billion, including the supplementary estimate.

As part of the process of determining multi-annual expenditure estimates for the 2015-2017 period, the Department submitted comprehensive reviews of current and capital expenditure to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform during 2014.

8.6 Monitoring our Systems and Processes

The Internal Audit Unit at the Department is responsible for providing assurance to the Accounting Officer on the adequacy, efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's risk management, internal control systems and governance processes.

The European Social Fund (ESF) Financial Control Unit ensures that Ireland complies with the regulatory requirements of the European Union in relation to the audit of ESF, promotes best practice in the management, control and audit of ESF in Ireland and ensures that audits are performed in accordance with international auditing standards in order to provide high quality, fair and balanced reports.

Annual audit programmes are prepared under the auspices of the Audit Committee and both the Internal Audit Unit and the ESF Audit Authority report to the Committee on the conduct of these programmes and the finalisation of audit reports. A total of twenty reports were finalised in 2014 and both areas track, on a quarterly basis, progress on the implementation of recommendations arising from audit reports.

8.7 Human Resources (HR)

The Department's HR Unit supported the public service reform initiative during 2014 in a number of ways, including a retention of reduced staffing numbers, the reassignment of staff to areas of critical need as required, implementation of updates to the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) and sick leave regulations, transition of certain Department HR functions to PeoplePoint and preparations for the transition of the payroll function to the Payroll Shared Service Centre. Development of the workforce planning process continued also.

Department staffing numbers have fallen from approximately 1,316 (WTE) at the end of 2008 before the introduction of the moratorium on recruitment and promotion, to approximately 1,200 (WTE) at the end of 2014, representing a reduction of almost 10%.

8.7.1 Transfer of HR Functions to Peoplepoint

The Department met all of its targets in 2014 in respect of the transition of transactional HR and pension functions to the Human Resources Shared Service Centre PeoplePoint in February 2014. This included the preparation of data and provision of briefing to all staff of the Department in relation to the new service. The Department also facilitated the redeployment of a number of its staff to work in PeoplePoint.

The Department has worked closely with PeoplePoint since transition with a view to stabilising the service provided and to identifying and addressing any service gaps or issues.

The transition to PeoplePoint has brought significant changes to the delivery of HR services to staff in the Department and has increased the devolution of responsibility for HR-related issues to line-managers. Once the PeoplePoint service has stabilised, the HR Unit will focus on more strategic operations which will focus on workforce planning and development.

8.7.2 Recruitment

Following sanction from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER), the HR Unit commenced the process of establishing internal panels across all the administrative grades for the first time since the introduction of the moratorium on recruitment and promotion. During 2014, an internal Assistant Principal Officer panel was established, along with a Higher Executive Officer panel. Plans were put in place for the establishment of Principal Officer and Executive Officer/Staff Officer panels in 2015.

The Department also identified critical resource gaps in our IT Unit and, on receipt of sanction from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, recruited additional IT resources by way of open competition.

8.7.3 Staff Mobility Policy

HR Unit continued to facilitate staff mobility as provided for under the Staff Mobility Policy insofar as possible given the dispersed nature of the Department's locations.

8.7.4 Staff Training and Development

During 2014, the Department's Staff Training and Development Unit continued to engage with staff and management to identify priority training and development needs. To meet those needs a range of targeted and customised training was available to staff. Approximately 2,500 training days were provided during the year.

Training, which was mainly delivered in-house, was provided in areas including project management, financial management, pensions' administration, business process improvement and Freedom of Information. The Department also continued to prioritise management training to enhance its capacity to adequately meet new and evolving challenges through the provision of training opportunities for middle and senior managers. To improve communication and involvement of staff across the Department, the Staff Forum was further developed.

Tailored training was also provided for the Inspectorate, National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Planning and Building Unit (PBU) and the IT Unit to meet their specific professional and technical training requirements.

Separate to the organised training and development outlined above, the Department continued to foster a learning culture by providing support for staff to attend further education courses in their own time. These courses were in areas relevant to the work of the Department and the broader civil and public service and included Strategic Management, Governance, Irish Language

Translation, Educational Psychology, Human Resources, Public Management, Information Technology, Payroll and Education.

8.8 Business Process Improvement

The implementation of a structured approach to streamlining and improving business processes using the Business Process Improvement (BPI) Lean Six Sigma methodology was further developed. Four new projects were carried out across the Department in the Building Unit, Higher Education Section, Inspectorate and Finance Unit. The project teams, comprising staff within the relevant business unit, were trained on the tools and techniques of process improvement and equipped with the skills for managing change in the workplace. Staff were also coached through the projects.

8.9 Business Planning

The Department's annual business planning process is central to the timely and successful achievement of our goals. Each year, sections are requested to identify their critical tasks for the coming year with reference to documents such as our Statement of Strategy and to plan for their implementation via the business planning process. In addition to identifying critical tasks, the business planning process also provides an opportunity for staff to consider business process improvement which leads to greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness and improved customer services, all of which are key elements of the Government's Public Service Reform Plan. All sections of the Department participated in the business planning process for 2014.

8.10 Overview of the Department's Energy Usage in 2014 and Actions Planned for 2015

Our Athlone and Dublin Offices account for approximately 70% of the Department's energy consumption, Tullamore consumes almost 15% and the local and regional offices consume the balance. Roughly two thirds of the energy consumed in our office buildings is for lighting, office equipment and catering, while the remaining office energy consumption relates to heating.

The tables below outline the expenditure by the Department on energy in 2014, along with energy saving actions undertaken during the year.

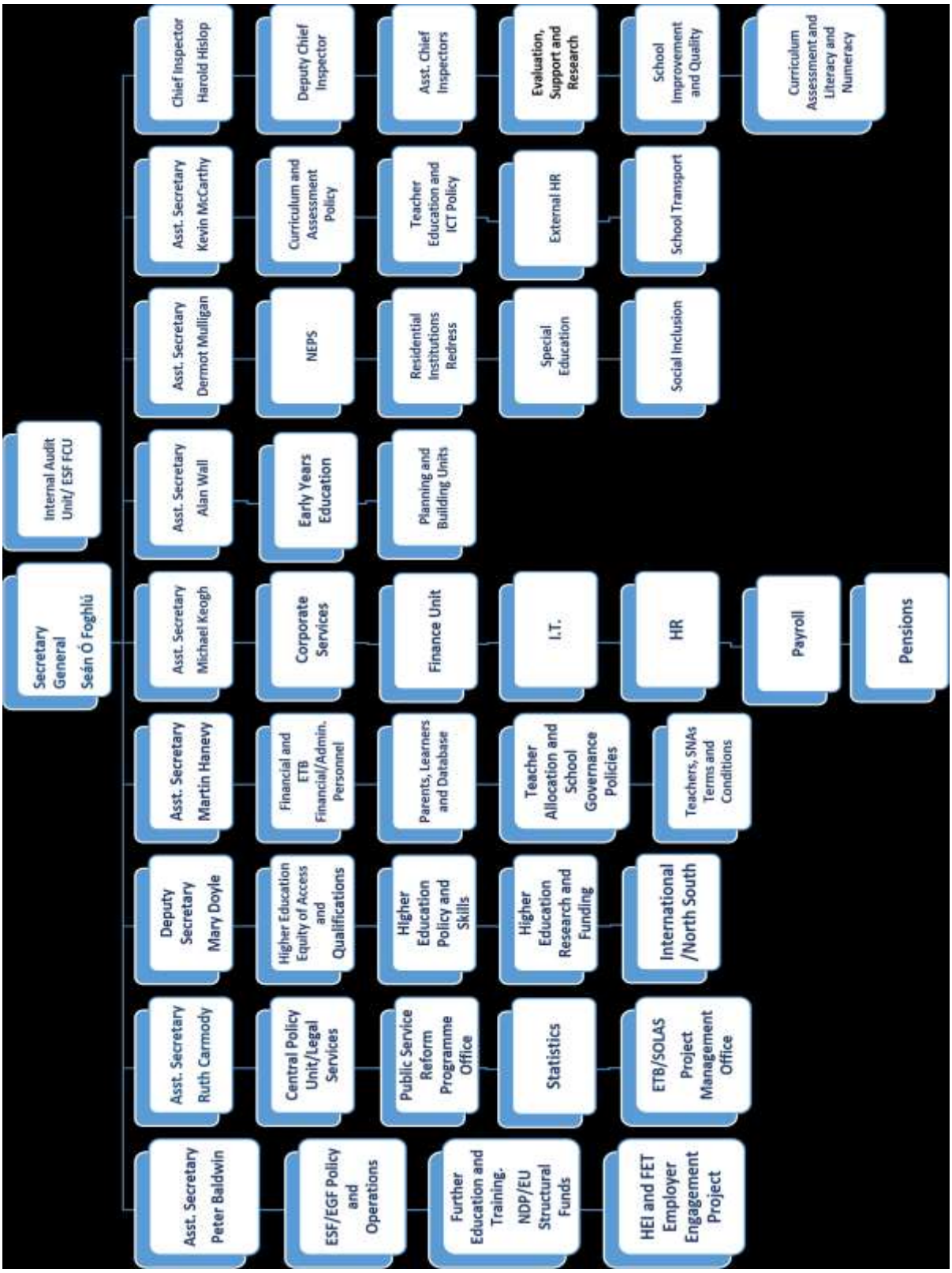
Expenditure by the Department on energy in 2014	
Electricity	**€432,917**
Gas	**€135,079**
LPG and Oil	**€24,839**
Total	**€592,835 (incl. VAT)**

Energy: Table of Actions Undertaken in 2014
• **An Energy Action Steering Committee has been established and an Energy Action Policy has been drawn up, along with Energy Action Plans for the three main sites.**
• **Energy assessments have been carried out on the three main sites in Tullamore, Athlone and Dublin.**
• **A 'Switch-It-Off' energy awareness campaign has been launched across the department, with further actions planned for 2015.**
• **Facility/energy managers have attended information and training sessions hosted by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland.**
• **A number of changes and upgrades to the type and usage of lighting, insulation, air conditioning, hot water boilers and heating were implemented at various locations within the Department to reduce our energy usage**
• **The underground carpark lighting system was upgraded in Dublin.**
• **Light sensors were installed in the canteen in Tullamore**
• **Unused water-boilers were removed at the Dublin site.**

• **A sub-meter was installed at Block 3 in Dublin.**

Energy: Table of Actions Planned for 2015
• **Engagement with OPW/Aramark's Optimising Power at Work team is planned.**
• **Staff awareness days are to be held at the three main sites.**
• **The 'Switch-it-Off' energy awareness campaign will continue.**
• **EnergyMap training is planned**
• **A number of upgrades and changes are planned to reduce our energy usage such as the installation of more energy efficient lighting, timers, chimney balloons, sub-meters and insulation, along with changes to PC settings.**

Appendix A – Organisation Chart – December 2014



Appendix B - Bodies under the Aegis of the Department

- An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG)
- Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (CICA)
- Grangegorman Development Agency (GGDA)
- Higher Education Authority (HEA)
- Léargas - The Exchange Bureau
- National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE)
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)
- National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland[1] (QQI)
- Residential Institutions Redress Board (RIRB)
- Residential Institutions Review Committee (RIRC)
- Caranua - Residential Institutions Statutory Fund (RISF)
- Skillnets Ltd
- SOLAS - An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna
- State Examinations Commission (SEC)
- The Teaching Council

Further information on our agencies including contact details and board details can be found on our website www.education.ie through the following link: Agencies

[1] QQI was was established in late 2012 as a new integrated agency replacing the Further Education and Training Awards Council, the Higher Education and Training Awards Council and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, and incorporating the functions of the Irish Universities Quality Board.

Appendix C – Direct Links to our Website www.education.ie

Statistical Information	http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/
Inspectorate Reports	http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-Reports-Publications/
Education Legislation	http://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Legislation/Education-Legislation.html
All Publications	http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/
Circulars and Forms	http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/
Special Education	http://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Special-Education/
School Design	http://www.education.ie/en/School-Design/
Press and Events	http://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/
Services and Information for Parents	http://www.education.ie/en/Parents/
National Educational Psychological Service	NEPS Link
Services and Information for Education Staff	http://www.education.ie/en/Education-Staff/
Services and Information for Learners	http://www.education.ie/en/Learners/

TUARASCÁIL BHLIANTÚIL AN ROINNE OIDEACHAIS AGUS SCILEANNA 2014

Bain amach do lán-acmhainneacht trí fhoghlaim

Arna foilsiú ag an Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna, Sráid Mhaoilbhríde, Baile Átha Cliath 1
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Cuirim fáilte roimh fhoilsiú Tuarascáil Bhliantúil na Roinne don bhliain 2014 ina dtugtar cuntas ar an obair shuntasach a rinne an Roinn i gcaitheamh na bliana. Ba onóir dom a bheith ceaptha mar Aire Oideachais agus Scileanna i mí Iúil 2014. Ar feadh mo ghairmréime ar fad bhí tosaíocht á tabhairt agam don oideachas - tá creideamh láidir agam go bhfuil cumhacht ag an oideachas beatha a athrú chun feabhais agus níos mó comhionannais a chruthú. D'fhonn na torthaí is fearr do gach aoinne a bhaint amach tá clár fairsing athchóirithe á chur i ngníomh againn atá ag díriú ar fhoghlaim don saol; feabhas a chur ar cháilíocht agus cuntasacht; tacú le cuimsiú agus éagsúlacht agus ar na córais agus na bonneagair chearta a thógáil.

Is é eispéireas oideachais dearfach go luath i saol an pháiste a chuireann an bhunchloch i gcomhair foghlaim rathúil ar feadh an tsaoil. Chun sin a chur chun cinn bhí an Roinn ag obair go dlúth as láimh a chéile leis an Roinn Leanaí agus Gnóthaí Óige i gcaitheamh na bliana chun an lucht saothair in earnáil na mblianta luatha a fhorbairt agus chun a chinntiú go gcuirtear luathoideachas den scoth ar fáil trí chláir a mheas agus a fheabhsú. Ceapadh Grúpa Comhairleach um Oideachas Luathóige a chuirfidh an obair chun cinn tuilleadh in 2015.

Tugaim tosaíocht shoiléir do chomhionannas deiseanna a sheachadadh tríd an oideachas. Mar thacaíocht leis an sprioc seo chuir an Rialtas dréachtú an Bhille Oideachais (Ligeann isteach i scoileanna) ar aghaidh agus d'fhaomh sé é in 2014. Is é is cuspóir don bhille ná níos mó comhionannais rochtana ar scoileanna a sholáthar. Foilsíodh an bille le déanaí. D'fháiltigh mé i gcaitheamh na bliana leis, roimh fhoilsiú measúnachtaí ar an gclár DEIS arb é príomhthionscnamh beartais na Roinne é chun tabhairt faoi mhíbhuntáiste oideachasúil i scoileanna. Léirigh siad treochtaí atá ina n-ábhar misnigh maidir le leibhéil ghnóthachtála, coinneáil daltaí agus rátaí tinrimh. Tá tionscnaimh eile chun tacú le cuimsiú agus éagsúlacht curtha i ngníomh nó tá siad á gcur i ngníomh. Mar chuid díobh seo áirítear feabhas ar rannpháirtiú na dtuismitheoirí inár gcuid scoileanna agus feabhas a chur ar thacaíochtaí do pháistí agus daoine óga ag a bhfuil riachtanais oideachais speisialta. Rachaidh torthaí dearfacha na dtionscnamh uile seo go mór chun tairbhe dár sochaí.

Is é atá i gcroílár córas oideachais den scoth ná a chinntiú go n-aireoidh scoláirí ag gach leibhéal den chóras oideachais torthaí oideachais dearfacha agus go dtugtar na scileanna dóibh atá riachtanach chun rannpháirtiú go rathúil sa tsochaí. Chuige seo tugaim tosaíocht riamh is choíche d'athchóiriú curaclaim leanúnach agus d'fhorbairt cláir, rud lena ngabhann dul i gcomhairle leis na gníomhaireachtaí agus luchtanna leasa lena mbaineann.

Is léir cheana féin go bhfuil ag éirí le cur i ngníomh na Straitéise Litearthachta agus Uimhearthachta. Léiríonn na Measúnachtaí Náisiúnta ar Bhéarla, Léamh agus Matamaitic ag an leibhéal bunscoile go bhfuil feabhas tagtha orthu den chéad uair ó 1980 agus tá na spriocanna leibhéal bunscoile bainte amach ar an iomlán. Idir an dá linn tá tionchar dearfach i gcónaí ag Tionscadal Mata agus pointí bónais do Mhata Ardleibhéil. Tá líon na scoláirí a ghlacann matamaitic ardleibhéil ag an Leibhéal Ardteistiméireachta ag dul i méad an t-am ar fad.

Tá athchóiriú ar an tSraith Shóisearach agus ar an tSraith Shinsearach á chur chun cinn i gcónaí agus forbairt sonruithe ábhair nua á gcur isteach. Tá tacaíochtaí agus acmhainní á gcur ar fáil do mhúinteoirí agus scoileanna chun cur i ngníomh an athchóirithe seo a éascú agus tá an Roinn rannpháirteach i ndianphléite le luchtanna leasa chun é a chur ar aghaidh. Ar athruithe suntasacha a fhorbrófar le linn 2015 áirítear athruithe ar na bandaí grádaithe ag Leibhéal na hArdteistiméireachta agus ar chóras pointí na Lároifige Iontrála.

In earnáil an bhreisoideachais agus oiliúna (FET) foilsíodh an chéad straitéis 5-bliana riamh don earnáil, mar aon le forbairt Plean Seirbhíse comhtháite breisoideachais agus oiliúna agus Plean um Chur i nGníomh Printíseachta. Gabhann an Roinn uirthi a bheith i dteagmháil le fostóirí chun a chinntiú go bhfuil an earnáil FET ar aon dul le riachtanais na heacnamaíochta agus go n-uasmhéadaíonn sí cumas na bhfoghlaimeoirí a bheith rannpháirteach sa mhargadh saothair. Tá athchóiriú fairsing ar siúl san earnáil ardoideachais chomh maith. Tá an Straitéis Náisiúnta um Ardoideachas go dtí 2030 á chur i ngníomh agus tá forbairt á déanamh ar an gCreat Feidhmíochta an Chóras Ardoideachais 2014-2016.

Bhí áthas orm a fhógairt go déanach in 2014, den chéad uair le roinnt blianta anuas, go n-ardófar an buiséad oideachais. Táim tiomanta d'infheistíocht bhreise leanúnach inár gcóras oideachais agus táim muiníneach go mbeidh a lán buntáistí dár sochaí mar thoradh air seo.

Ba mhaith liom an deis seo a thapú agus buíochas a ghabháil le foireann ar fad na Roinne, i dteannta leo siúd atá ag obair inár gcuid gníomhaireachtaí agus ag gach leibhéal ar fud an earnáil oideachais i gcoitinne, as an obair chrua agus an dílseacht a léirigh sibh in 2014. Is cúis mhór áthais dom scéala a thabhairt faoina bhfuil bainte amach agaibh i gcaitheamh na bliana agus fáiltím roimh bhur dtacaíocht leanúnach in 2015.

Jan O'Sullivan, **Aire Oideachais agus Scileanna**

Ráiteas ón Ard-Rúnaí

Tá áthas orm tuarascáil bhliantúil na Roinne don bhliain 2014 a chur i láthair. Tugann sí deis dúinn go léir ár machnamh a dhéanamh ar a bhfuil bainte amach againn i gcaitheamh na bliana seo caite. Mar Roinn is é ár bpríomhchuspóir ná tacú le córas oideachais agus oiliúna a chuireann ar chumas gach foghlaimeora a lánacmhainneacht a bhaint amach agus cur le forbairt eacnamaíoch, shóisialta agus chultúrtha na hÉireann. Mar sprioc uileghabhálach tá againn feabhas a chur ar cháilíocht foghlama agus teagaisc ag gach leibhéal den earnáil oideachais agus oiliúna agus torthaí oideachais a fheabhsú i gcaitheamh ama.

Tá obair chrua déanta againn chun ár gcuid spriocanna a chur chun cinn in 2014 agus sinne ag leanúint orainn ag cur i ngníomh clár cuimsitheach athchóirithe. Agus sin á dhéanamh againn ghlacamar le cur chuige "córas uile" i leith pleanála straitéisí agus cuir i ngníomh straitéisigh ar fud an earnáil oideachais mar is dóigh linn gurb é seo an tslí is éifeachtaí chun athrú a bhfuil brí leis agus na torthaí is fearr do gach duine a bhaint amach. Cuireann an cur-chuige seo ar ár gcumas ár gclár athchóirithe a phleanáil agus a chur i ngníomh agus, ag an am céanna, leanúint orainn ag tacú le hoibríocht ár gcóras oideachais agus oiliúna agus é a chothú.

Ba tríd an bPlean um Sheachadadh Athchóirithe Chomhtháite (IRDP) 2014 de chuid na Roinne, an Plean um Sheirbhís Roinnte agus an Plean um Sheachadadh Seirbhíse Seachtraí (ESD) 2014 - 2016 a rinneadh an clár oibre um athchóiriú ar fud an earnáil oideachais agus oiliúna a bhainistiú agus a chur i ngníomh i gcaitheamh na bliana. Chuir Oifig an Chláir um Athchóiriú na Seirbhíse Poiblí (PSR) laistigh den Roinn forbairt struchtúir láidre rialachais chun cinn mar aon le húsáid struchtúir bainistithe chláir agus tionscadail agus modheolaíochtaí ar fud na Roinne agus na hearnála. Chun a chinntiú go bhfaightear luach níos fearr ar airgead chomhordaigh Oifig an Chláir um Athchóiriú na Seirbhíse Poiblí tionscnaimh ar nós bunú Aonad um Sholáthar do Scoileanna agus an Líonra um Sholáthar Oideachais.

Bhain an Roinn a cuid spriocanna go léir amach i ndáil le feidhmeanna trasghníomhaíochta acmhainní daonna agus pinsin a aistriú chuig an Lárionad Seirbhíse Roinnte d'Acmhainní Daonna, **PeoplePoint,** rud as a leanann athruithe nach beag ar sheachadadh seirbhísí Acmhainní Daonna don bhfoireann sa Roinn. Lena chois sin ghlacamar páirt go gníomhach sa tionscadal Seirbhísí Roinnte um Bhainistiú Airgeadais agus sa tionscadal Párolla Roinnte. Mar thoradh air seo aistreofar an párolla agus feidhmeanna cothú taistil chuig ardán na seirbhísí roinnte in 2015.

Ar na feabhsuithe a rinneadh ar an gcóras Teicneolaíocht Faisnéise agus Cumarsáide (TFC) i gcaitheamh na bliana áirítear roinnt breisiúchán ar ár bpárollaí d'fhostaithe scoile agus ar an gcóras bainistithe airgeadais (FMS) chun gur féidir Alt 30 d'Acht na Comhairle Múinteoireachta 2001, socruithe saoire breoiteachta nua d'fhostaithe scoile agus SEPA (Limistéar Aonair d'Íocaíochtaí Euro) a chur i ngníomh.

De bhreis air seo leanadh ar aghaidh leis an obair ar bhunachar sonraí d'fhoghlaimeoirí bunscoile (POD). Nuair a bheidh sé curtha i ngníomh ina iomláine cuirfidh sé sonraí ar fáil do mheasúnú cláir agus ceapadh beartais atá bunaithe ar fhianaise. Tá sruthlíniú déanta ar phróiseas na dtuairisceán bliantúil Dheireadh Fómhair mar thoradh ar chur i ngníomh an bhunachar sonraí d'fhoghlaimeoirí iarbhunscoile (PPOD) atá ar siúl i gcónaí, agus mar thoradh ar feabhas a bheith curtha ar fheidhmiú Scéim na nOibreacha Samhraidh tá an scéim níos éifeachtaí.

Is tosaíocht don Roinn é seirbhís custaiméara den scoth a chur ar fáil. Agus cuimhne á coinneáil againn air seo leanamar orainn ag déanamh athbhreithnithe ar an soláthar seirbhíse. Mar chuid den obair seo feabhsaíodh ár suíomh gréasáin, seoladh ardán suíomh gréasáin nua don tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais (NEPS) san áireamh, chun gur fusa do thuismitheoirí, scoileanna agus oideachasóirí teacht ar eolas, acmhainní agus foilseacháin de chuid na Seirbhíse Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais. Lena chois sin cuireadh tionscnaimh nua i ngníomh leis, chun cur le feasacht ar obair an Aire agus na Roinne araon trí ábhar a fhoilsiú ar bhonn níos leithne ar an suíomh gréasáin. Tá tosaíocht á thabhairt againn i gcónaí do bheith ag díriú ar fheabhsú leanúnach an phróisis ghnó d'fhonn éifeachtacht níos mó agus soláthar seirbhíse níos fearr a chinntiú.

Bíodh agus go bhfuil ár n-eacnamaíocht ag casadh chun feabhais, táimidne, mar Roinn, ag oibriú le hacmhainní laghdaithe i gcónaí. D'ainneoin seo bhí ar ár gcumas, a bhuíochas le tiomantas agus obair chrua foireann na Roinne agus na ndaoine siúd atá ag obair ar fud an earnáil oideachais, seachadadh maidir lenár gcuid spriocanna agus iad a chur chun cinn. Ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil libh uile as bhur ndílseacht, comhoibriú agus solúbthacht leanúnach maidir le cuspóirí a bhaint amach agus glacadh le hathrú. Cuireadh spriocanna agus straitéisí nua inár Ráiteas Straitéise don tréimhse 2015-17 agus táim ag súil le bheith ag obair libh go léir chun na spriocanna seo a bhaint amach.

Seán Ó Foghlú, Ard-Rúnaí

1 Athbhreithniú ar an mBliain

Rinne an Roinn dul chun cinn suntasach leanúnach i mórán dá cuid réimsí tosaíochta in 2014.

1.1 Oideachas Luathóige

D'fhonn soláthar luathóige ardcháilíochta a chur chun cinn bhí an Roinn ag comhthadhall leis an Roinn Leanaí agus Gnóthaí Óige maidir le réimse bearta féachaint le cinntiú go mbeidh na scileanna cearta ag céimithe as cláir luathoideachais chun obair go héifeachtach sa réimse seo. Áiríodh orthu seo céimeanna chun na cáilíochtaí íosta a mhéadú a éilítear ó bhaill foirne. Ina theannta sin cuireadh tús le hathbhreithniú ar chláir luathoideachais. Is féidir féachaint ar a thuilleadh eolais maidir le tionscnaimh luathoideachais in 2014 i mír 4.1.

1.2 Athchóiriú Curaclaim i Scoileanna

Bhí mar thosaíocht ag an Roinn i gcónaí an córas oideachais a fhorbairt trí athchóiriú curaclaim chun na torthaí is fearr a bhaint amach d'fhoghlaimeoirí agus don tsochaí.

1.2.1 Leibhéal Bunscoile

Ag an leibhéal bunscoile d'oibrigh an Roinn as láimh a chéile leis an gComhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta (NCCA) i ndáil le hathchóiriú suntasach a chur i ngníomh. Áiríodh air seo curaclam teanga comhtháite a fhorbairt mar aon le tús a chur le hobair i réimse na matamaitice ag an leibhéal bunscoile. Cuireadh tástálacha caighdeánaithe i bhfeidhm den tríú bliain as a chéile mar chuid de chur i ngníomh leanúnach na Straitéise Náisiúnta um Litearthacht agus Uimhearthacht.

1.2.2 Leibhéal Iarbhunscoile

Ag an leibhéal iarbhunscoile ghlac scoláirí Ardteistiméireachta scrúduithe a dhéileáil leis an gcuraclam iomlán Tionscnaimh Mhata. Cuireadh scoláirí an Teastais Shóisearachta faoi scrúdú i snáithí 1-4. Mar thoradh ar siollabas nua Tionscnaimh Mhata don Ardteistiméireacht a thabhairt isteach mar aon le pointí bónais, tháinig méadú suntasach ar líon na scoláirí a roghnaigh an páipéar Matamaitice Ardleibhéil.

Mar chuid d'athchóiriú na Sraithe Sóisearaí cuireadh an sonrú ábhair nua Béarla i ngníomh de réir a chéile i scoileanna, cuireadh roinnt gearrchúrsaí i gcrích agus leanadh den obair ar fhorbairt sonruithe nua do roinnt ábhar eile.

Leanadh de dhianphlé leis na luchtanna leasa go léir maidir le cur i ngníomh na Sraithe Sóisearachta nua.

Bhíothas i mbun oibre i gcónaí chun sonruithe nua do roinnt ábhar a fhorbairt mar chuid d'athchóiriú na Sraithe Sóisearaí.

Lena chois sin cuireadh tús le forbairt straitéise nua teangacha chun ról teangacha iasachta a bhreithniú san earnáil iarbhunscoile, breisoideachais agus ardoideachais.

Féach mír 4.2-4.10 chun tuilleadh eolais a fháil ar an athchóiriú curaclaim.

1.3 Cuimsitheacht agus Folláine na Scoláirí a chur chun cinn i Scoileanna

Thug an Roinn tacaíocht leanúnach chun dul i ngleic le bulaíocht i scoileanna tríd an bPlean Gníomhaíochta um Bhulaíocht a chur i ngníomh. Áiríodh air seo maoiniú i gcomhair seisiúin oiliúna

do thuismitheoirí a chur ar fáil, acmhainní a thabhairt isteach cosúil le UP2USagus leanúint d'fhorbairt ghairmiúil do mhúinteoirí chun a gcumas dul i ngleic le bulaíocht a chur chun cinn.

D'fhorbair an tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais (NEPS) treoirlínte in 2014 chun athbhreithniú ar Fhoirne Tacaíochta Scoláirí a chur ar bun. Is é a dhéanann Foirne Tacaíochta Scoláirí ná tacú le scoláirí ag a bhfuil fadhbanna sóisialta, mothúcháin agus iompair. Ina theannta sin tá siad ina lárionad maidir le hoiliúint, tacaíocht agus comhairle ón síceolaí NEPS atá sannta don scoil.

1.3.1 Pátrúnacht Scoile

Foilsíodh an tuarascáil ***An Fóram ar Phátrúnacht agus Iolrachas in Earnáil an Bhunoideachais: Dul chun cinn go nuige seo agus Treoracha don Todhchaí***ar an 1 Iúil 2014. Sa pháipéar seo tugtar an t-eolas is deireanaí ar an dul chun cinn atá déanta go dtí seo maidir le moltaí an Fhóraim ar Phátrúnacht agus Iolrachas san earnáil bhunscoile a chur chun cinn. Dírítear go háirithe ar dheachleachtas agus roghanna chun éagsúlacht a chur ar aghaidh i mbunscoileanna.

1.3.2 Beartais maidir le Ligean isteach sa Bhunscoil

I mí Mhárta 2014 d'fhaomh an Rialtas dréachtú an Bhille Oideachais (Ligean isteach i Scoileanna) a bhfuil de chuspóir aige creat uileghabhálach a sholáthar chun a chinntiú go bhfuil beartais rollaithe i bhfeidhm a bhfuil struchtúr níos fearr acu, atá cothrom agus trédhearcach agus go bhfaighidh gach páiste áit i scoil. Tá dul chun cinn maith déanta ar dhréachtú an bhille agus tá sé ar chlár reachtaíochta an Rialtais le haghaidh a fhoilsithe go luath in 2015.

Chun tuilleadh eolais ar gach a bhfuil ráite anseo thuas a fháil féach mír 4.14.

1.4 Feabhsuithe ar Oideachas an Mhúinteora

Cuireadh tuilleadh feabhsuithe i bhfeidhm ar oideachas tosaigh an mhúinteora (ITE) agus cuireadh soláthar forbartha gairmiúla (CPD) do mhúinteoirí chun cinn tuilleadh in 2014. Áiríodh orthu seo na hathruithe ar inneachar agus fad na gclár oideachas tosaigh an mhúinteora ar fad a chur i ngníomh de réir na straitéise Litearthachta agus Uimhearthachta faoi dheireadh 2014. Féach mír 4.20 chun tuilleadh eolais a fháil.

1.5 Soláthar Múinteoirí

Sa bhliain 2014 d'fhaomh an Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta treochlár chun múnla inbhuanaithe i gcomhair soláthar múinteoirí a bhaint amach agus chuir ar bun grúpa oibre teicniúil chun dréachtmhúnla i gcomhair soláthar múinteoirí a dhréachtú. Lena chois sin cuireadh fóram comhairleach do na luchtanna leasa go léir ar suim leo é seo. Fuarthas tuarascáil eatramhach ar obair an ghrúpa oibre theicniúil i mí na Nollag 2014 agus tá tuarascáil deiridh le teacht go déanach in 2015.

1.6 Samhail Nua Bheartaithe maidir le Múinteoirí a Shannadh do Scoláirí ag a bhfuil Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais.

D'fhoilsigh an Chomhairle Náisiúnta um Oideachas Speisialta (NCSE) a tuarascáil *Soláthar do Dhaltaí a bhfuil Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais acu* ar an 18 Meitheamh 2014. Is grúpa oibre a bhí ceaptha ag an NCSE agus ina raibh ionadaithe ó eagraíochtaí míchumais agus eagraíochtaí ionadaíochta tuismitheoirí a d'ullmhaigh an tuarascáil. Tá tuilleadh eolais ar fáil ag mír 4.17.5.

1.7 An Bille um Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta (Leasú) - Grinnfhiosrúchán an Gharda Síochána do Mhúinteoirí agus Oiriúnacht don Mhúinteoireacht

I mí Aibreáin d'fhaomh an Rialtas dréachtú an Bhille um Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta (Leasú).

Freastalaíonn an Bille ar dhá aidhm uileghabhálacha: tacaíocht a thabhairt do ról lárnach na Comhairle Múinteoireachta sna socruithe grinnfhiosrúcháin reachtúla do mhúinteoirí cláraithe atá romhainn agus na forálacha reachtúla maidir le feidhm na Comhairle Múinteoireachta i dtaobh oiriúnachta don mhúinteoireacht a leasú agus a neartú. Tá sé i gceist an Bille a fhoilsiú in 2015. Féach 4.22.2.

1.8 Gníomhaíochtaí na Cigireachta

Mar chuid dá clár mór cigireachta i gcaitheamh na bliana chuir an Chigireacht obair chun tosaigh i dtaobh athbhreithniú de chuid na Roinne ar oideachas Gaeltachta. Críochnaíodh dréacht-tuarascáil ar an athbhreithniú ar thaighde náisiúnta ar oideachas Gaeltachta. Lena chois sin críochnaíodh dréacht-tuarascáil ar staidéir cháis a rinne an Chigireacht ar shampláil de scoileanna Gaeltachta. De bhreis air seo thug an Chigireacht cuairteanna staidéar cáis ar shampláil bunscoileanna agus iarbhunscoileanna mar chuid d'athbhreithniú de chuid na Roinne ar dhíolúintí ón nGaeilge.

1.9 Forbairtí san Earnáil Bhreisoideachais agus Oiliúna (FET)

Cuireadh roinnt athchóirithe maidir leis an Earnáil Bhreisoideachais agus Oiliúna chun cinn tuilleadh in 2014. Áiríodh orthu SOLAS agus na 16 Bhord Oideachais agus Oiliúna (ETB) a chur ar bun agus a fhorbairt.

D'fhoilsigh SOLAS an chéad *Straitéis Bhreisoideachais agus Oiliúna 2014-2015* riamh i mí Bhealtaine 2014 mar aon leis an chéad Plean um Sheirbhísí Oideachais agus Oiliúna Comhtháite don earnáil.

Tar éis don Athbhreithniú ar an gcóras Printíseachta in Éirinn a bheith foilsithe in 2013 foilsíodh Plean um Chur i nGníomh Printíseachta i mí Mheithimh 2014. Ar na príomh-mholtaí ón Athbhreithniú áirítear bunú Comhairle Phrintíseachta chun maoirseacht a dhéanamh ar fhorbairt printíseachtaí i réimsí nua Seoladh an Chomhairle go foirmiúil i mí na Samhna 2014 agus tá ghlao ar thograí i gcomhair printíseachtaí nua. Féachfar orthu siúd in 2015.
Tá tuilleadh eolais maidir leis an méid thuas agus forbairtí eile san earnáil Bhreisoideachais agus Oiliúna ar fáil ag Sprioc 2, leathanaigh 28-32.

1.10 Forbairtí san Earnáil Ardoideachais

Tá clár nuachóirithe agus athchóirithe nach raibh a leithéid ann riamh ar siúl sa Chóras Ardoideachais in Éirinn. Tá d'aidhm ag cur i ngníomh leanúnach na Straitéise Náisiúnta d'Ardoideachas go nuige 2030 córas ardoideachais a fhorbairt a thabharfaidh an t-eolas agus na scileanna do dhaoine atá riachtanach chun saol saibhir sásúil a chaitheamh agus chun a bheith in ann aghaidh a thabhairt ar na dúshláin shóisialta eacnamaíocha atá roimh Éirinn. Leag an tAire amach Creat Feidhmíocht Chórais a shonraíonn tosaíochtaí náisiúnta agus príomhspriocanna an Rialtais don ardoideachas don tréimhse 2014-2016.

Is é cuid tábhachtach eile de na hathchóirithe atá idir lámha chun eispéireas na scoláirí a fheabhsú ná tacú le haistriú níos fearr ón oideachas dara leibhéil chuig an ardoideachas. Tá dul chun cinn

mór déanta ag príomhluchtanna leasa agus príomhghníomhaireachtaí i dtaobh pacáiste tograí a chomhaontú lena mbainfear an chuspóir seo amach.

De dheasca brú ar an gcóras ardoideachais mar thoradh ar fás a bheith ag teacht ar líon na mac léinn gan stad gan staonadh, bunaíodh grúpa saineolaithe in 2014 chun cuir chuige a aimsiú a bhainfeadh bunús maoinithe inbhuanaithe amach d'fhonn aghaidh a thabhairt ar mhéadú leanúnach na hearnála agus oideachas ardcháilíochta a choinneáil ag an am céanna.

Tá tuilleadh eolais ar fhorbairtí san earnáil ardoideachais ar fáil faoi Sprioc 3, leathanaigh 32-36.

1.11 Athchóiriú na Seirbhíse Poiblí

Sa bhliain 2014 chomhordaigh Oifig an Chláir um Athchóiriú na Seirbhíse Poiblí laistigh den Roinn bunú an Aonad um Sholáthar do Scoileanna agus an Líonra um Sholáthar Oideachais. Mar chuid den bPlean Seirbhísí Roinnte 2014 - 2016 a chur i ngníomh críochnaíodh an Tuarascáil Bonnlíne ar Sheirbhís Roinnte Párolla don Ardoideachas agus an Cás Gnó Seirbhísí Roinnte Párolla na mBord Oideachais agus Oiliúna. De bhreis air sin críochnaíodh athbhreithniú tosaigh ar na Tograí Oideachais ar mhaithe le Forbairt Inbhuanaithe ar fad go luath in 2014.

Bhain an Roinn a cuid spriocanna go léir amach i ndáil le feidhmeanna trasghníomhaíochta acmhainní daonna agus pinsin a aistriú chuig an Lárionad Seirbhíse Roinnte d'Acmhainní Daonna, **PeoplePoint**, i mí Feabhra 2014.

Lena chois sin bhí an Roinn ina rannpháirtí gníomhach sa togra um Sheirbhísí Roinnte do Bhainistíocht Airgeadais agus sa togra um Párolla Roinnte. Tá sé i gceist feidhmeanna párolla agus cothú taistil na Roinne a aistriú chuig ardán seirbhísí roinnte i mí Mhárta 2015.

1.12 Dul i ngleic le Drochúsáid san Am atá Thart

Bhí an Roinn ag tacú le hobair Caranua i gcónaí. Is é seo an Ciste Reachtúil um Fhorais Chónaithe a cuireadh ar bun chun maoirseacht a dhéanamh ar úsáid ranníocaíochtaí airgid €110 milliún ar a mhéid atá geallta ag cuallachtaí reiligiúnacha chun tacú le riachtanais breis is 15,000 marthanóirí ó dhrochúsáid leanaí i bhforais chónaithe. Thosaigh Caranua ar ghlacadh le hiarratais i mí Eanáir 2014 agus bhí 3,829 n-iarratas faighte aige faoi dheireadh na bliana. Bhí €8.9 milliún caite aige ar sholáthar réimse seirbhísí faofa d'iar-chónaitheoirí.

I mí na Nollag 2014 d'fhaomh an Rialtas moltaí chun socruithe lasmuigh den chúirt a thairiscint dóibh siúd a thug cásanna cúirte maidir le drochúsáid ghnéasach leanaí scoile stairiúil i gcoinne an Stáit chomh fada agus atá na cásanna ag teacht le téarmaí an Chinnidh a rinne an Chúirt Eorpach um Chearta an Duine i gcás Louise O'Keefe agus a chomhlíonann siad riachtanais áirithe eile.

2 Eolas agus Sonraí Corparáide Ginearálta

Sa chuid seo den Tuarascáil tugtar sonraí corparáide ginearálta Tá sonraí maidir le tionscnaimh ar leith ar fáil ó mhíreanna 4.1 go 8.8 den Tuarascáil. Tá staitisticí tábhachtacha oideachais ar fáil ar leathanach na staitisticí de shuíomh gréasáin na Roinne ag an nasc seo a leanas:
www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/

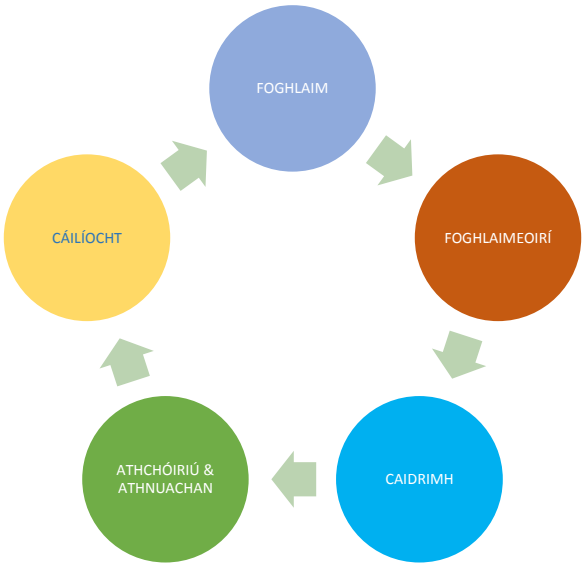
2.1 Ár Misean

A chur ar chumas daoine tríd an bhfoghlaim a lánacmhainneacht a bhaint amach le go bhféadann siad cur le forbairt shóisialta, chultúrtha agus eacnamaíochta na hÉireann.

2.2 Ár bhFís

Córas oideachais agus oiliúna a aithnítear go hidirnáisiúnta, bunaithe ar bheartais a bhfuil bonn fianaise leo agus a cheaptar le teacht roimh riachtanais foghlaimeoirí, na sochaí agus an gheilleagair, a bhíonn ag athrú, agus freagairt dá réir.

2.3 Ár Luachanna

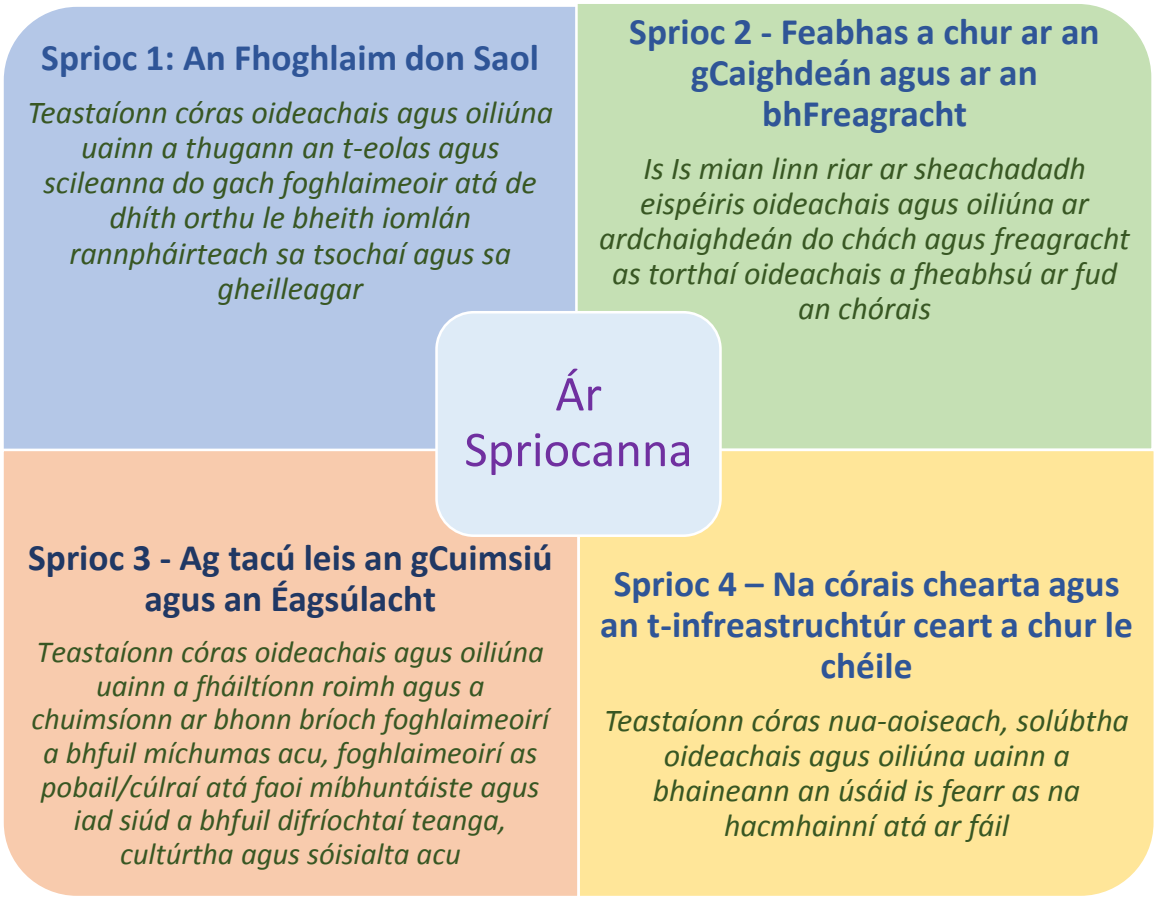


- Cuirimid luach ar **fhoghlaim** mar leas pobail agus aithnímid a ról i bhforbairt, comhtháthú agus folláine sochaí
- Cuirimid luach ar **cháilíocht** agus táimid tiomanta do phrionsabal an fheabhsúcháin leanúnaigh agus a bheith oscailte do smaointe, dúshláin agus díospóireacht sheachtrach
- D'aithníomar áit an **fhoghlaimeora** i gcroílár forbairt beartais
- Cuirimid luach ar **chaidreamh** agus bheith ag obair i gcomhpháirt laistigh d'earnáil an oideachais agus leis an bpobal i gcoitinne
- Táimid tiomanta d'fheidhmiú phlean **athnuachan** na státseirbhíse agus phlean **athchóiriú** na hearnála poiblí

2.4 Ár gCur Chuige

Glacaimid cur chuige "córais uile" i leith pleanála straitéisí agus cur i ngníomh ar fud na hearnála oideachais agus oiliúna. Cuireann an cur chuige "i gcomhar a chéile" ar ár gcumas clár fairsing athchóirithe a phleanáil agus a chur i ngníomh agus tacú le hoibríocht ár gcóras oideachais agus oiliúna agus é a chothú ag an am céanna.

3 Ár Spriocanna



3.1 Ag tacú leis an bPróiseas Parlaiminte in 2014

Ag tacú leis an bPróiseas Parlaiminte in 2014
➢ Tugadh freagra ar **3,786** Ceist Parlaiminte
➢ Fuarthas tuairim is **8,000** uiríll aire nua mar aon le comhfhreagras leanúnach a bhain le comhaid cháis reatha agus gnóthaí dáilcheantair.
➢ Tugadh freagra sa Dáil ar **38** Díospóireacht Saincheiste Tráthúla agus freagraíodh **42** rún Díospóireachta Atráthaithe sa Seanad.

3.2 Seirbhísí Faisnéise

Seirbhísí Faisnéise in 2014
➢ Fuarthas **6,724** ríomhphost trí info@education.gov.ie
➢ D'fhéach **1.9** milliún cuairteoir ar bhreis is **7** milliún leathanach ar ár suíomh gréasáin www.education.ie.
➢ Bhí an Roinn ag baint úsáide as na meáin shóisialta i gcónaí mar ardán chun cumarsáid a dhéanamh le luchtanna leasa seachtracha agus tháinig méadú ar líon leantóirí na Roinne ar Twitter ó bhreis is 4,000 i mí Eanáir 2014 go breis is **14,000** ag deireadh 2014.
➢ Fuarthas **303** iarratas faoin Acht um Shaoráil Faisnéise 2014 agus rinneadh **300** cinneadh faoi iarratais ar Shaoráil Faisnéise.
➢ D'fhoilsigh an Phreasoifig **134** preaseisiúint agus **38** caint

3.3 Clár Cigireachta Bliantúil i Scoileanna agus Lárionaid Oideachais

Tá tuilleadh eolais ar chigireachtaí scoile agus obair na Cigireachta ar fáil i mír 4.19.

Rinne an Chigireacht 4,459 gcigireacht nó cuairt chomhairleach ar scoileanna san iomlán in 2014 mar a mínítear i dTáblaí 1 go 4 thíos.

Tábla 1: Achoimre ar chigireachtaí agus measúnachtaí, 2014

Achoimre ar chigireachtaí	**2014**
Cigireachtaí i mbunscoileanna (cigireachtaí ar obair mhúinteoirí ar promhadh san áireamh)	2945
Cigireachtaí in iarbhunscoileanna agus ionaid oideachais	746
Cigireachtaí eile ar sholáthar do scoláirí agus daoine óga	135
Iomlán na gcigireachtaí i scoileanna agus ionaid oideachais	**3826**
Iomlán na gcuairteanna comhairleacha um féinmheasúnacht scoile	633

Tábla 2: Cigireachtaí agus measúnachtaí i mbunscoileanna, 2014

Cigireacht Bhunscoile/gníomhaíocht mheasúnachta	**2014**
MSU: Bunscoile	266
Cigireachtaí Theagmhasacha	503
Cigireachtaí Leantacha	141
Measúnachtaí DEIS	10
Cigireachtaí ar mhúinteoirí bunscoile nuacháilithe: promhadh múinteoirí (bunscoile) don scoilbhliain 2012/13	2025
Iomlán na gcuairteanna cigireacht scoile	**2945**
Cuairteanna comhairleacha um féinmheasúnacht scoile	491

Tábla 3: Cigireachtaí agus measúnachtaí in iarbhunscoileanna, 2014

Cigireacht Iarbhunscoile/gníomhaíocht mheasúnachta	**2014**
MSU-BCF (Bainistíocht-Ceannaireacht-Foghlaim) (Iarbhunscoile)	75
Cigireacht Ábhair	317
Cigireachtaí Cláir	29
Measúnachtaí DEIS	10
Measúnacht Ionaid Oideachais (Ógtheagmháil, Ionaid Oideachais do Thaistealaithe Fásta)	4
Cigireachtaí Theagmhasacha	210
Cigireachtaí Leantacha	101
Iomlán na gcuairteanna cigireacht scoile	**746**
Cuairteanna comhairleacha um féinmheasúnacht scoile	142

Tábla 4: Gníomhaíochtaí cigireachta eile in 2014

Cigireachtaí/measúnachtaí eile ar sholáthar do scoláirí agus daoine óga	2014
Tuarascálacha measúnachta ar choláistí Gaeilge Gaeltachta (Samhradh/Cáisc) (Coláistí Gaeilge)	32
Measúnacht ar scoileanna chun críocha eile lena n-áirítear: *Athbhreithniú ar Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Athbhreithniú ar Díolúintí ón Ghaeilge*	26
Measúnachtaí ar Chúram Luathóige agus suíomhanna Oideachais	19
Measúnacht ar scoileanna speisialta atá ceangailte le hAonaid Ardtacaíochta, Aonaid Sainchúraim, agus Scoileanna Coinneála Leanaí	9
Cigireachtaí ar champaí samhraidh litearthachta do leanaí	4
Cigireachtaí ar champaí samhraidh do leanaí	5
Cigireacht ar chúrsaí samhraidh FGL (Forbairt Ghairmiúil Leanúnach) do mhúinteoirí bunscoile	40
Iomlán na gníomhaíochta measúnachta eile	**135**

3.4 Tábla na bPrasíocaíochtaí in 2014

Prasíocaíochtaí [1] Achoimre Eanáir go Nollaig 2014			
Mionsonraí	**Líon**	**Luach €**	**Céatadán (%) na n-íocaíochtaí iomlána a rinneadh (a Líon)**
Líon na n-íocaíochtaí a rinneadh laistigh de 15 lá	10,767	366,747,620	90.68%
Líon na n-íocaíochtaí a rinneadh laistigh de 16 lá - 30 lá	1,042	5,757,052	8.78%
Líon na n-íocaíochtaí a rinneadh tar éis breis is 30 lá	65	96,528	0.55%
Iomlán na n-íocaíochtaí a rinneadh in 2014	**11,874**	**372,601,200**	**100.00%**
Iomlán na Sonrasc faoi dhíospóid in 2014	39	240,900	

Foinse: Achoimre ar thuarascálacha Ráithe in 2014 don Roinn de bhun Cinneadh Rialtais Uimh.S29296 den 19 Bealtaine 2009

[1] Íocaíochtaí a rinneadh ar an dáta nó roimh an dáta ar a bhfuil an íocaíocht dlite de réir téarmaí conartha i scríbhinn, nó mura bhfuil conradh i scríbhinn ann, nó mura sonraíonn an conradh i scríbhinn dáta íocaíochta, laistigh de 45 lá ón sonrasc a fháil nó ó seachadadh na hearraí nó na seirbhísí, cibé acu is déanaí.

Dul chun cinn ar ár gcuid Spriocanna Ardleibhéil in 2014

4 Sprioc 1 - Córas scoile agus oideachas luathóige ardcháilíochta uileghabhálach a sholáthar, mar aon le torthaí foghlama feabhsaithe

Is é cuspóir iomlán na Roinne agus tacaíochtaí á soláthar aici don gcóras scoile agus oideachas luathóige ná a chur ar chumas soláthraithe oideachais torthaí den scoth a sheachadadh do gach foghlaimeoir i dtimpeallacht uileghabhálach. Chun an chuspóir seo a bhaint amach soláthraíonn an Roinn go leanúnach tacaíochtaí maidir le múineadh, cúrsaí airgeadais, beartas, reachtaíocht, rialáil agus curaclam. Ag an am céanna féachann sí le dul i ngleic le míbhuntáiste oideachais agus riachtanais oideachais speisialta. Soláthraíonn Cigireacht na Roinne cinnteacht maidir le cáilíocht agus cuntasacht phoiblí sa chóras oideachais trí cigireachtaí agus measúnachtaí a dhéanamh i scoileanna agus barrchleachtas agus feabhsú scoile a chur chun cinn trí comhairle a chur ar mhúinteoirí, príomhoidí, boird bhainistíochta i scoileanna, lucht déanta beartais sa Roinn agus don earnáil oideachais i gcoitinne.

4.1 Ag tacú le Córas Oideachais Luathóige Ardcháilíochta

Le linn na bliana bhí an Roinn ag obair i gcónaí leis an Roinn Leanaí agus Gnóthaí Óige chun feabhas a chur ar cháilíocht an oideachas luathóige. ~~Feabhsú cáilíochta~~Ar an gclár oibre um fheabhsú cáilíochta áirítear cigireachtaí a thabhairt isteach atá dírithe ar oideachas, i suíomhanna atá rannpháirteach i Scéim na Bliana Réamhscoile Saor-in Aisce. Cuireadh tús le hobair ar shamhail chigireachta chuí a fhorbairt in 2014 agus cuirfear tús leis na cigireachtaí a dhéanfaidh Cigireacht na ROS ar iarraidh an Aire Oideachais agus Scileanna agus an Aire Leanaí agus Gnóthaí Óige, in 2015. Tá gné eile den gclár oibre cáilíochta ag díriú ar lucht saothair a fhorbairt san earnáil luathóige. Ina thaobh seo, geallann an Roinn Leanaí agus Gnóthaí Óige an riachtanas cáilíochta íosta a ardú i dtreo go mbeidh ar gach ball foirne cáilíocht ábhartha a fháil ag Leibhéal 5 ar Chreat Náisiúnta na gCáilíochtaí. Ní mór do cheannairí réamhscoile cáilíocht ag Leibhéal 6 ar Chreat Náisiúnta na gCáilíochtaí a fháil. Bhí an Roinn ag obair as láimh a chéile leis an Roinn Leanaí agus Gnóthaí Óige agus le POBAL chun critéir a bhunú do chiste foghlaimeoirí a thacódh leo cur lena gcuid scileanna.

D'fhonn na scileanna, an t-eolas agus an meon cuí a thabhairt do chéimithe chun obair i réimse an oideachas luathóige tá cáilíocht na gclár oideachais agus oiliúna as a leanann cáilíochtaí i gcúram agus oideachas luathóige ríthábhachtach. Tionscnaíodh athbhreithniú ar na cláir oideachais agus oiliúna go léir den gcineál seo in 2014.

Lena chois sin, forbraíodh sa chlár um fheabhsú cáilíochta tacaíocht ghairmiúil saineolaithe agus seirbhís meantóireachta mar chuid den tionscnamh Better Start (Tús Níos Fearr). Sa tseirbhís tacaíochta tá 36 bhall foirne atá faoi chomhbhainistiú na Roinne Leanaí agus Gnóthaí Óige agus Pobal. Tá 30 saineolaí Luathóige ag obair go díreach laistigh de na suíomhanna luathóige.

Críochnaíodh obair na Roinne leis an nGrúpa Oibre Téamach um Oideachas Luathóige agus Cúram (ECEC) a bunaíodh faoi choimirce an Choimisiúin Eorpaigh in 2014 leis an bhfoilsiúchán *Proposal for key principles of a quality framework for early childhood education and care.*

Thug an Roinn tacaíocht leanúnach don gClár Túis Luaith ar tionscnamh réamhbhunscoile é i limistéir ainmnithe ina bhfuil míbhuntáiste uirbeach. In 2014, bhain 1,261 pháiste úsáid as an gclár. Lena chois sin lean an Roinn uirthi ag soláthar maoinithe do thionscadal réamhscoile Sráid Rutland.

Foilsíodh *A Focussed Policy Assessment of the Early Start Programme* i mí Mheithimh 2014. Sa Mheasúnú seo aithníodh bearta chun oibriú Túis Luaith a neartú amach anseo ach a éifeachtúlacht agus a éifeachtacht a fheabhsú. Pléadh na moltaí agus na torthaí ag fóram a reáchtáladh i mí na Samhna 2014. D'fhreastail 100 múinteoirí aonaid de chuid Túis Luaith, oibrithe cúram leanaí agus príomhoidí air.

4.2 Curaclam agus Measúnacht i Scoileanna

Le linn 2014 ar fad lean an Roinn dá cuid oibre leis an gComhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta agus leis an gCoimisiún Scrúduithe Stáit maidir le forbairt curaclaim, agus thug tús áite do chur i ngníomh leanúnach na Straitéise Náisiúnta Litearthachta agus Uimhearthachta, Tionscadal Mata agus Athchóiriú na Sraithe Sóisearaí.

4.3 Athchóiriú Curaclaim ag an Leibhéal Bunscoile

Bhí an Roinn ag obair leis an gComhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta d'fhonn tús a chur le clár tábhachtach um athchóiriú curaclaim ag an leibhéal bunscoile. Áiríodh air seo tús a chur le curaclam teanga comhtháite do naíonáin shóisearacha go rang a dó (san áireamh) a fhorbairt agus tús a chur le hábhar nua a fhorbairt dar teideal 'Oideachas faoi Reiligiúin agus Creidimh mar aon le hEitic' a fhorbairt. Cuireadh forbairtí sna réimsí seo chun cinn in 2014 agus tabharfar chun críche iad in 2015. Lena chois sin cuireadh tús le hobair maidir le Matamaitic Bhunscoile.

4.4 Ár gcuid Scileanna Litearthachta agus Uimhearthachta a fheabhsú

Leanamar orainn ag cur i ngníomh na Straitéise Náisiúnta um Fheabhsú Litearthachta agus Uimhearthachta i measc Páistí agus Daoine Óga 2011 go 2020. Foilsíodh i mí Iúil 2011 é agus leanadh ar aghaidh leis in 2014.

Rinneadh tástálacha caighdeánaithe i rang 2, 4 agus 6 den tríú bliain as a chéile i mí Bhealtaine / Mheithimh 2014. Tuairiscíodh torthaí comhiomlánaithe na dtástálacha seo don Roinn chun go ndéanfar iad a anailísiú.

4.5 Teagasc agus Foghlaim na Gaeilge agus trí Ghaeilge i Scoileanna

Thug an Roinn tacaíocht leanúnach don gComhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) a chuireann comhairle, taighde, acmhainní agus téacsanna as Gaeilge ar fáil mar aon le seirbhísí tacaíochta i gcomhair múineadh na Gaeilge agus trí Ghaeilge.

Cuireadh feabhsuithe ar mheasúnacht litearthachta Gaeilge (T1) i nGaelscoileanna i ngníomh de réir mar a míníodh sa Straitéis Náisiúnta Litearthachta agus Uimhearthachta.

Rinneadh an t-athbhreithniú ar inneachar an churaclaim Ghaeilge (T2) do scoileanna príomhshrutha Béarla. Úsáideadh cur chuige torthaí foghlama a shonraigh go soiléir na gnóthachtálacha a bhfuiltear ag súil leo ó pháistí na sraithe bunscoile.

Mar a luadh ag 1.8 san Athbhreithniú ar an Bhliain, cuireadh tús leis, le hathbhreithniú ar oideachas sa Ghaeltacht. Tá sé i gceist an obair seo a chríochnú in 2015.

4.6 Measúnachtaí Náisiúnta

In 2014 rinne an Foras Taighde ar Oideachas na Measúnachtaí Náisiúnta ar Léamh Béarla agus Matamaitic ar shampláil ionadaíoch breis is 8,000 scoláire i 150 bunscoil. Baineadh úsáid as tástálacha slána. Rinneadh na tástálacha bonnlíne roimhe seo in 2009 agus bheifí ag súil go dtaispeánfadh torthaí na dtástálacha 2014 a bheidh ar fáil le linn 2015, dul chun cinn ó shin.

Tá na tuarascálacha, staidéir agus measúnachtaí a rinne an Foras Taighde ar Oideachas ar fáil ar **www.erc.ie**

4.7 Aistriú ón bhunscoil go dtí an iarbhunscoil

Forbraíodh sraith ábhar chun tacú le tuairisciú agus aistriú faisnéise faoi scoláirí ó bhunscoileanna go iarbhunscoileanna. Cuireadh na hábhair i láthair faoin mbrat-theideal Education Passport (Pas Oideachais) agus tá siad ar fáil ag www.ncca.ie/transfer.

Ó 2013/2014 ar aghaidh bhí an t-ábhar ar fáil do scoileanna chun tacú le tuairisciú agus aistriú faisnéise faoi scoláirí. D'fhorbair an Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta an carda tuairiscithe nó aistrithe caighdeánach mar thoradh ar thréimhse fhairsing teagmhála le luchtanna leasa, d'fhonn tacú leis an dá sprioc seo: tuairisciú do thuismitheoirí agus faisnéis faoi scoláirí a aistriú chuig iarbhunscoileanna i ndiaidh don scoláire a bheith curtha ar an rolla.

4.8 Forbairt Curaclaim ag an Leibhéal Iarbhunscoile

4.8.1 Tionscadal Mata

Cuireadh na cúig snáithe de Thionscadal Mata i ngníomh de réir a chéile i scoileanna príomhshrutha i mí Mheán Fómhair 2012. I mí Mheithimh 2014 chuaigh scoláirí Ardteistiméireachta faoi scrúduithe a phléigh iomlán an churaclaim bua (snáithe 1-5) agus chuaigh scoláirí ag leibhéal an Teastais Shóisearaigh faoi scrúdú i snáithí 1-4. Mar thoradh ar shiollabas nua Tionscnaimh Mhata don Ardteistiméireacht agus pointí bónais araon a thabhairt isteach tháinig méadú suntasach ar líon na scoláirí a ghlac an páipéar Matamaitice ardleibhéil le ceithre bliana anuas. Ghlac tuairim is 27% dóibh siúd a ghlac scrúdú Matamaitice an scrúdú ardleibhéil in 2014, i gcomparáid le 25.6% in 2013.

Tugtar feabhsuithe faoi deara leis, sa Teastas Sóisearach: ghlac 54% de scoláirí Matamaitice an páipéar ardleibhéil in 2014, i gcomparáid le 52% in 2013.

Is iad na sprioc-rátaí rannpháirtíochta mar a leagadh amach sa Straitéis Litearthachta agus Uimhearthachta ná rannpháirtíocht ardleibhéil 30% san Ardteistiméireacht agus 60% sa Teastas Sóisearach faoi 2020.

4.8.2 An tionchar a imríonn Tionscadal Mata mar Idirghabháil in Athchóiriú an Churaclaim

D'fhoilsigh an Foras Taighde ar Oideachas tuarascáil ar an tionchar tosaigh a d'imir Tionscadal Mata mar idirghabháil in athchóiriú an churaclaim. Baineadh úsáid as an gClár do Mheasúnacht Scoláire Idirnáisiúnta (PISA) 2012 mar uirlis mheasúnachta. Ba é cuspóir leis an anailís ná feidhmíocht scoláirí na 23 scoil Tionscadal Mata a thug faoi i dtosach - ba iad an chéad ghrúpa scoileanna a chuir Tionscadal Mata i ngníomh de réir a chéile - a chur i gcomparáid le feidhmíocht scoláirí na scoileanna a ghlac le Tionscadal Mata níos déanaí agus úsáid a bhaint as na measúnachtaí PISA. Tá fianaise ón tuarascáil go bhfuil tionchar dearfach ag Tionscadal Mata ar fheidhmíocht Mhata na scoláirí go dtí seo.

4.8.3 Athchóiriú na Sraithe Sóisearaí

I mí Mheán Fómhair 2014 cuireadh an sonrú ábhair Béarla don tSraith Shóisearaigh nua i ngníomh i scoileanna.

De bhreis air sin tugadh na hábhair seo a leanas chun críche in 2014: gearrchúrsaí in Oideachas Sibhialta, Sóisialta agus Polaitiúil, Corpoideachas, Oideachas Sóisialta, Pearsanta agus Sláinte, Sínis, Códú, Cúram Ainmhithe (do pháistí ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta), Imscrúdú Láithreacha Coire:

Eolaíocht Fhóiréinseach a Thaiscéaladh (do pháistí ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta), Litearthacht sna Meáin Dhigiteacha agus Taibhiú Ealaíonta.

Leanadh den obair leis, ar fhorbairt sonruithe nua san Eolaíocht, i nGaeilge agus i Staidéar Gnó.

Leanadh de phlé dian maidir le cur i ngníomh na Sraithe Sóisearaí nua leis na luchtanna leasa go léir, go háirithe le ceardchumainn mhúinteoirí a chuir i gcoinne gach gné den athchóiriú, go háirithe de bharr go mbaineann siad le measúnacht atá bunaithe sa scoil. Chun déileáil le himní na luchtanna leasa rinneadh roinnt athruithe ar an bplean um chur i ngníomh ar a n-áirítear leasú ar amchlár an chuir i ngníomh agus comhaontú go leanfar de mheasúnacht gnéithe suntasacha de gach ábhar trí scrúduithe a chuireann an Coimisiún Scrúduithe Stáit agus a dhéanann an Coimisiún a mharcáil. Chuir an tAire moladh i láthair do Cheardchumainn na Múinteoirí i mí na Samhna mar shlí chun tosaigh ach níor glacadh leis.

Tá an t-eolas go léir ar fáil ag http://www.juniorcycle.ie agus http://www.education.ie

4.8.4 Athchóiriú na Sraithe Sinsearaí

Leanamar orainn ag gabháil d'fhorbairt sonruithe nua d'Eacnamaíocht, Ealaín, Corpoideachas, Matamaitic Fheidhmeach agus Eolaíocht Talmhaíochta. Cuireadh sonruithe críochnaithe do Cheimic, Fisic agus Bitheolaíocht faoi bhráid an Aire. Bainfear triail astu seo sula gcuirfear i ngníomh iad ar bhonn náisiúnta. Imreoidh obair an Ghrúpa Stiúrtha um Athchóiriú Aistrithe obair athchóirithe na Sraithe Sinsearaí.

4.9 An Straitéis um Nuatheangacha Iasachta

Cuireadh tús le hobair ar straitéis nua teangacha a fhorbairt chun ról teangacha iasachta a bhreithniú san earnáil iarbhunscoile, breisoideachais agus ardoideachais. Bhí an próiseas comhairliúcháin ar siúl ó mhí Lúnasa go mí Dheireadh Fómhair 2014 agus iarradh ar luchtanna leasa freagra a thabhairt ar dhoiciméad cúlra agus príomhcheisteanna.

Fuarthas 80 aighneacht nach mór, agus breithníodh iad go cúramach sula reáchtálfar fóram do luchtanna leasa in 2015.

4.10 Clár do Mheasúnacht Idirnáisiúnta Scoláirí (PISA)

Bhí an cúigiú timthriall PISA ar siúl in Éirinn i mí Mhárta 2012 agus rinneadh anailís ar thorthaí PISA maidir le hÉirinn agus d'fhoilsigh an Foras Taighde ar Oideachas iad i ndeireadh 2013. In 2012 cuireadh réiteach faidhbe san áireamh mar mheasúnacht roghnach i bPISA. Measúnacht ar réiteach faidhbe bunaithe ar ríomhaire a lean ar aghaidh ar feadh 40 nóiméad a bhí i gceist. In Éirinn bhí 1,303 scoláire 15 bliana d'aois ó 183 scoil rannpháirteach. Foilsíodh na torthaí i mí Aibreáin 2014.

Bhí Éire ar an 17ú áit den 28 dtír ECFE a bhí rannpháirteach sa staidéar agus ar an 22ú áit den 44 tír a ghlac páirt san iomlán. Chruthaigh tíortha ar nós na Stát Aontaithe, an Iorua, an Danmhairg agus an tSualainn cosúil le hÉirinn; chruthaigh Ceanada, an Astráil, an Fhionlainn agus an R.A. i bhfad níos fearr ná Éire. Tá na sé tír is fearr a chruthaigh san Áis, agus Singeapór sa chéad áit.

Chruthaigh an scoláire is measa agus an scoláire is fearr in Éirinn sa réiteach faidhbe cosúil le meán na dtíortha ECFE. Níl aon difríocht rómhór idir cruthú scoláirí fireannacha agus scoláirí baineannacha. Bhí cruthú na scoláirí ó chúlraí inimirce i bhfad níos fearr ná an meán comhfhreagrach na hECFE bhí sé i bhfad níos ísle fós ná cruthú na scoláirí dúchasacha.

4.11 Ag tacú leis an bPróiseas Scrúduithe

Lean an Roinn uirthi ag tacú leis an gCoimisiún Scrúduithe Stáit (SEC) in 2014. Soláthraíonn an Coimisiún scrúduithe d'iarrthóirí i ngach clár scrúdaithe, scrúduithe ar ábhair churaclaim agus neamhchuraclaim san áireamh. Soláthraíodh roinnt bearta chun éascaíocht a dhéanamh d'iarrthóirí ag a bhfuil riachtanais ar leith chun go raibh ar a gcumas a scrúduithe Stáit a ghlacadh. Ar obair an Choimisiúin áirítear scrúdú míreanna tástála ar leith ar nós scríbhinní scrúdaithe, obair ealaíne, míreanna tionscadail agus béalscrúduithe. Lena chois sin bronnann an Coimisiún torthaí scrúdaithe agus próiseálann sé achomhairc.

4.12 Oideachas ar mhaithe le Forbairt Inbhuanaithe

D'fhoilsigh an Roinn an Straitéis Náisiúnta um Oideachas ar mhaithe le Forbairt Inbhuanaithe i mí Iúil 2014. Sa Straitéis tugtar 44 mholadh a bhaineann leis na 8 bpríomhréimse tosaíochta seo a leanas:

- Ceannaireacht agus comhordú
- Tiomsú sonraí agus tomhas bonnlíne
- Curaclam sa réamhscoil, bunscoil agus iarbhunscoil.
- Forbairt ghairmiúil
- Breisoideachas agus Oiliúint
- Ardoideachas agus Taighde
- Rannpháirtiú daoine óga a chur chun cinn
- Inbhuanaitheacht i mbun gnímh

Rinneadh dul chun cinn in 2014 maidir le moltaí na Straitéise a chur i ngníomh. Ar na chéad moltaí a chuirfear i ngníomh bhí an Grúpa Comhairleach um Oideachas ar mhaithe le Forbairt Inbhuanaithe. Bhí an chéad chruinniú den Ghrúpa seo atá faoi chathaoirleacht na Roinne Oideachais agus Scileanna, ar an 29 Deireadh Fómhair 2014.

4.13 Teicneolaíocht Faisnéise agus Cumarsáide (TFC) i Scoileanna

4.13.1 An Clár TFC i Scoileanna

Tá an Clár TFC i Scoileanna dírithe ar an TFC a chomhtháthú sa teagasc, foghlaim agus measúnacht agus cuireann sé forbairt litearthacht dhigiteach na scoláirí chun cinn.

Tacaíonn an clár le forbairt inneachair dhigitigh agus cuireann chun cinn í, a bhaineann leis an gcuraclam Éireannach. Lena chois sin cuireann sé rochtain ar nascacht leathanbhanda ar fáil do scoileanna. De bhreis air seo tacaíonn sé le forbairt cláir chuimsithigh náisiúnta um fhorbairt ghairmiúil leanúnach do mhúinteoirí chun cabhrú leo an TFC a thabhairt isteach ina gcuid foghlama agus teagaisc. Déantar straitéisí á saothrú trí obair na Roinne agus na Seirbhíse um Fhorbairt Ghairmiúil do Mhúinteoirí (PDST) Teicneolaíocht san Oideachas, i gcomhar le gníomhaireachtaí eile, seirbhísí tacaíochta agus comhlachtaí ionadaíochta de réir mar is cuí.

4.13.2 An Straitéis Dhigiteach do Scoileanna

Táthar i mbun oibre i gcónaí ar straitéis dhigiteach nua a fhorbairt do scoileanna. Críochnaíodh próiseas cuimsitheach taighde agus comhairliúcháin in 2014 agus beidh na torthaí a thiocfaidh as mar bhonn eolais ag moltaí a dhéanfar sa Straitéis.

4.13.3 Saotharlann na Scoileanna Beo

I dtogra Saotharlann na Scoileanna Beo ina raibh 15 chomhpháirtí rannpháirteach, an Roinn ina measc, cuireadh cur chuige scoile uile chun cinn i leith úsáid TFC. Rinneadh coigeartú barrchleachtais TFC idir scoileanna atá a bhfuil leibhéil éagsúla 'inniúlacht teicneolaíochta acu. Fuair na scoileanna rannpháirteacha a raibh seacht scoil as Éirinn ina measc, tacaíocht trí

mhalartuithe piara i moil réigiúnacha, ó fhoirne uile-Eorpacha a bhí ag obair i gcomhar a chéile ar roinnt téamaí agus trí roinnt deiseanna éagsúla do mhúinteoirí leas a bhaint as forbairt ghairmiúil leanúnach. Ba é an Coimisiún Eorpach a mhaoinigh an tionscadal agus bhí sé críochnaithe i mí Mheán Fómhair 2014.

Mar thoradh ar féachaint ar scoileanna i 12 thír cuireadh tuarascáil agus moltaí le chéile faoi phríomhshruthú barrchleachtais agus forbairt cuir chuige scoile uile i leith TFC.

4.13.4 Leathanbhanda do Scoileanna

Rinneadh an Clár Leathanbhanda do Scoileanna chun soláthar nascacht idirlín a thabhairt do gach bunscoil ar mhian léi leas a bhaint as an tseirbhís seo.

Bhí soláthar an Líonra Ardluais 100Mbit/s do gach iarbhunscoil curtha ar bun faoi dheireadh 2014. Comhfhiontar de chuid na Roinne seo agus na Roinne Cumarsáide, Fuinnimh agus Acmhainní Nádúrtha is ea an togra.

Tá nascacht leathanbhanda do scoileanna á ródú chuig an Idirlíon trí Líonra Leathanbhanda Náisiúnta. Cuireann sé seirbhísí faoi bhainistiú lárnach ar fáil do scoileanna, ar nós slándáil, fríth-turscair/frith-víris agus scagadh inneachair. Tá deasc cabhrach náisiúnta curtha ar bun mar chomhéadan idir an líonra, na Soláthraithe Rochtana ar Sheirbhís Leathanbhanda agus na scoileanna.

4.13.5 Scoilnet

Is é Scoilnet tairseach oifigiúil na Roinne d'oideachas in Éirinn. Bunaíodh ar dtús é in 1998 agus is é an tSeirbhís um Fhorbairt Ghairmiúil do Mhúinteoirí, Teicneolaíocht san Oideachas a bhainistíonn é thar ceann na Roinne.

Seoladh leagan nua de shuíomh gréasáin Scoilnet ar an 27 Bealtaine 2014. Tacaíonn sé le múinteoirí agus spreagann sé iad chun a gcuid ábhar oideachais a chur leis an suíomh agus a roinnt. I láthair na huaire, tá breis is 11,000 nasc gréasáin agus acmhainní ar an suíomh atá nasctha de réir ábhar curaclam na hÉireann.

4.14 Cuimsitheacht a chur chun Cinn sna Scoileanna

4.14.1 Plean Gníomhaíochta ar Bhulaíocht agus Forbairt Nósanna Imeachta Frithbhulaíochta

In 2014, leanadh d'obair ar ghníomhartha a chur i ngníomh sa Phlean Gníomhaíochta ar Bhulaíocht. Díríonn bearta an Phlean seo, a seoladh in 2013, ar thacaíocht do scoileanna, oideachas agus oiliúint, taighde agus múscailt feasachta.

Cuireadh maoiniú ar fáil do 199 seisiún frithbhulaíochta do 4,300 tuismitheoir. Ba í an Chomhairle Náisiúnta Tuismitheoirí (bunscoile agus iarbhunscoile) a reáchtáil iad.

Seoladh acmhainn nua chun dul i ngleic le cíbearbhulaíocht darb ainm UP2US tríd an tionscnamh slándála idirlín, Webwise, agus reáchtáladh seó bóthair UP2US um mheáin shóisialta i gcomhar le Beat 102-103.

Foilsíodh staidéar ar "The Prevalence and Impact of Bullying Linked to Social Media on the Mental Health and Suicidal Behaviour among Young People" (Leitheadúlacht agus Tionchar Bulaíochta a bhaineann leis na Meáin Shóisialta ar Mheabhairshláinte agus Iompar Féinmharfach i measc Daoine Óga) i mí Bhealtaine 2014. Ba iad an Roinn agus an an Oifig Náisiúnta um Fhéinmharú a Chosc a choimisiúnaigh an staidéar.

I mí Bhealtaine 2014 chomh maith, d'athsheoil Tánaiste agus Aire Oideachais agus Scileanna na haimsire sin an tIonad Frithbhulaíochta mar Ionad Náisiúnta Frithbhulaíochta agus Acmhainne.

Ar na gníomhaíochtaí eile a bhí ar siúl áirítear clár Forbartha Gairmiúla Leanúnaí maidir leis an bPlean Gníomhaíochta a fhorbairt agus a chur ar fáil, tacú le tionscnaimh a mhúsclaíonn feasacht, cosúil le Lá na Sábháilteachta Idirlín, the Stand Up! Seachtain na feasachta um bhulaíocht homafóbach agus trasfóbach i scoileanna dara leibhéil agus an Feachtas Shield de chuid Cumann na hÉireann um Chosaint Leanaí.

4.14.2 Próisis maidir le Ligean isteach sa Scoil

I mí Mhárta 2014, d'fhaomh an Rialtas dréachtú Bille Oideachais (Ligean isteach i Scoileanna). Is é cuspóir an Bhille ná creat uileghabhálach a sholáthar chun a chinntiú go bhfuil struchtúr níos fearr ar na beartais um ligean isteach i scoileanna, go bhfuil siad níos cothroime níos trédhearcaí.

Chun rochtain a fheabhsú do gach scoláire moltar sa chreat cumhachtaí nua a thabhairt don Chomhairle Náisiúnta d'Oideachas Speisialta agus don nGníomhaireacht um Leanaí agus an Teaghlach chun áit scoile a shocrú do pháistí nach féidir leo ceann a fháil.

Lena chois sin forálfaidh an Bille go bhféadfadh an tAire rialacháin a dhéanamh a dhréachtófar i gcomhairle leis na comhpháirtithe oideachais.

4.14.3 Fóram ar Phátrúnacht agus Iolrachas in Earnáil an Bhunoideachais

Leanadh den obair ar Phlean Gnímh an Aire a chur i ngníomh mar fhreagra ar an Tuarascáil ón nGrúpa Comhairleach don bhFóram ar Phátrúnacht agus Iolrachas in Earnáil an Bhunoideachais. Foilsíodh páipéar leantach le Tuarascáil an Fhóraim, dar teideal *Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector: Progress to Date and Future Directions (Fóram ar Phátrúnacht agus Iolrachas in Earnáil an Bhunoideachais: Dul chun cinn go dtí seo agus Treoracha amach anseo)*ar an 1 Iúil 2014. Sa pháipéar a raibh comhairliúchán poiblí mar bhonn eolais aige ina raibh tuismitheoirí go háirithe rannpháirteach, leagtar amach na príomhfhorbairtí i ndáil le cur i ngníomh moltaí an Fhóraim, an t-eolas is deireanaí san áireamh ar bhunú scoileanna nua, dí-dhílsiú pátrúnachta, reachtaíocht rollaithe agus forbairt cláir oideachais faoi reiligiún, creidimh agus eitic. De bhreis air seo mínítear sa pháipéar deachleachtas agus roghanna chun éagsúlacht a chur chun cinn i scoileanna.

4.14.4 Tuarascáil ón nGrúpa Oibre um Ábhair Oideachais maidir le hÚsáid Substaintí

Foilsíodh an *Report of the Working Group on Educational Materials for use in Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), with particular reference to Substance Use Education* i mí Iúil 2014. Sa tuarascáil seo leagtar amach sraith mholtaí atá dírithe ar cabhrú le foirne teagaisc agus scoileanna nó ionaid oideachais clár OSPS a sholáthar d'fhonn gníomhartha a chomhlánú atá sonraithe sa Straitéis Náisiúnta Drugaí 2009-2016. Tá na moltaí á gcur i ngníomh go leanúnach.

4.14.5 Saincheisteanna Tras-Roinne

Le linn 2014, lean an Roinn uirthi ag cur le líon mór coistí tras-roinne a phléigh saincheisteanna eacnamaíoch agus sóisialta lena n-áirítear an Straitéis Náisiúnta Frithdhrugaí, Straitéis Náisiúnta na mBan agus an Straitéis Náisiúnta Míchumais.

Lena chois seo thug an Roinn freagra ar scrúdú na Ceathrú Tuarascála Tréimhsiúla de chuid na hÉireann faoin gCúnant Idirnáisiúnta um Chearta Sibhialta agus Polaitiúla a bhí ar siúl le linn 111ú seisiúin an Choiste NA um Chearta Daonna i mí Iúil 2014.

4.15 An Clár DEIS (Comhionannas Deise a Sheachadadh i Scoileanna)

Is é DEIS, an Plean Gnímh um Chuimsiú san Oideachas, príomhthionscnamh beartais na Roinne chun dul i ngleic le míbhuntáiste san oideachas. Is é is aidhm le DEIS ná a chinntiú go dtugtar

tosaíocht do riachtanais oideachais páistí agus daoine óga ó phobail faoi mhíbhuntáiste agus go tugtar fúthu go héifeachtúil.

Faigheann gach bunscoil agus iarbhunscoil atá rannpháirteach i nDEIS réimse acmhainní breise lena n-áirítear baill foirne bhreise, maoiniú, teacht ar chláir litearthachta agus uimhearthachta chomh maith le cúnamh i leith gníomhaíochtaí ar nós pleanáil scoile. Mar chuid den gClár Tacaíochta Scoile tá idirghabhálacha cosúil leis an Scéim Theagmhála Baile, Scoile agus Pobail (HSCL) agus an Clár Críochnaithe Scolaíochta (SCP) ar fáil do bhunscoileanna uirbeacha DEIS agus d'iarbhunscoileanna DEIS.

I láthair na huaire tá 849 scoil rannpháirteach sa Chlár DEIS. San iomlán seo tá 336 bunscoil uirbeacha, 321 bhunscoil thuaithe agus 192 iarbhunscoil. Ba é €96m an costas iomlán a chaith an Roinn ar gach gné den gClár DEIS in 2014.

4.15.1 An Scéim Theagmhála Baile Scoile agus an Phobail agus an Clár Críochnaithe Scoile

Is í an tSeirbhís Leasa Oideachais de chuid na Gníomhaireachta Leanaí agus Teaghlaigh a sheachadann an Scéim Theagmhála Baile Scoile agus an Phobail agus an Clár Críochnaithe Scoile ar príomhghnéithe de DEIS iad féin. Tá teacht ag 528 mbunscoil agus iarbhunscoil uirbeacha DEIS ar an Scéim Theagmhála Baile Scoile agus an Phobail ina bhfuil 400 post sannta do mhúinteoirí chun feidhm Comhordaitheora a ghlacadh. Tá 124 thionscadal Clár Críochnaithe Scoile ina bhfuil 470 bunscoil agus 224 iarbhunscoil rannpháirteach. Iontu seo, táthar ag freastal ar tuairim is 36,000 páiste agus daoine óga.

Taispeánann an tuarascáil *Rátaí Coinneála i Scoileanna Dara Leibhéil 2008 Luathchothóirt* go bhfuil na rátaí coinneála i scoileanna DEIS i bhfad níos mó le roinnt blianta anuas ná na feabhsuithe ar an iomlán go náisiúnta, ardú ó 68% go 82.1%.

4.15.2 Measúnacht DEIS

D'fhonn a chinntiú go mbíonn torthaí ar idirghabháil DEIS tá sraith measúnachtaí déanta ag an bhForas Taighde ar Oideachas (ERC) agus ag Cigireacht na Roinne ar ghnéithe den gclár DEIS. Is é a bhfuil an taighde dírithe air ná a chinntiú go gcuirtear DEIS i ngníomh go rathúil agus go n-úsáidtear na cuir chuige is fearr dá bhfuil ar fáil chun an dul chun cinn agus na torthaí a thomhas ag an leibhéal áitiúil agus náisiúnta araon.

Ar na measúnachtaí a foilsíodh in 2014 áirítear *A Report on the Evaluation of DEIS at Second Level* (Foras Taighde ar Oideachas)*; The Organisation of the Delivery of Learning Support and Resource Teaching in a Sample of Urban Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Pupils (Foras Taighde ar Oideachas); An Evaluation of Action Planning for Improvement in DEIS Primary Schools (An Chigireacht); agus An Evaluation of Action Planning for Improvement in DEIS Post-primary Schools (An Chigireacht).*

Taispeánann torthaí tuarascála de chuid an Fhoras Taighde ar Oideachas treochtaí dearfacha i dtaobh leibhéil a shroichint, scoláirí a choinneáil agus i dtaobh rátaí coinneála. Lena chois sin tá feabhas suntasach ag teacht ar na leibhéil ghnóthachtála i mBéarla agus Matamaitic araon ó 2009 ar aghaidh ag leibhéal an Teastais Shóisearaigh.

4.15.3 Measúnacht na Cigireachta ar DEIS

Chuir an Chigireacht torthaí na measúnachtaí i láthair a rinne sí ar bhunscoileanna agus iarbhunscoileanna DEIS in 2013 agus 2014 ag seimineár DEIS a d'eagraigh an Roinn i mí Bhealtaine 2014. De bhreis air seo chuir an Chigireacht le hathbhreithniú de chuid na hInstitiúide Taighde Eacnamaíochta agus Sóisialta (ESRI) i mí na Nollag 2014 agus d'ullmhaigh sí dhá thuarascáil ilchodacha DEIS a fhoilseofar in 2015.

Is léir ó thuarascálacha na Cigireachta go dtéann rannpháirtíocht sa phróiseas DEIS chun tairbhe do scoileanna agus go bhfuil gá le díriú ar an scoil uile agus le cur chuige spriocdhírithe i dteannta a chéile chun na feabhsuithe is gá a bhaint amach. Léiríonn na torthaí leis, go bhfuil atmaisféar dearfach do scoláirí i scoileanna DEIS de ghnáth agus go mbíonn fáilte roimh thuismitheoirí. Tá gnéithe sa phróiseas pleanála DEIS áfach, a bhfuil tuilleadh forbartha ag teastáil uathu, go háirithe maidir le spriocanna a chur, anailís sonraí agus monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar thionchar agus é a thomhas. Ar an iomlán tá cuma dearfach ar an scéal ach mar sin féin tá tacaíochtaí agus acmhainní breise ó scoileanna DEIS i gcónaí.

4.15.4 Tuarascáil Chomhdhlúite na hInstitiúide Taighde Eacnamaíochta agus Sóisialta - Ag Foghlaim ó DEIS

Coimisiúnaíodh tuarascáil chomhdhlúite ar Fhoghlaim ó DEIS in 2014. Sa tuarascáil seo beidh eolas maidir leis na hionchuir, próisis agus torthaí oideachais éagsúla atá sna torthaí taighde agus na measúnachtaí ar fad a rinne an Foras Taighde ar Oideachas agus an Chigireacht ar DEIS go dtí seo. De bhreis air seo déanfar athbhreithniú inti ar thaighde ghaolmhar eile a rinneadh in Éirinn agus thar lear ar mhíbhuntáiste oideachais. Sa tuarascáil seo, a bheidh á hullmhú ag an Institiúid Taighde Eacnamaíochta agus Sóisialta, déanfar príomhthorthaí na taighde seo a mheas agus tabharfar comhairle mar threoir do bheartas amach anseo i ndáil le míbhuntáiste oideachais, DEIS san áireamh. Tá sé i gceist é a fhoilsiú in 2015.

4.16 Comhar le Seirbhís na hÉireann um Cheartas i leith an Aosa Óig

Thug an Roinn cúnamh in 2014 chun airgead as Ciste Sóisialta na hEorpa a éileamh ón gCoimisiún Eorpach do thionscadail de chuid Seirbhís na hÉireann um Cheartas i leith an Aosa Óig agus Oifig Athstiúrtha Óige an Gharda Síochána. Rinneadh na tionscadail seo a sheachadadh tríd an An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt agus Comhionannais agus tá siad dírithe ar dhaoine óga nach bhfuil ach beagán teagmhála acu leis na bealaí seanbhunaithe chuig an oideachas, oiliúint agus fostaíocht, agus tá siad dírithe ar sholáthar scileanna TF agus forbartha pearsanta.

4.17 Ag freastal ar Scoláirí ag a bhfuil Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais

Déanann an Roinn soláthar do réimse tacaíochtaí agus seirbhísí oideachais do pháistí ag a bhfuil riachtanais oideachais speisialta i scoileanna príomhshrutha agus i scoileanna speisialta. Áirítear orthu múinteoirí, cúntóirí riachtanas speisialta (SNAnna), teicneolaíocht chúnta, trealamh speisialta, caipitíocht ardaithe agus socruithe iompair speisialta.

Geallann an Roinn go gcinnteoidh sí go mbeidh rochtain ar oideachas ag gach páiste ag a bhfuil riachtanas oideachais speisialta atá oiriúnach dá chuid riachtanas. Ba é an rogha is fearr é dá gcuirfí an t-oideachas ar fáil i suíomhanna cuimsitheacha i scoileanna príomhshrutha trí líonra na mbunscoileanna agus iarbhunscoileanna. Mura féidir freastal ar pháistí ag a bhfuil riachtanais oideachais speisialta i suíomhanna príomhshrutha, soláthraíonn an Roinn áiteanna i ranganna agus scoileanna speisialta.

Tá an Chomhairle Náisiúnta d'Oideachas Speisialta (NCSE) freagrach as iarratais ó scoileanna ar thacaíochtaí do pháistí ag a bhfuil riachtanais oideachais speisialta acu a phróiseáil.

Tugann an tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais (NEPS) tacaíocht ar fáil do scoileanna chun láidreachtaí agus riachtanais scoláirí a aithint agus pleanáil a dhéanamh do na riachtanais seo, athbhreithniú a dhéanamh orthu agus idirghabhálacha cuí a dhéanamh ina dtaobh.

4.17.1 Tacaíochtaí spriocdhírithe do Scoláirí ag a bhfuil Riachtanais Oideachais Speisialta

Faoin 31 Nollaig 2014 bhí 10,700 múinteoir tacaíocht foghlama nó múinteoir acmhainne (coibhéis lánaimseartha) i mbunscoileanna agus iarbhunscoileanna príomhshrutha. De bhreis air sin

sholáthraigh 1,100 múinteoir oideachas do pháistí a bhí ag freastal ar scoileanna speisialta ina raibh cóimheas scoláire múinteora íslithe idir 6-1 go 11-1 de réir catagóiriú míchumais.

Tugtar tacaíocht leis, do pháistí ag a bhfuil riachtanais chúraim speisialta, obair a dhéanann cúntóirí riachtanas speisialta (SNAnna). Bhí soláthar á dhéanamh do 11,110 bpost SNA (coibhéis lánaimseartha) faoi dheireadh 2014 agus tá sé i gceist 225 eile a chur ar fáil in 2015 chun cúram a thabhairt do pháistí ag a bhfuil riachtanais oideachais speisialta i mbunscoileanna, iarbhunscoileanna agus scoileanna speisialta.

Tugadh tuairim is 1,140 deontas do bhunscoileanna agus scoileanna speisialta le linn 2014 chun saintrealamh a cheannach a chabhróidh le páistí ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta sa seomra ranga. Áirítear ar an trealamh a soláthraíodh córais réimse fuaime do pháistí a bhfuil lagéisteacht acu nó bogearraí agus áiseanna ríomhaire do pháistí ag a bhfuil míchumas cumarsáide.

Bunaíodh 130 rang nó aonad speisialta sa mbreis don scoilbhliain 2014/15 agus soláthraíodh 860 ranganna nó aonad speisialta ar an iomlán.

Sholáthraigh an tSeirbhís Tacaíochta d'Oideachas Speisialta 15,835 áit le haghaidh Forbartha Gairmiúla Leanúnaí do mhúinteoirí páistí ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta oideachais in 2014.

Soláthraíodh 338 n-áit ar chláir atá bunaithe i gcoláiste i dtacaíocht foghlama agus oideachas speisialta.

4.17.2 An Scéim Teagaisc Bhaile

Leis an Scéim Teagaisc Bhaile soláthraítear maoiniú do thuismitheoirí chun oideachas a sholáthar sa bhaile do pháistí nach bhfuil ar a gcumas freastal ar scoil de dheasca cúiseanna éagsúla, mar shampla breoiteacht bhuan. Tá an scéim á méadú le blianta beaga anuas d'fhonn teagasc a éascú do pháistí atá ag fanacht le socrú oideachais oiriúnach agus chun idirghabháil luath a thabhairt do pháistí réamhscoile a bhfuil an t-uathachas orthu.

Bhain 1,309 scoláire úsáid as teagasc baile le linn na scoilbhliana 2013/14.

4.17.3 Clár Oideachais Mhí Iúil

Leis an gClár Oideachais mhí Iúil soláthraítear ranganna speisialta chun freastal ar pháistí a bhfuil uathachas acu, chun seirbhísí oideachais a leathnú amach dóibh trí mhí Iúil. De bhreis air seo déanann an Roinn soláthar i gcomhair Clár mhí Iúil do scoláirí a bhfuil míchumas foghlama ginearálta dian nó tromchúiseach orthu. Mura féidir soláthar ar scoil a thabhairt d'fhéadfaí deontas a thabhairt i leith soláthar baile trí Scéim Teagaisc Bhaile.

Tá líon na scoileanna a thairgeann an clár Iúil ag dul i méad go seasmhach ó tugadh isteach é sa bhliain 2001. Bhí 180 scoil rannpháirteach in 2014. Bhain tuairim is 3,850 scoláire leas as an gclár soláthar baile mhí Iúil in 2014.

4.17.4 Múnla Nua Bheartaithe maidir le Múinteoirí a Shannadh do Scoláirí ag a bhfuil Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais.

De réir molta a rinneadh i bhfoilseachán de chuid na Comhairle Náisiúnta d'Oideachas Speisialta (NCSE) ó mhí Bhealtaine 2013 ar a bheith *Ag tacú le Daltaí a bhfuil Riachtanais Speisialta acu i Scoileanna,* d'fhoilsigh the NCSE a thuarascáil ar *Mhúnla nua molta um leithdháileadh mhúinteoirí do dhaltaí ag a bhfuil Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais* ar an 18 Meitheamh 2014.

Grúpa oibre a d'ullmhaigh an Tuarascáil agus ba é an Chomhairle Náisiúnta d'Oideachas Speisialta a cheap an grúpa. Bhí ionadaithe ar eagraíochtaí míchumais agus ar eagraíochtaí ionadaíochta tuismitheoirí sa ghrúpa.

Thug an grúpa oibre faoi phróiseas comhairliúcháin fairsing le luchtanna leasa, chun bonn eolais a thabhairt d'fhorbairt a thuarascála. Reáchtáladh cruinnithe comhairliúcháin le Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte, múinteoirí, oifigigh ceardchumainn, tuismitheoirí, comhlachtaí bainistíocht scoile, an tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais, grúpaí tathanta, an Chigireacht agus le heagraithe riachtanais speisialta oideachais.

In 2015, leanfar d'fhorbairt an mhúnla mholta agus de bheith ag tabhairt faoi roinnt ábhair imní a aithníodh tríd na comhairliúcháin a rinneadh go dtí seo.

Tá sé i gceist go ndearfaidh an Roinn leagan trialach den múnla nua seo a d'fhéadfadh scoileanna a roghnú ar bhonn deonach. Beidh comhairliúchán leanúnach le luchtanna leasa ina chuid ríthábhachtach den obair seo atá ar siúl i gcónaí.

4.17.5 Comhairle Bheartais ar Uathachas

Sa bhliain 2014 d'iarr an tAire ar an gComhairle Náisiúnta d'Oideachas Speisialta (NCSE) comhairle bheartais a chur ar fáil maidir le páistí ar a bhfuil mí-ord ar speictream an uathachais. Dúirt an NCSE go gcuirfear an chomhairle ar fáil go luath in 2015 agus go mbainfear úsáid as torthaí a bhailíodh ó phróiseas comhairliúcháin fairsing. Lena chuid sin beidh an chomhairle bunaithe ar thaighde a choimisiúnaigh an NCSE chun na críocha seo agus ó thaighde ar bith eile atá ar fáil, agus ar fiú féachaint uirthi i dtuairim an NCSE. Táthar ag súil go léireoidh tuarascáil dheiridh an NCSE an réimse tuairimí is leithne dá bhfuil ann agus go soláthróidh sé moltaí a chabhróidh chun beartas a fhorbairt i gcomhair na mblianta atá amach romhainn.

4.17.6 An Tionscadal Lárionad Middletown um Uathachas

Tionscnamh atá á chómhaoiniú ag an Roinn Oideachais i dTuaisceart Éireann agus an Roinn seo is ea an Tionscadal Lárionad Middletown um Uathachas. Tá sé dírithe ar thacú le cur chun cinn sármhaitheasa i bhforbairt agus comhchuibhiú oideachais agus seirbhísí a ghabhann leis, do pháistí agus daoine óga ar a bhfuil mí-oird ar speictream an uathachais. Tá tuilleadh eolais faoin Lárionad ar fáil ag www.middletownautism.com.

Ba é 2014 an dara bliain den mhéadú céimnithe dá bhliana ar sheirbhísí ag Lárionad Middletown um Uathachas a chomhaontaíodh ag cruinniú earnála na Comhairle Aireachta Thuaidh/Theas ar an 15 Meitheamh 2012. De bhreis ar líon na n-úsáideoirí a bhain tairbhe as seirbhísí an Lárionaid a bheith a mhéadú ba í cuspóir thábhachtach atá le leathnú na seirbhísí ná an Lárionad a leabú tuilleadh mar chomhlacht a sheachadann an réimse seirbhísí atá ar fáil chun tacú le páistí ar a bhfuil an t-uathachas ar fud an oileáin ar fad.

Mar thoradh ar leathnú seirbhísí an Lárionaid sa Deisceart tá ar chumas an Lárionaid tacaíocht dhíreach a chur ar fáil do pháistí ar bhonn trialach, is féidir tionscadail thaighde spriocdhírithe a thabhairt chun críche chun go mbeidh siad mar bhonn eolais ag forbairt beartais amach anseo agus is féidir líon na n-áiteanna oiliúna a mhéadú a thairgtear do thuismitheoirí agus do ghairmithe araon, rud ina leagtar béim ar leith ar na príomhchéimeanna beatha atá ag páiste ar a bhfuil an t-uathachas.

4.18 An Scéim Iompair Scoile

Tá ar cheann d'fheidhmeanna na Roinne iompar scoile sábháilte, éifeachtach agus éifeachtúil ó thaobh costais dé a chur ar fáil do pháistí incháilithe chuig an scoil agus abhaile, agus a chinntiú go n-íoctar deontais go tráthúil chun cabhrú le teaghlaigh incháilithe maidir le costas iompar scoile i

gcúinsí nach féidir seirbhísí iompar scoile a chur ar fáil nó má tá sé róchostasach seirbhísí iompar scoile a sholáthar**.**

Soláthraíodh iompar do 114,000 páiste, 9,000 páiste ag a bhfuil riachtanais oideachais speisialta ina measc, go slán sábháilte chun na scoile sa scoilbhliain 2013/14. Taistealaíodh fad 82 milliún ciliméadar ar 42 mhilliún turas ar 6,000 bealach.

Fuair breis is 2,000 teaghlach íocaíochtaí deontais dar luach €3.2 milliún le linn 2014.

Ba é €172 milliún táirgeacht na seirbhíse, is é sin, tuairim is €2 mhilliún níos airde ná an leithdháileadh €170 milliún a fuarthas.

4.19 Cigireacht agus Dearbhú Cáilíochta i Scoileanna

Cabhraíonn Cigireacht na Roinne chun córas scoile ardcháilíochta uileghabhálach a sholáthar trína chlár cigireachta bliantúil i scoileanna agus ionaid oideachais, trí múnlaí nua feabhsaithe cigireachta a fhorbairt agus cur le beartas na Roinne i mórán réimsí éagsúla.

4.19.1 Clár Cigireachta Bliantúil i Scoileanna agus Lárionaid Oideachais

Rinne an Chigireacht 4,419 gcigireacht nó cuairteanna comhairleacha ar scoileanna san iomlán in 2014 mar a thaispeántar i dTáblaí 1-4 ar leathanaigh 9 agus 10.

Lean an Chigireacht uirthi ag forbairt réimse uirlisí chun tacú le dearbhú cáilíochta a cuid cigireachtaí agus chun feabhas a chur ar a seirbhís custaiméara. Ar na huirlisí seo áirítear iad seo a leanas: suirbhéanna dearbhaithe cháilíochta a reáchtáil ar bhonn píolótach go leanúnach ar phríomhoidí agus múinteoirí tar éis meastóireacht scoile uile a bheith déanta i sampláil scoileanna ag leibhéal bunscoile agus meánscoile; cigirí ag baint úsáide as leathán machnaimh phearsanta tar éis meastóireachta nó gníomhaíochtaí comhairleacha agus bainistíocht na Cigireachta ag rannpháirtiú go leanúnach in obair chigireachta agus chomhairleach. Rinneadh athbhreithniú a chód cleachtais na Cigireachta chun go léireodh sé níos fearr leithne agus raon obair na heagraíochta a théann níos sia ná cigireacht scoile. Rinneadh comhairliúchán seachtrach le comhpháirtithe agus tá súil go nglacfar leis an gcód athbhreithnithe go foirmiúil in 2015.

4.19.2 Féinmheastóireacht Scoile (SSE)

D'eagraigh an Chigireacht seimineár náisiúnta ar Fhéinmheastóireacht Scoile chun léargas idirnáisiúnta ar Fhéinmheastóireacht Scoile a thabhairt agus chun a chur ar chumas scoileanna a gcuid taithí a roinnt agus deachleachtas a scaipeadh. Bhí cigirí ag tabhairt cuairteanna comhairleacha maidir le Féinmheastóireacht scoile i gcónaí agus d'fhoilsigh siad dhá Nuashonrú Féinmheastóireachta scoile chun cabhrú le scoileanna agus tacú leo agus iad ag tabhairt faoi Fhéinmheastóireacht a gcuid teagaisc agus foghlama.

4.19.3 Forbairt Múnlaí Cigireachta Nua Feabhsaithe

Tá de chuspóir ag an gCigireacht líon na scoileanna agus na n-ionad oideachais a bhfuil sí ag freastal orthu agus cáilíocht a cuid oibre a fheabhsú riamh is choíche. In 2014 chríochnaigh sí forbairt múnla dírithe cigireachta ar sholáthar maidir le riachtanais oideachais speisialta i mbunscoileanna agus múnla chun gnéithe ar leith den gcuraclam bunscoile a mheas. Tá leaganacha trialacha den dá mhúnla ar siúl faoi láthair i roinnt bunscoileanna.

Críochnaíodh leagan trialach den Múnla Meastóireachta Leantach agus foilsíodh tuarascálacha ar na cigireachtaí leantacha a rinneadh ó mhí Mhárta 2014 ar shuíomh gréasáin na Roinne.

4.19.4 Tacaíocht ón Chigireacht don bPlean Gníomhaíochta ar Bhulaíocht

Faoi bheart 5 den *bPlean Gníomhaíochta ar Bhulaíocht,* thug an Chigireacht faoi thaighde chun gnéithe den soláthar a dhéanann scoileanna ar mhaithe le folláine na scoláirí a aithint, agus in 2014 cuireadh tús le tionscadal taighde comhoibritheach ar an téama seo i roinnt bunscoileanna agus iarbhunscoileanna.

In 2014 leasaíodh na ceistneoirí faoi bheart 4 den *bPlean Gníomhaíochta ar Bhulaíocht* a thugtar de ghnáth do thuismitheoirí agus daltaí/scoláirí mar chuid de mheastóireachtaí den gcineál scoile uile chun roinnt ráiteas a thabhairt san áireamh a iarrann orthu a gcuid tuairimí a thabhairt ar ghnéithe den scoil a chuireann le cultúr scoile dearfach.

4.19.5 Rannchuidiú na Cigireachta i leith Athchóiriú Beartais agus Curaclaim

Cuireann an Chigireacht le athchóiriú curaclaim ar bhonn leanúnach agus chuir sí leis an imlitir ar an tSraith Shóisearach a dáileadh ar scoileanna go luath in 2014. Lena chois sin bhí sí sa chathaoir ar an nGrúpa Comhairleach um an tSraith Shóisearach i dteannta na Roinne agus chuir comhairle ar fáil maidir le forbairt na sonruithe nua don Eolaíocht agus maidir le dréachtú sonruithe nua do Staidéar Gnó agus an Ghaeilge. Lena chois sin thug an Chigireacht comhairle maidir le forbairt na gclár Forbartha Gairmiúla Leanúnaí don tSraith Shóisearach don Bhéarla agus don Eolaíocht agus chuir sí comhairle ar fáil maidir le forbairt curaclam teanga nua ag an leibhéal bunscoile.

De bhreis air seo chuir an Chigireacht le roinnt réimsí beartais lena n-áirítear obair ar shaincheisteanna faoi sholáthar oideachais speisialta, neamhspleáchas scoile agus cuimsiú sóisialta.

Lena chois sin d'fhorbair an Chigireacht fearainn agus caighdeáin do cheannaireacht scoile mar chuid dá rannchuidiú do ghrúpa ceannaireachta a bhí ceaptha ag Coiste Comhairleach Bainistíochta na Roinne. Beidh na fearainn agus caighdeáin seo mar threoir ag obair an Ionaid nua um Cheannaireacht Scoile agus forbrófar iad chun tacú le Féinmheastóireacht Scoile ar cheannaireacht agus bainistíocht i scoileanna.

4.20 Oideachas Múinteoirí agus Forbairt Ghairmiúil Leanúnach

4.20.1 Cláir um Oideachas Tosaigh Múinteoirí

Is é atá d'aidhm ag an Straitéis Náisiúnta chun an Litearthacht agus an Uimhearthacht a Fheabhsú i measc Leanaí agus Daoine Óga 2011-2020, a seoladh i mí Iúil 2011, ná a chinntiú go mbeidh múinteoirí agus scoileanna ag díriú go láidir gan stad gan staonadh ar scileanna litearthachta agus uimhearthachta mar chuid de churaclam leathan cothromaithe agus leagtar amach ann clár fairsing oideachas tosaigh múinteoirí ag an leibhéal bunscoile agus iarbhunscoile. Bhí dianchomhairliú ar siúl idir an Roinn agus an Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta maidir le cur i ngníomh na straitéise agus ionchorpraíodh na hathruithe beartaithe ar oideachas múinteoirí i bPáipéar Beartais na Comhairle Múinteoireachta faoi Leanúnachas an Oideachais Mhúinteoirí agus Critéir agus Treoirlínte do Sholáthraithe Cláir, páipéar a foilsíodh in 2011.

Ar na feabhsuithe atá á ndéanamh ar chúrsaí oideachais tosaigh mhúinteoirí áirítear riachtanais iontrála níos airde do chúrsaí oideachais mhúinteoirí agus athchumrú inneachair agus fad cúrsaí d'fhonn a chinntiú go bhforbraítear scileanna na múinteoirí i múineadh litearthachta agus uimhearthachta.

Le héifeacht ó mhí Mheán Fómhair 2014 ní mór do gach clár oideachais múinteoirí comhleanúnach (iarchéime) leanúint ar feadh dhá bhliana agus luach 120 Aistriú Creidiúna Eorpach a bheith acu, rud a fhágann go bhfuil cur i ngníomh iomlán na n-athruithe ar inneachar agus fad déanta ar na cláir Oideachais Múinteoirí de réir na straitéise litearthachta agus uimhearthachta faoi dheireadh 2014.

Tá an Roinn i dteagmháil agus i mbun cumarsáide go héifeachtúil agus go héifeachtach i gcónaí le coláistí oideachais maidir le roinnt cúrsaí a bhaineann le hoideachas tosaigh múinteoirí, go háirithe i dtaobh na Céime Baitsiléara san Oideachas agus an Mháistreacht Ghairmiúil in Oideachas do mhúinteoireacht bhunscoile.

4.20.2 Clár Ionduchtúcháin Náisiúnta do Mhúinteoirí (NIPT)

Is é príomhchuspóir an Chláir Náisiúnta Ionduchtúcháin do Mhúinteoirí ná tacú le forbairt ghairmiúil múinteoirí a cháiligh le fíordhéanaí ag an leibhéal bunscoile agus iarbhunscoile araon. Déantar sin trí thacaíocht shistéamach ag tús a ngairmréim mhúinteoireachta. Ar an gcuma seo cuirtear síos an bhunchloch le haghaidh fáis agus forbartha gairmiúla a dhéanfar níos déanaí.

Is é atá i gceist le *Droichead* ar tréimhse cleachtais ghairmiúil a dtacaítear léi é, ná gné i gcroílár múnla nua ionduchtúcháin agus promhaidh a reáchtáiltear ar bhonn trialach i roinnt scoileanna thar tréimhse trí bliana 2013-2014, 2014-2015 agus 2015-16. Agus an próiseas *Droichead* críochnaithe acu dearbhóidh a gcomh-mhúinteoirí na múinteoirí nua-cháilithe mar mhúinteoirí a bhfuil critéir áirithe comhlíonta acu agus bainfidh an Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta an coinníoll *Droichead* óna gclárú. Tá freagracht ar an Roinn as an gClár Náisiúnta Ionduchtúcháin do Mhúinteoirí a bhainistiú agus tá an Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta freagrach as an gclár Droichead.

Thacaigh Cigireacht na Roinne leis an tionscadal *Droichead* trí comhairle a chur ar fáil agus freastal ar chruinnithe braisle agus laethanta foghlama comhroinnte in 2014.

4.20.3 Seirbhís Forbartha Gairmiúla do Mhúinteoirí

Is í príomhaidhm na Seirbhíse Forbartha Gairmiúla do Mhúinteoirí ná tacaíocht sheasmhach chomhtháite den scoth a chinntiú trí Fhorbairt Ghairmiúil Leanúnach de réir na réimsí tosaíochta náisiúnta agus riachtanas a thagann chun cinn go háitiúil.

Tá de chúram ar an tSeirbhís soláthar tacaíochta do mhúinteoirí a stiúradh maidir le Straitéis Litearthachta agus Uimhearthachta na Roinne, Féinmheastóireacht Scoile san áireamh. Leanadh den obair seo in 2014 inar díríodh ar shraith seimineár d'fheabhsú scoile a sheachadadh a raibh mar sprioc acu naisc lánbhrí a chur chun cinn idir feabhsú litearthachta agus uimhearthachta agus an próiseas féinmheastóireachta scoile.

Lena chois sin ghlac an tSeirbhís Forbartha Gairmiúla do Mhúinteoirí príomhpháirt i bpróiseas comhoibritheach chun athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar sholáthar Forbartha Gairmiúla Leanúnaí reatha i réimse na frithbhulaíochta. Ina dhiaidh sin cuireadh cur chuige trí-chéime ar bun chun clár tacaíochta cuimsitheach a chur ar fáil do mhúinteoirí i mbunscoileanna agus iarbhunscoileanna. Bhí céim 1 dírithe ar fhorbairt bheartas agus nósanna imeachta. Chuige seo cuireadh craoladh gréasáin, teimpléad beartais agus foireann uirlisí ar fáil do gach scoil. I gcéim 2 reáchtáladh ceardlanna áitiúla agus oibríodh le scoileanna píolótacha chun deachleachtas a chur ag obair. Tugadh tacaíocht in-scoile de réir mar ba ghá. I gcéim 3 díríodh ar feasacht a mhúscailt agus ar straitéisí um chosc agus idirghabháil.

Bhí na tosaíochtaí náisiúnta seo mar phríomhábhar cúraim na Seirbhíse Forbartha Gairmiúla do Mhúinteoirí in 2014.

4.20.4 Líonra na nIonad Oideachais

Is príomhchomhpháirtithe iad an 30 ionad oideachais ar fud na tíre, i dtaobh soláthar Forbartha Gairmiúla Leanúnaí do mhúinteoirí. Faoi chúram na Roinne bhí siad mar óstach do chláir náisiúnta um athchóiriú curaclaim agus thairg siad seirbhísí tacaíochta agus cúrsaí a phléigh réimse leathan ábhar faoi theagasc agus foghlaim in 2014.

4.20.5 Forbairt Ghairmiúil Leanúnach le bheith ag freastal ar Riachtanais Oideachais Speisialta

Is tosaíocht thábhachtach sa chóras oideachais i gcónaí é an gá le forbairt ghairmiúil leanúnach breise do mhúinteoirí chun a chur ar a gcumas freastal ar riachtanais scoláirí ag a bhfuil riachtanais oideachais speisialta. Cuireadh maoiniú ar fáil i gcónaí in 2014 le haghaidh áiteanna do mhúinteoirí chun cáilíochtaí iarchéime a bhaint amach in oideachas speisialta in institiúidí tríú leibhéil.

Lena chois sin spreagtar múinteoirí chun cabhair a lorg ón tSeirbhís Tacaíochta d'Oideachas Speisialta (SESS) agus tabhairt faoi Fhorbairt Ghairmiúil Leanúnach speisialaithe maidir le múineadh scoláirí ag a bhfuil riachtanais oideachais speisialta. In 2014 sholáthair an tSeirbhís Tacaíochta d'Oideachas Speisialta tuairim is 15,835 áit oiliúna do mhúinteoirí agus cuireadh 338 n-áit ar fáil anuas air sin ar chláir iarchéime in oideachas speisialta.

4.20.6 Soláthar Múinteoirí

De réir a shainchúraim reachtúil tá ar an gComhairle Mhúinteoireachta comhairle a chur ar an Aire maidir le saincheist an tsoláthair mhúinteoirí. In 2014 d'fhaomh an chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta treochlár chun múnla inbhuanaithe soláthar múinteoirí a bhaint amach agus chuir sí Grúpa Oibre Teicniúil ar bun a raibh an tUas. Ciarán Flynn mar chathaoirleach air, d'fhonn triail a bhaint as dréachtmhúnla soláthar múinteoirí. Tá ionadaíocht ag an Údarás Ardoideachais agus an Roinn sa Ghrúpa seo. Lena chois sin bunaíodh fóram comhairleach do na luchtanna leasa uile, a chuirfidh comhairle agus aiseolas ar fáil i dtaobh na moltaí atá forbartha ag an nGrúpa Oibre Teicniúil. Fuarthas tuarascáil eatramhach ar obair an Ghrúpa Oibre Theicniúil i mí na Nollag 2014 agus tá tuarascáil dheiridh le teacht go déanach in 2015.

4.21 Leithdháiltí múinteoirí in 2014

In 2014 leithdháileadh beagáinín os cionn 62,000 post múinteoireachta ag leibhéal bunscoile agus iarbhunscoile.

Mar chuid den bpróiseas athimlonnaithe in 2014 rinneadh 360 múinteoir buan a athimlonnú ag an leibhéal bunscoile agus 75 mhúinteoir buan ag an leibhéal iarbhunscoile.

Agus na múinteoirí buana athimlonnaithe, úsáidtear an painéal forlíontach athimlonnaithe sa phróiseas athimlonnaithe ag an leibhéal bunscoile chun poist bhuana atá fágtha a líonadh. In 2014 bhí breis is 1,600 múinteoir ar an bpainéal forlíontach athimlonnaithe.

4.22 Téarmaí agus Coinníollacha Fostaíochta do Mhúinteoirí agus Cúntóirí Riachtanais Speisialta

In 2014 rinneadh an Roinn na téarmaí agus coinníollacha fostaíochta a rialú a rialaíonn múinteoirí agus cúntóirí riachtanais speisialta i scoileanna aitheanta, d'fhorbair sí beartas sa réimse seo agus rinne monatóireacht ar chomhlíonadh d'fhonn úsáid éifeachtach acmhainní daonna a chur chun cinn ar fud earnáil na mbunscoileanna agus iarbhunscoileanna.

4.22.1 Achtú Ailt 30 den Acht um Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta 2001

Shínigh an tAire Oideachais agus Scileanna an t-ordú um thosach feidhme d'Alt 30 den Acht um Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta 2001 ar an 1 Samhain 2013 chun go dtiocfadh feidhm leis ar an 28 Eanáir 2014. Ón dáta sin níl cead ag an bpámháistir ginearálta de réir an dlí, duine ar bith a íoc atá fostaithe mar mhúinteoir i scoil aitheanta ach amháin má tá sé/sí cláraithe leis an gComhairle Mhúinteoireachta. Forbairt thábhachtach é seo i stair córas oideachais na hÉireann sa mhéid go ndéanann sé gairm faoi lánrialáil de ghairm na múinteoireachta. Is ar mhaithe leis oideachas chomh maith agus is féidir a sholáthar dár gcuid scoláirí agus chun tacú le stádas gairm na múinteoireachta ach rialú cothrom trédhearcach a chur i bhfeidhm

Bhí páirt ríthábhachtach ag foireann na dTéarmaí agus Coinníollachta do Mhúinteoirí/SNAnna agus na Rialacháin um Bhainistíocht Seirbhíse Poiblí (Saoire Bhreoiteachta) 2014 a chur i ngníomh trí himlitreacha maidir le saoire bhreoiteachta do Mhúinteoirí agus SNAnna a eisiúint i mí Iúil 2014. Thosaigh na rialacháin do Mhúinteoirí agus SNAnna ar an 1 Meán Fómhair 2014.

4.22.2 An Bille um Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta (Leasú)

Ó tugadh isteach na socruithe i gcomhair grinnfhiosrúchán an Gharda Síochána d'fhoireann scoile i mí Mheán Fómhair 2006 tá ról ríthábhachtach ag an gComhairle Mhúinteoireachta i ndáil le socruithe grinnfhiosrúcháin do mhúinteoirí a oibriú.

I mí Aibreáin d'fhaomh an Rialtas dréachtú an Bhille um Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta (Leasú).

Freastalaíonn an Bille ar dhá aidhm uileghabhálacha: tacaíocht a thabhairt do ról lárnach na Comhairle Múinteoireachta sna socruithe grinnfhiosrúcháin reachtúla do mhúinteoirí cláraithe atá romhainn agus na forálacha reachtúla maidir le feidhm na Comhairle Múinteoireachta i dtaobh oiriúnachta don mhúinteoireacht a leasú agus a neartú.

Tá sé i gceist an Bille a thabhairt i gcrích le linn seisiún an earraigh/tsamhraidh 2015.

4.23 An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais (NEPS)

Tá teacht ag gach bunscoil agus iarbhunscoil phríomhshrutha ar shíceolaí de chuid na Seirbhíse Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais a chuireann seirbhís chomhairleach ar fáil d'fhonn tabhairt faoi riachtanais thosaíochta i scoileanna. Tacaítear leis an tseirbhís seo trí mheasúnachtaí a sholáthar i gcásanna áirithe tríd an Scéim um Mheasúnachtaí Síceolaíochta a Choimisiúnú (SCPA) a fhaomhann an tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais agus as a íocann an tSeirbhís seo, chomh maith.

Cuireann an tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais cúnamh do scoileanna agus do phobail scoile a bhfuil teagmhais chriticiúla acu ar iarratas. De bhreis air seo déanann an tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais iarratais ar Chóiríocht Réasúnta i Scrúduithe Stáit a phróiseáil agus freagraíonn sí ceisteanna maidir le páistí aonair ó rannáin eile na Roinne agus ó shainghníomhaíochtaí.

In 2014 lean an tSeirbhís uirthi ag sannadh síceolaí do gach bunscoil agus iarbhunscoil ach amháin do na Scoileanna Speisialta siúd a fhaigheann seirbhísí ó fhoinsí eile. Soláthraítear measúnuithe tríd an Scéim chun Measúnuithe Síceolaíochta a Choimisiúnú (SCPA) más gá. Dá thoradh sin cuireadh síceolaí de chuid na Seirbhíse Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais ar fáil do 98% de scoileanna, rud arb ionann agus 99.3% de scoláirí.

I gcaitheamh na bliana bhí síceolaithe na Seirbhíse rannpháirteach in obair cháis lena n-áiríodh measúnú agus idirghabháil, i dtaobh breis is 8,012 scoláire. Chuir siad comhairle ar mhúinteoirí maidir le hidirghabhálacha i ndáil le tuairim is 15,000 scoláire gan ainm de bhreis air seo. Ina theannta sin maoiníodh 1,628 éigin measúnú faoin Scéim chun Measúnuithe Síceolaíochta a Ordú sa tréimhse céanna.

Lena chois sin thug síceolaithe de chuid na Seirbhíse Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais moltaí i dtaobh tuairim is 5,000 scoláire faoin scéim um Chóiríocht Réasúnta i Scrúduithe Teastais thar

ceann an Choimisiúin Scrúduithe Stáit agus d'fhreastail sí ar tuairim is 120 teagmhas criticiúil i scoileanna ar iarratas na nÚdarás Scoile.

Tar éis di a bheith bainteach le *Folláine in Iarbhunscoileanna - Treoirlínte do Chothú na Meabhairshláinte agus do Chosc an Fhéinmharaithe* a fhorbairt, d'fhorbair an tSeirbhís treoirlínte le haghaidh bunú Foirne Tacaíochta Scoláirí nó le haghaidh a n-athbhreithnithe in 2014. Tá páirt thábhachtach ag Foirne Tacaíochta Scoláirí maidir le scoláirí a bhfuil fadhbanna sóisialta, mothúcháin agus iompair acu a aithint, tacú leo agus iad a chur ar aghaidh Lena chois sin tá na foirne ina mball fócais maidir le hoiliúint, tacaíocht agus comhairle ón síceolaí Seirbhíse Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais atá sannta don scoil.

Rinne an tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais athbhreithniú ar a Straitéis um Theagmhas Criticiúil in 2014. Thug sí a cuid treoirlínte agus ábhar tacaíochta do scoileanna cothrom le dáta chun iad a ullmhú dá bhfoilsiú in 2015.

Lena chois sin rinne an tSeirbhís athbhreithniú ar a straitéis chumarsáide le scoileanna, d'atheagraigh sí a cur i láthair gréasáin ar shuíomh gréasáin na Roinne agus thug sí faoi chaidreamh níos gníomhaí le scoileanna.

4.24 Comhar Thuaidh Theas

Clúdaíonn réimsí den gcomhar Thuaidh-Theas san oideachas a ainmníodh faoi Chomhaontú Bhéal Feirste/Aoine an Chéasta easpa gnóthachtála san oideachas, cáilíochtaí múinteoirí, riachtanais oideachais speisialta agus malartuithe óige scoile agus múinteoirí.

Sa bhliain 2014 bhí an tAire Oideachais agus Scileanna rannpháirteach i gcruinnithe de chuid na hEarnála Oideachais agus i gcruinnithe iomlánacha na Comhairle Aireachta Thuaidh-Theas in Ard Mhacha agus Baile Átha Cliath. Lena chois sin bhí cruinnithe déthaobhacha aige le hAirí ó Fheidhmeannas Thuaisceart Éireann agus le baill de Thionól Thuaisceart Éireann, faoi ghnóthaí comhleasa agus rudaí is cúis imní i ngnóthaí oideachais san dá dhlínse.

Chuir an Roinn agus an Roinn Oideachais i dTuaisceart Éireann comhar chun cinn ag leibhéal oifigiúil i ndáil le barrchleachtas a roinnt i gcigireacht scoile, tabhairt faoi easpa gnóthachtála san oideachas agus faoi chuimsiú, ceannaireacht scoile a fheabhsú agus rochtain thrasteorann ar bhunoideachas agus iarbhunoideachas a éascú.

Lean an Roinn agus an Roinn Oideachais i dTuaisceart Éireann orthu ag tacú le réimse tionscnamh trasteorann atá á soláthar ón taobh amuigh díobh agus ag déanamh cómhaoinithe orthu in 2014, d'fhonn litearthacht agus uimhearthacht a chur chun cinn. Áiríodh air seo Seachtain Mhatamaitice a bhí ar siúl i mí Dheireadh Fómhair. Is é is Seachtain Mhatamaitice na hÉireann ann ná ceiliúradh na matamaitice ar fud Oileán na hÉireann. Comhpháirtíocht breis is 50 grúpa is ea é lena n-áirítear ollscoileanna, institiúidí teicneolaíochta, coláistí, iarsmalanna, leabharlanna, ionaid chuairteoirí agus forais ghairmiúla ó Thuaidh agus ó Dheas. Meastar go raibh 250,000 duine rannpháirteach in imeachtaí i ngach contae.

Leanadh de theagmháil ardleibhéil idir an Roinn agus an Roinn Fostaíochta agus Foghlama i dTuaisceart Éireann. Chuir oifigigh an dá Ranna comhthionscnaimh ar aghaidh faoi shruth scoláirí breisoideachais agus ardoideachais trasna na teorann a thomhas agus anailís a dhéanamh air; rochtain a éascú ar bhreisoideachas agus ardoideachas lastuaidh agus laisteas den teorainn; agus comhar trasteorann idir na córais phrintíseachta ar an dá thaobh.

Go déanach in 2014 chuir an Roinn tús le hathbhreithniú ar cháir oideachais sheanbhunaithe d'fhonn a dheimhniú cé chomh maith agus atá tionscadail mhaoinithe ag freastal ar spriocanna

reatha an chomhar trasteorann san oideachas, an mó luach sa mbreis atá á seachadadh acu do na córais oideachais i dtaobh an churaclaim agus oideolaíochta agus cén luach ar airgead atá á léiriú acu. Leanfar den obair seo in 2015.

Le linn na bliana ainmníodh an Roinn mar Roinn Chuntasach mar aon leis an Roinn Oideachais i dTuaisceart Éireann, chun an tsraith "Oideachas Roinnte" de chlár nua de chuid an AE um SHÍOCHÁIN agus Athmhuintearas 2014 - 2020 (SÍOCHÁIN IV) a chur i ngníomh. Tá buiséad €53m ag an sraith Oideachais Roinnte. Cuirfidh an Roinn €11.5m den mhéid seo leis ach is féidir 85% den rannchuidiú a fháil ar ais ón gCoimisiún Eorpach. I mí Mheán Fómhair 2014 d'fhaomh an Rialtas an dréachtchlár agus go gcuirfí faoi bhráid Choimisiún an AE é. Táthar ag súil go gcuirfear tús le Síocháin IV a chur i bhfeidhm go céimneach in 2015.

Sa tábla thíos leagtar amach an líon rannpháirtithe i dtionscadail um mhalartú oideachais scoile agus óige Thuaidh/Theas a mhaoinigh an Roinn in 2014. Léiríonn na figiúirí a thugtar anseo líon iomlán na scoileanna, grúpaí óige, múinteoirí agus daoine óga as Éirinn agus Tuaisceart Éireann a raibh rannpháirteach sna tionscadail lena mbaineann.

Rannpháirtithe	2014
Líon iomlán Scoileanna	2052
Líon iomlán Grúpaí Óige	35
Líon iomlán Múinteoirí/Oiliúnóirí	2,425
Líon iomlán Scoláirí	221,678
Líon iomlán Daoine Óga	8,806
Líon na nInstitiúidí 3ú Leibhéil	58

5 Sprioc 2- Deiseanna breisoiliúna agus athoiliúna a sholáthar a fhreastalaíonn ar riachtanais daoine aonair agus an mhargadh saothair

5.1 Breisoideachas agus Oiliúint in Éirinn

Tá d'aidhm ag an Roinn bonneagar breise breisoideachas agus oiliúint (FET) a chur ar fáil a thacaíonn le forbairt eacnamaíoch, a mhéadaíonn cuimsiú sóisialta agus a sholáthraíonn eispéireas foghlama ardcháilíochta ag a bhfuil torthaí níos fearr a fhreastalaíonn ar riachtanais gach foghlaimeora agus gach pobail. Tá forbairtí breisoideachais agus oiliúna 2014 mar aon le athchóiriú mór na hearnála leagtha amach thíos

5.2 Dul chun cinn ar Athchóiriú ar an Earnáil Bhreisoideachais agus Oiliúna in 2014

Tá roinnt athchóirithe a bhaineann leis an earnáil bhreisoideachais agus oiliúna in Éirinn curtha i ngníomh. Áirítear air seo SOLAS agus 16 bhord oideachais agus oiliúna (ETBnna); díscaoileadh FÁS agus aistríodh iar-lárionaid oiliúna FÁS chuig rialachas na mbord oideachais agus oiliúna agus aistríodh lárionaid oiliúna SOLAS chuig na ETBnna lena mbaineann faoi mhí Iúil 2014.

Tá na príomhathchóirithe go léir ar an earnáil bhreisoideachais agus oiliúna curtha ar bun agus tá an córas dírithe go huile agus go hiomlán ar phleanáil agus seachadadh na seirbhíse. Leanfaidh an clár um athrú corparáide ar aghaidh go ceann tamaill mhaith tar éis na forais nua a bheith bunaithe agus na feidhmeanna a bheith aistrithe.

5.3 Bord Cláir na nIonad Oideachais agus Oiliúna/SOLAS agus an Oifig um Bhainistiú Tionscadail

Lean Bord Clár na nIonad Oideachais agus Oiliúna/SOLAS air ag tacú go gníomhach le cur i ngníomh an clár athchóirithe foriomláin d'earnáil na mBord Oideachais agus Oiliúna/SOLAS. Is é Ardrúnaí na Roinne cathaoirleach an Bhord Cláir agus ar na baill áirítear foireann shinsearach bainistíochta na Roinne mar aon le hArdrúnaí na mBord Oideachais agus Oiliúna in Éirinn, Ardstiúrthóir SOLAS agus príomhfheidhmeannaigh dhá Bhord Oideachais agus Oiliúna.

Cabhraíonn Oifig um Bhainistiú Tionscadail (PMO) leis an mBord Cláir. Tacaíonn sé sin le cur i ngníomh spriocanna straitéiseacha fadtéarmacha agus le gnóthaí oibriúcháin díreacha a gcaitheann na Boird Oideachais agus Oiliúna agus SOLAS aghaidh a thabhairt orthu mar thoradh ar an gclár oibre um athrú.

Le linn 2014 d'fhaomh an Bord Cláir an Plean Cláir de chuid na mBord Oideachais agus Oiliúna/SOLAS ina bhfuil 19 dtogra athchóirithe a bhaineann leis an earnáil ar fad. D'aithin an Oifig um Bhainistiú Tionscadail roinnt príomhthionscadal ó thaobh istigh den bPlean Cláir de chuid na nIonad Oideachais agus Oiliúna/SOLAS. Tá dul chun cinn fíormhaith déanta ar mholadh i gcomhair struchtúr eagraíochta nua agus tá cuid mhaith bainte amach i ndáil le príomhshruthú feidhmíocht chúloifige. Coiglítear an-chuid airgid mar thoradh air seo. Tá líon na bpárollaí laghdaithe ó 33 go 20 agus tá tús curtha le roinnt párollaí a aistriú chuig seirbhís bhainistithe. Tá cás gnó agus treochlár um chur i ngníomh faofa maidir le Sheirbhís Roinnte Phárolla a bhunú do na Boird Oideachais agus Oiliúna agus tá tús curtha le cleachtadh bonnlíne mar ullmhúchán cáis ghnó agus chun treochláir do Sheirbhís Roinnte Airgeadais na mBord Oideachais agus Oiliúna a fhaomhadh. Lena chois sin tugadh isteach acmhainní líonra TF agus leathanbhanda níos mó.

Rinneadh Orduithe ón Aire a rialaíonn ionadaíocht údarás áitiúil ar gach Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna. Rinneadh rialacháin maidir le toghadh baill foirne agus reáchtáladh toghcháin i mí Mheithimh inár laghdaíodh na ballraíochtaí go mór.

D'fhonn baill foirne atá ag obair in earnáil na mBord Oideachais agus Oiliúa/SOLAS a chur ar an eolas faoi sheasamh na Roinne maidir le roinnt príomhghnóthaí d'eisigh an Oifig um Bhainistiú Tionscadail 5 nuachtlitir le linn 2014.

5.4 An Straitéis Breisoideachais agus Oiliúna 2014-2019

D'fhoilsigh SOLAS an chéad Straitéis Breisoideachais agus Oiliúna cúig bliana 2014-2019 riamh i mí Bhealtaine 2014. Sa straitéis seo leagtar amach cúig sprioc ardleibhéil mar threochlár don Earnáil Bhreisoideachais agus Oiliúna mar seo a leanas:

1. Scileanna don Eacnamaíocht,
2. Cuimsiú gníomhach ina n-áirítear Straitéis Litearthachta agus Uimhearthachta,
3. Soláthar Ardcháilíochta,
4. Pleanáil agus Maoiniú Comhtháite
5. Seasamh an Bhreisoideachais agus Oiliúna

Leis an Straitéis Breisoideachais agus Oiliúna gabhann an Earnáil seo uirthi freagra níos éifeachtaí a thabhairt ar riachtanais fostóirí ag an leibhéal áitiúil agus réigiúnach.

Lena chois sin d'fhoilsigh SOLAS Plean Comhtháite um Sheirbhísí Breisoideachais agus Oiliúna do 2014 le comhar agus rannpháirtiú iomlán na 16 Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna.

5.5 Athbhreithniú ar Chóras Printíseachta na hÉireann

Mar thoradh ar Athbhreithniú ar chóras Printíseachta na hÉireann a bheith foilsithe in 2013 foilsíodh Plean um Chur i nGníomh Printíseachtaí i mí Mheithimh 2014 inar tugadh cuntas mionsonraithe ar an tslí ina bhféadfaí moltaí an athbhreithnithe a chur i ngníomh agus conas a d'fhéadfaí iad a chur i ngníomh.

Ar na príomh-mholtaí a rinneadh san athbhreithniú áirítear Comhairle Phrintíseachta a chur ar bun chun maoirseacht a dhéanamh ar fhorbairt printíseachtaí i réimsí nua. Tá an Chomhairle, a seoladh go foirmiúil i mí na Samhna 2014, faoi cheannaireacht fiontair. Tá ionadaithe ón earnáil ghnó, ó cheardchumainn agus ó institiúidí breisoideachais agus ardoideachais chomh maith le hionadaithe ón Roinn inti.

5.6 Caidreamh gníomhach le Fostóirí agus luchtanna leasa eile lena mbaineann

Tá baint ag fostóirí le fada an lá i struchtúir náisiúnta i réimsí ar nós riachtanais scileanna a mheas, cáilíochtaí a fhorbairt agus cláir phrintíseachta a bhainistiú. Le fíordhéanaí bhí an Roinn ag plé saincheisteanna agus deiseanna le fostóirí inár bhFóram um Chaidreamh gníomhach le Fiontar. Bhí páirt thábhachtach ag fostóirí in athbhreithniú ar phrintíseacht agus chuir siad le forbairt na Straitéise Bhreisoideachais agus Oiliúna.

5.7 Scileanna chun Oibre

Mar chuid de thionscnamh *Phlean Gníomhaíochta um Phoist* de chuid an Rialtais d'fhorbair an Roinn seo i dteannta Roinn an Taoisigh agus an Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí agus i dteannta na ngníomhaireachtaí Stáit lena mbaineann an branda *Scileanna chun Oibre*. Seasann an branda nua seo a seoladh go luath in 2014, cur chuige comhordaithe i leith réimse na gclár oideachais agus oiliúna atá spriocdhírithe ar fhiontar atá ar fáil do lucht cuardaithe poist a chur i láthair. Tá na cláir seo a leanas atá á riaradh ag an Roinn seo san áireamh sa tionscnamh: Lingchlár, Momentum agus Skillnets. Tá na scéimeanna seo, mar aon le JobBridge agus JobsPlus de chuid na Roinne Coimirce Sóisialaí faoi bhrat an fheachtais *Scileanna chun Oibre*.

Ar an bhfeachtas *Scileanna chun Oibre* áirítear treoir nua ar líne chun cabhrú le daoine a dheimhniú cén cláir a bhfuil siad cáilithe dóibh agus an suíomh gréasáin *skillstowork.ie* a chabhraíonn le lucht cuardaithe poist agus fostóirí araon teacht ar eolas gan stró ar an réimse scileanna agus roghanna oiliúna atá ár fáil dóibh. Tarraingíodh aird ar an bhfeachtas trí fhógraí ar líne ar phríomhshuíomhanna na meán in Éirinn, chomh maith.

Lena chois sin bhí seastán ag *Scileanna chun Oibre* ag mórimeachtaí fostaíochta agus mionghnó ag a raibh foirne ó gach ceann den gcúig chlár ag obair as láimh a chéile chun comhairle a chur ar chuardaitheoirí poist agus fostóirí maidir le leas a bhaint as na tacaíochtaí seo de chuid an Rialtais. Seoladh an feachtas go hoifigiúil ar an 19 Bealtaine 2014.

5.8 Lingchlár

Tionscnamh ar leith is ea Lingchlár a dhíríonn go straitéiseach ar dheiseanna athoiliúna solúbtha saor in aisce a mhaoiniú ag an leibhéal ardoideachais do dhaoine dífhostaithe agus daoine a bhí féinfhostaithe roimhe seo, i réimsí ina bhfuil riachtanais scileanna ag teacht chun cinn. Le linn 2014 tacaíodh 8,569 rannpháirtí ar chúrsaí de chuid Lingchláir. Caitheadh €23m san iomlán maidir le Lingchlár in 2014.

Taispeánadh i measúnú a rinneadh ar Lingchlár le déanaí gur fhill 40% de chéimithe na bliana 2012/13 ar an oideachas nó ar fhéinfhostaíocht laistigh de 6 seachtaine ó bronnadh céim orthu, agus 52% díobh laistigh de 6 mhí tar éis dóibh céim a fháil.

5.9 MOMENTUM

Is é atá i MOMENTUM ná scéim d'idirghabhálacha oideachais agus oiliúna. Tacaíonn sí le soláthar tograí oideachais agus oiliúna saor in aisce chun deis a thabhairt do chuardaitheoirí poist scileanna a fháil agus rochtain a fháil ar dheiseanna oibre in earnálacha aitheanta fáis. In 2014 fógraíodh soláthar buiséid breise chun atriail eile den gclár Momentum a mhaoiniú. Soláthróidh an clár oiread is 6,000 áit oideachais agus oiliúna do dhaoine atá dífhostaithe go fadtéarmach. Ag teacht lenár ngealltanas don tionscnamh An Ráthaíocht don Aos Óg, cuirfear oiread is 2,000 áit díobh seo ar leataobh dóibh siúd atá faoi bhun 25 bliana d'aois.

5.10 An Chlár Tiontaithe Iarchéime Scileanna TFC

Le linn 2014 sheol an Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna agus an Roinn Post, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta *Plean Gníomhaíochta TFC 2014 - 2018* athbhreithnithe Rialtais/Tionscail. Is é is aidhm don Phlean ná an chuspóir a bhaint amach atá leagtha amach sa *Phlean Gníomhaíochta le haghaidh Post* chun an ionad is tarraingtí ar domhan a dhéanamh d'Éirinn maidir le Scileanna TFC a bheith ar fáil.

Mar chuid den phlean fógraíodh babhta eile den gclár tiontaithe scileanna TFC. Le linn 2014 tacaíodh le 1,210 rannpháirtí ar an gclár tiontaithe TFC. Caitheadh €4.8m san iomlán in 2014 i ndáil leis na cláir seo.

5.11 An Ciste Eorpach um Choigeartú don Domhandú (EGF)

Is é an Ciste Eorpach um Choigeartú don Domhandú ann ná ionstraim mhaoinithe de chuid an AE a dhéanann cómhaoiniú ar chlár gníomhachtaithe margadh fostaíochta de chuid na mBallstát i ngairmthreoir, oiliúint, oideachas agus fiontar chun tacú le oibrithe atá iomarcach mar thoradh ar dhomhandú.

Chuir an Clár EGF Talk Talk tuairim is 1,126 idirghabháil ar leith ar fáil do 353 oibrí iomarcacha ón áis Talk Talk a bhí i bPort Láirige tamall ó shin, thar an tréimhse ó Mheán Fómhair 2011 go Feabhra 2014. Cuireadh gairmthreoir ar fáil mar aon le pleanáil gairme, cúrsaí oiliúna, cúrsaí breisoideachais agus ardoideachais, intéirneachtaí agus cúnamh chun gnó a thionscnamh. Ar na

bearta a cuireadh i ngníomh faoin gclár áirítear scéim um Rannchuidiú le Costais Chúrsaí chomh maith le dearadh agus soláthar cúrsa nuálach luathaithe Baitsiléir Eolaíochta in Eolaíocht Chógaisíochta agus Deachleachtas Monaraithe, ó Bhealtaine 2012 go Feabhra 2014. Ag deireadh an chláir bhí €3.79m caite air. Phoibligh an Coimisiún Eorpach an beart seo mar shampla a léiríonn úsáid éifeachtach airgid ón gCiste Eorpaigh um Choigeartú don Domhandú. http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7725&type=2&furtherPubs=yes).

Bhí Éire ar na chéad bhallstáit den AE a bhain leas as foráil nua an Rialacháin (AE) Uimh. 1309/2013 a rialaíonn an Ciste, chun daoine óga nach bhfuil aon phost acu agus nach bhfuil i mbun oideachais ná oiliúna a thabhairt san áireamh in iarratas ar an gCiste seo. D'fhaomh institiúidí an AE an t-iarratas ábhartha thar ceann oibrithe seodóireachta iomarcacha i Rath Caola, Co. Luimnigh i mí na Samhna 2014.

Is acmhainn luachmhar é an suíomh gréasáin www.egf.ie a chuirtear ar fáil d'fhonn an pobal a chur ar an eolas faoin bpróiseas EGF agus chun iarratais agus cláir de chuid EGF a mhíniú go mionsonraithe.

5.12 Ciste Sóisialta na hEorpa (ESF) agus Clár Oibriúcháin Chiste Shóisialta na hEorpa

Chabhraigh an Roinn chun €22.1m a éileamh ó Chiste Sóisialta na Eorpa (ESF) ón gCoimisiún Eorpach le linn 2014. Úsáidtear an t-airgead seo chun cómhaoiniú a dhéanamh ar chostas gníomhaíochtaí incháilithe ó thaobh ESF de, a sheachadtar trí Ranna Rialtais éagsúla. Infheistíochtaí i gcaipiteal daonna trí chláir oideachais agus oiliúna go mór mór atá i ngníomhaíochtaí de chuid Ciste Sóisialta na hEorpa.

Tá Clár Oibriúcháin Chiste Shóisialta na hEorpa dréachtaithe ag an Roinn i gcomhair na mblianta 2014-2020. Leis an gclár seo déantar riachtanais agus tosaíochtaí forbartha a mheas sna réimsí fostaíochta agus cuimsiú sóisialta agus aithnítear na tosaíochtaí náisiúnta ábhartha chun tacú leis an gClár Athchóirithe Náisiúnta agus le spriocanna náisiúnta a bhaint amach a bhfuil gá leo d'fhonn an *Straitéis Eoraip 2020 um Fhás Cliste, Inbhuanaithe Cuimsitheach* a sheachadadh.

D'fhaomh an Rialtas an *Dréachtchlár Oibriúcháin um Infhostaitheacht, Cuimsiú agus Foghlaim* agus chuir faoi bhráid an Aontais Eorpaigh é i mí Iúil 2014. Is é €1.153 billiún an buiséad iomlán atá beartaithe dó. Is é an leithdháileadh €542.43 milliún ó Chiste Sóisialta na hEorpa an chomhchuid is mó de na Cistí Struchtúracha agus Infheistíochta a leithdháileadh ar Éirinn thar an tréimhse seo. Comhchuid eile den gClár um Infhostaitheacht, Cuimsiú agus Foghlaim (PEIL) 2014-2020 is ea an Tionscnamh um Fhostaíocht don Aos Óg (YEI) a dtacaíonn maoiniú ESF, maoiniú díreach YEI agus cistí ón státchiste leis (€68m as gach ceann den trí fhoinse seo - státchiste, Ciste Sóisialta na hEorpa agus Ciste um Thionscnamh don Aos Óg).

Is iad na cuspóirí téamacha don tréimhse 2014-2020 atáthar ag iarraidh a bhaint amach in Éirinn le cabhair ó Chiste Sóisialta na hEorpa ná:

- Fostaíocht inbhuanaithe ardcháilíochta a chur chun cinn agus tacú le soghluaisteacht saothair;
- Cuimsiú sóisialta a chur chun cinn, dul i ngleic leis an mbochtaineacht agus le leithcheal ar bith;
- Infheistiú san oideachas, oiliúint agus oiliúint ghairme ar mhaithe le scileanna agus foghlaim ar feadh an tsaoil.

Sa Dréachtchlár Oibriúcháin tá beartaithe tuairim is 29% den airgead as Ciste Sóisialta na hEorpa a leithdháileadh chun dul i ngleic leis an dífhostaíocht, Ráthaíocht don Óige san áireamh, agus chun

soghluaisteacht saothair a chur chun cinn, tuairim is 36% do bhearta cuimsithe gníomhacha agus 18% don Tionscnamh Fostaíochta don Aos Óg. Tá súil le comhaontú ar an gClár in 2015.

5.12.1 Ag tacú le cur i ngníomh na Straitéise Náisiúnta Scileanna trí Chiste Sóisialta na hEorpa

Chabhraigh an Roinn seo chun airgead as Ciste Sóisialta na hEorpa a éileamh ón gCoimisiún Eorpach do ghníomhaíochtaí scileanna fochéime in 2014. Seachadadh na gníomhaíochtaí seo trí sholáthraithe oideachais tríú leibhéil d'fhonn tabhairt faoi ghanntanas céimithe oilte i réimsí ar tharraing an Grúpa Saineolaithe um Riachtanais Scileanna amach anseo agus tuarascálacha eile aird air. Is é atá i gceist go háirithe ná scileanna TFC, innealtóireacht agus disciplíní eolaíochta.

5.12.2 Ag tacú le hOiliúint Litearthachta i gCláir Breisoideachais agus Oiliúna trí Chiste Sóisialta na hEorpa

Chabhraigh an Roinn seo chun airgead as Ciste Sóisialta na hEorpa a éileamh ón gCoimisiún Eorpach chun cláir breisoideachais agus oiliúna a sheachadadh in 2014. Seachadtar na cláir seo trí oiliúint agus réimsí breisoideachais. Is é is aidhm do na cláir seo ná an lucht saothair oilte a fhorbairt atá ag teastáil chun freastal ar riachtanais na hÉireann amach anseo agus, ina theannta sin, cabhrú le cuardaitheoirí poist cáilíochtaí agus fostaíocht a bhaint amach.

6 Sprioc 3 - Deiseanna foghlama, taighde agus nuálaíochta a chur ar fáil san earnáil ardoideachais

Tá clár nuachóirithe agus athchóirithe nach raibh a leithéid ann riamh ar siúl sa Chóras Ardoideachais in Éirinn. Tá d'aidhm ag cur i ngníomh na Straitéise Náisiúnta d'Ardoideachas go nuige 2030 córas ardoideachais a fhorbairt a thabharfaidh an t-eolas agus na scileanna do dhaoine atá riachtanach chun saol saibhir sásúil a chaitheamh agus chun a aghaidh a thabhairt ar na dúshláin shóisialta eacnamaíocha atá roimh Éirinn.

6.1 Creatlach Feidhmíochta an Chóras Ardoideachais 2014-2016

Leag an tAire amach Creat Feidhmíocht Chórais a shonraíonn tosaíochtaí náisiúnta agus príomhspriocanna an Rialtais don ardoideachas don tréimhse 2014-2016. Le linn 2014 d'fhoilsigh an tÚdarás Ardoideachais (HEA) an chéad Tuarascáil Bhliantúil ar Fheidhmíocht an Chóras Ardoideachais i gcomparáid leis na cuspóirí seo. In Imleabhar II den tuarascáil mínítear na próifílí institiúideacha agus earnála maidir le 2011-12. Tá comhshocrú déanta ag gach institiúid anois leis an Údarás Ardoideachais maidir leis an tslí ina gcuirfidh sí leis na cuspóirí náisiúnta ón ionad ina bhfuil a misean agus a cuid láidreachtaí. Déanann na comhshocruithe soláthar i ndáil le feidhmíocht a mheas agus beidh cuid den mhaoiniú ag brath ar fheidhmíocht sna blianta atá romhainn. Tá teacht ar na tuarascálacha ar shuíomh gréasáin na Roinne www.education.gov.ie .

6.2 Grúpa Stiúrtha um Athchóiriú Aistrithe

Rinne an Grúpa Stiúrtha um Athchóiriú Aistrithe a bhfuil ionadaithe ar phríomhchomhpháirtithe oideachais ann, dul chun cinn suntasach ar roinnt saincheisteanna a iniúchadh a aithníodh i dtaobh aistriú lucht fágála scoile chuig a n-eispéireas mar fhochéimithe sa chéad bhliain. Tugtar cuntas ar na réimsí a phléitear sa pháipéar ***Ag Tacú le hAistriú níos fearr ón Oideachas Dara Leibhéil go dtí an tArdoideachas - Cur chun Feidhme agus na Chéad Chéimeanna Eile.*** Foilsíodh an t-eolas is deireanaí ar obair an Ghrúpa Stiúrtha um Athchóiriú Aistrithe le linn 2014 - ***Key Directions Update - Easter 2014*** (An t-eolas is deireanaí ar na príomhthreonna - Cáisc 2014) inár tugadh tuilleadh eolais ar na treonna seo ina ndéanfar athrú, go háirithe maidir le grádú Ardteistiméireachta. Tá an dá doiciméad foilsithe ar shuíomh gréasáin na Roinne.

6.3 Cothromas Rochtana ar an Ardoideachas

Lean an Roinn uirthi ag cur tacaíochta rochtana ar fáil in 2014 chun níos mó rannpháirtíochta san ardoideachas i measc grúpaí faoi ghannionadaíocht a éascú. Is é an sprioc ardleibhéil ná tacú le mic léinn faoi mhíchumas, le mic léinn aibí agus leo siúd ó chúlraí atá faoi mhíbhuntáiste sóch-eacnamaíoch, chun a chur ar a gcumas teacht ar dheiseanna chun gabháil ar aghaidh chuig an ardoideachas.

Sa Bheart um Rochtain ar Thríú Leibhéal atá á bhainistiú ag an Údarás Ardoideachais thar ceann na Roinne, tá dhá fho-thosaíocht; an Ciste Cúnaimh do Mhic Léinn agus an Ciste do Mhic Léinn faoi Mhíchumas.

Tá an Ciste Cúnaimh do Mhic Léinn á riaradh ar bhonn áitiúil ag institiúidí ardoideachais rannpháirteacha agus tá sé dírithe ar na mic léinn is mó a bhfuil gá acu leis. Cuireann sé acmhainní breise ar fáil d'institiúidí chun tacú le mic léinn lánaimseartha atá i gcruachás. Bhain 13,000 mac léinn leas as an gCiste in 2013/14.

Cuireann an Ciste do Mhic Léinn faoi Mhíchumas maoiniú ar fáil d'institiúidí breisoideachais agus ardoideachais chun seirbhísí agus tacaíochtaí a thabhairt do mhic léinn lánaimseartha a bhfuil míchumais thromchúiseacha céadfacha, coirp agus/nó cumarsáide orthu. Tá d'aidhm ag an gCiste tacú le mic léinn chun gur féidir leo rannpháirtiú go hiomlán ina gcláir acadúla agus a chinntiú nach mbeidh siad faoi mhíbhuntáiste mar thoradh ar a míchumas. Bhain 8,807 mac léinn san iomlán leas as an gCiste sa bhliain acadúil 2013/14.

6.3.1 Rátaí rannpháirtíochta méadaithe i measc grúpaí faoi ghannionadaíocht

Tugadh faoi phróiseas fairsing comhairleoireachta le inn 2014 chun teagmháil a dhéanamh le réimse leathan luchtanna leasa san earnáil ardoideachais agus lasmuigh di araon, i ndáil le plean náisiúnta nua um chothromas rochtana ar an ardoideachas a fhorbairt. Chun an próiseas comhairleoireachta seo a éascú d'fhoilsigh an tÚdarás Ardoideachais agus an Roinn an páipéar comhairliúcháin *Towards the development of a new National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education (I dtreo Plean Náisiúnta nua um Chothromas Rochtana ar an Ardoideachas a fhorbairt)* i mí Lúnasa 2014. Foilsíodh na sonraí is deireanaí agus na táscairí feidhmíochta maidir le cothromas rochtana sa pháipéar comhairliúcháin agus tugadh cuireadh do na luchtanna leasa ar fad a dtuairim a thabhairt.

6.3.2 Deontais do Mhic Léinn

Cuireann an Roinn maoiniú ar fáil do Bhord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath (CDETB) i gcomhair riaradh deontas do Mhic Léinn trí Thacaíocht Chomhchoiteann do Mhic Léinn in Éirinn (SUSI).

6.3.3 Tacaíocht Chomhchoiteann do Mhic Léinn in Éirinn (SUSI)

De thoradh ar an taithí atá faighte againn ar SUSI a oibriú le dhá bhliana anuas tugadh isteach roinnt feabhsuithe tábhachtacha don bhliain acadúil 2014/2015, lena n-áirítear;

- An próiseas iarratais a oscailt níos luaithe -8 Bealtaine in 2014 seachas 20 Bealtaine, mar a rinneadh in 2013
- Eolas ar an shuíomh gréasáin athbhreithnithe agus níos éasca don úsáideoir ag www.susi.ie;
- Níos mó bailíochtú uathoibrithe ar an bhfoirm iarratais ar líne;
- Réimse leathnaithe seirbhísí ar líne d'iarrthóirí;
- Próiseáil inmheánach níos sruthlínithe ar iarratais;

- Comhroinnt sonraí níos leithne le Ranna agus Gníomhaireachtaí Rialtais;
- Rannpháirtiú níos mó a bheith ag luchtanna leasa; agus
- Áiritheoir ar líne chun incháilitheacht do dheontas a thabhairt isteach.

D'éirigh le SUSI na meadarachtaí agus spriocanna feidhmíochta a chomhlíonadh nó a shárú atá leagtha amach sa Chomhaontú Bainistithe Creatlaí idir an Roinn agus Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath maidir le deontais do mhic léinn a phróiseáil agus a íoc in 2014/15.

6.3.4 Bord Achomhairc um Dheontais do Mhic Léinn

In 2014 tháinig an Bord Achomhairc um Dheontais do Mhic Léinn le chéile 31uair. Agus é tagtha faoi chúram Oifig Fear an Phobail ar an 1 Bealtaine 2013 is féidir leis an Oifig seo gearáin maidir le gníomhartha i dtaobh riaracháin SUSI a imscrúdú.

6.3.5 Scoláireachtaí Idirnáisiúnta

Institiúid taighde iarchéime is ea an Institiúid Eorpach Ollscoile (EUI) a bhunaigh ballstáit an Aontais Eorpaigh. Tá sé i bhFlórans. Maoiníonn an Roinn scoláireachtaí iarchéime do roinnt mac léinn as Éirinn san Institiúid seo gach bliain. Bhí uachtaránacht na hÉireann ar an Ardchomhairle, bord rialaithe na hInstitiúide, a mhair ar feadh téarma bliana amháin, istigh i mí Mhárta 2014.

6.3.6 Caiteachas 2014

Bhí an caiteachas in 2014 ar chothromas rochtana ar thionscnaimh ardoideachais mar seo a leanas:

Scéimeanna	Líon na dtairbhithe (bliain acadúil 2013/14)	Caiteachas sa Bhliain Airgeadais 2014
Scéimeanna Deontais do Mhic Léinn	78,965	€345,304,470
Scéimeanna Rochtana Tríú Leibhéil	21,807	€16,200,000
Scoláireachtaí/Sparántachaí	402	€1,820,000

In 2014 ba é €3,025 uasmhéid caighdeánach an deontas cothabhála. Fuair mic léinn a cháiligh i gcomhair an ráta deontais speisialta €5,915 ar a mhéid.

6.4 Ardoideachas, Taighde agus Airgeadas

Leithdháileann an Roinn maoiniú aisfhillteach ar an Údarás Ardoideachais (HEA) chun go n-íocfar amach é leis na hOllscoileanna, Institiúidí Teicneolaíochta agus coláistí ainmnithe. Lena chois sin maoiníonn an Roinn líon beag institiúidí ardoideachais go díreach.

Caitheadh beagnach €940 milliún in 2014 ar mhaoiniú aisfhillteach d'Ollscoileanna, Institiúidí Teicneolaíochta agus institiúidí eile atá ainmnithe ag an Údarás Ardoideachais. Ar an maoiniú seo áirítear an deontas in ionad costas táillí teagaisc d'fhochéimithe arb é €310 milliún san iomlán san earnáil, sa bhliain acadúil 2013/14. Fuair tuairim is 129,000 mac léinn lánaimseartha íocaíocht dá shórt.

Lena chois sin tacaíonn an Roinn le forbairt inniúlachtaí taighde in iliomad disciplíní in institiúidí tríú leibhéil trí mhaoiniú a chur ar fáil i gcomhair caipiteal daonna tríd an gComhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn. Maoiníonn an soláthar seo tacaíocht ríomh-bhonneagair don gcóras taighde. Cuireadh €38 milliún ar fáil, nach mór, in 2014.

6.4.1 Grúpa Saineolaithe um Mhaoiniú

Cuireadh Grúpa Saineolaithe ar bun in 2014 a raibh Peter Cassells mar chathaoirleach air, chun ár gcuid socruithe maidir le maoiniú an ardoideachais a scrúdú agus chun roinnt cuir chuige a aimsiú

lena mbainfear bunús inbhuanaithe don mhaoiniú amach má chuirfear i bhfeidhm iad i dteannta a chéile. Is chun tabhairt faoi mhéadú na hearnála atá ag dul ar aghaidh gan stad gan staonadh a glacadh an beart seo agus ag an am céanna táimid ag iarraidh cáilíocht an oideachais a chosaint. Tá brú ar an gcóras ag fás i gcónaí le roinnt blianta anuas mar thoradh ar fás seasmhach a bheith ag líon na mac léinn agus laghdú ar acmhainní soláthar foirne agus airgid. Beidh méadú ag teacht ar éileamh ar áiteanna ardoideachais amach anseo go ceann 10-15 bliana eile, rud a chuirfidh tuilleadh brú ar institiúidí chun eispéireas oideachais den scoth a choinneáil.

6.4.2 Ráta Táille

In 2014 bhí an Rialtas sásta glacadh leis an ráta táille AE a ghearradh ar náisiúnaigh den AE/LEE/na hEilvéise nach gcomhlíonann riachtanas cónaithe an tionscnaimh um Tháillí Saor in Aisce ach a raibh cúig bliana acadúla staidéir ar a laghad curtha isteach acu ag leibhéal bunscoile nó iarbhunscoile san AE/LEE/Eilvéis, seachas an ráta neamh-AE níos airde, mar a dhéantaí i gcásanna áirithe.

D'iarr an tAire ar an Údarás Ardoideachais de réir Ailt 40 den Acht Ollscoileanna comhairle a chur ar na hollscoileanna agus, lena chois sin, comhairle a chur ar choláistí agus Institiúidí Teicneolaíochta ainmnithe, faoin ráta táille ar chóir, i dtuairim an Rialtais, a ghearradh ar mhic léinn dá shórt. Iarradh an beartas seo a chur i bhfeidhm ón bhliain acadúil 2014/15 ar aghaidh.

6.4.3 Straitéis Taighde

Tá próiseas idir lámha atá ceaptha chun a bheith mar bhonn eolais ag straitéis a fhorbrófar ar bhonn leathan agus a thiocfaidh in ionad na *Straitéise um Eolaíocht, Teicneolaíocht agus Nuálaíocht 2007-2013.* Tugann ceapadh na straitéise nua an deis chun straitéis nua Rialtais-uile a fhorbairt i gcomhair taighde agus nuálaíochta a bhainfidh leas as an dul chun cinn atá déanta go dtí seo. Tá coiste idir-ranna ina bhfuil ionadaithe ó phríomh-Ranna Rialtais agus ón Údarás Ardoideachais, faoi chathaoirleacht na Roinne Post, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta, á cheapadh chun moltaí don straitéis nua a fhorbairt. Meastar go gcríochnóidh an coiste seo a chuid oibre in 2015.

6.4.4 Teagasc agus Foghlaim i bhFóram Ardoideachais

D'fhorbair an Fóram Náisiúnta um Fheabhsú Teagaisc agus Foghlama san Ardoideachas treochlár tosaigh chun feabhas a chur ar fhoghlaim dhigiteach san earnáil. Foilsíodh an clár oibre i mí Bhealtaine 2014 agus cuireadh ciste €2 milliúin ar fáil chun tacú le hinstitiúidí d'fhonn inniúlacht dhigiteach a fhorbairt.

6.5 Straitéis chun Idirnáisiúnú Seirbhísí Oideachais na hÉireann a fheabhsú

Leanadh den obair ar chur i ngníomh na straitéise chun feabhas a chur ar idirnáisiúnú seirbhísí oideachais na hÉireann Ar na príomhtháscairí feidhmíochta maidir le cur i ngníomh céimneach na straitéise áirítear méadú 60% ar mhic léinn idirnáisiúnta inár gcuid institiúidí ardoideachais a fhaigheann maoiniú poiblí agus maoiniú príobháideach, méadú 16% ar líon na mac léinn a bhíonn rannpháirteach inár n-earnáil Bhéarla ardcháilíochta agus méadú 38% ar líon na mac léinn a thagann go hÉirinn mar chuid den chlár Erasmus+.

6.6 Éire a chur chun cinn go hidirnáisiúnta mar Lárionad Sármhaitheasa in Oideachas agus Oiliúint

Ar ghníomhartha ardleibhéil ar tugadh fúthu i gcaitheamh na bliana chun naisc oideachais idirnáisiúnta agus teagmhálacha idir-rialtais a chur ar bun áirítear misin oideachais faoi cheannaireacht airí chuig na trí mhargadh tosaíochta arb iad an Araib Shádach, an tSín agus an India, chomh maith le misean faoi cheannaireacht an Ardrúnaí chuig na Stáit Aontaithe.

Cuireadh comhaontú oideachais idirnáisiúnta idir Éirinn agus Aontas na nÉimíríochtaí Arabacha i gcrích le linn cuairt an Taoisigh ar na hÉimíríochtaí. Lena chois sin bhí an Roinn rannpháirteach i

gcomhchoimisiúin eacnamaíocha leis an Araib Shádach, an Rúis agus an Chóiré agus bhí sí mar óstach do thoscairí idirnáisiúnta ón Chóiré, an Fhionlainn, an Chróit, an Liotuáin agus Vítneam.

Chun an branda *Oideachas in Éirinn* a chur chun cinn feabhsaíodh an clár Ambasadóir Idirnáisiúnta do Mhic léinn agus méadaíodh an ghníomhaíocht ar na meáin shóisialta mar aon le feachtais oiriúnaithe ar líne a fhorbairt d'fhonn aonaigh a chur chun cinn agus feasacht ar an mbranda a mhúscailt. Mar thoradh air sin fuarthas breis is 3 mhilliún teagmháil leis an mbranda.

6.6.1 Erasmus+

Is é Erasmus+ an Clár de chuid an AE d'Oideachas, Oiliúint agus Spórt i gcomhair 2014-2020. Tá d'aidhm aige cabhrú chun aghaidh a thabhairt ar na dúshláin is tábhachtaí atá roimh an Eoraip trí fás agus poist a threisiú agus cothromas agus cuimsiú sóisialta a chothú. Cuirfidh Erasmus+ deiseanna ar fáil do 4 mhilliún Eorpach, 62,000 saoránach Éireannacha san áireamh, chun tabhairt faoi staidéar, oiliúint, taithí oibre a fháil agus obair dheonach a dhéanamh thar lear.
Ag an leibhéal Eorpach leithdháileadh €14.7 billiún don gclár a mhairfidh ar feadh seacht mbliana. Tá sé seo 40% níos airde ná an clár roimhe seo. Meastar gurb ionann leithdháileadh na hÉireann agus €169m.

Déanann an Roinn seo i dteannta na Roinne Leanaí agus Gnóthaí Óige maoirseacht ar riarachán an chláir tríd an Údarás Ardoideachais agus Léargas in Éirinn. Bhí an maoiniú a cuireadh ar fáil don gclár in 2014 mar seo a leanas:

Maoiniú ón gCoimisiún Eorpach do Erasmus+ in 2014	
Maoiniú oibríochta do Léargas:	€1,011,591
Maoiniú oibríochta don Údarás Ardoideachas:	€194,225
Erasmus+ scoileanna:	€1,307,671
Erasmus+ oideachas agus oiliúint ghairme (VET):	€4,278,442
Erasmus+ oideachas aosach:	€1,644,297
Erasmus+ óige:	€2,898,321
Ardoideachas Erasmus+:	€7,705,791

7 Sprioc 4 - Bonneagar cuí do thimpeallachtaí foghlama a phleanáil agus a sholáthar

Tá d'aidhm ag an Roinn bonneagar cuí a sholáthar do thimpeallachtaí foghlama chun go mbeidh teacht ag gach foghlaimeoir ar thimpeallacht foghlama nua-aimseartha. Tá an Roinn ag díriú go háirithe ar cóiríocht a sholáthar chun freastal ar an éileamh ar áiteanna scoile i gceantair ina bhfuil fás ar líon na scoláirí ar an rolla.

7.1 Clár Tógála agus Cóiríochta in 2014

In 2014 caitheadh €438.5m san iomlán ar bhonneagar scoileanna. Ar thorthaí na hinfheistíochta seo áirítear 42 thionscadal mórscála a críochnaíodh; 30 díobh san earnáil bhunscoile agus 12 san earnáil iarbhunscoile. Soláthraíodh 10,432 áit scoile bhuana ar áiteanna buana breise 8,052 díobh. Cuireadh ar fáil iad i 20 bunscoil nua. Cuireadh 2,240 áit bhuan breise ar fáil in 10 mbunscoil atá ann cheana féin.

San earnáil iarbhunscoile críochnaíodh 7 scoil nua agus 5 mhéadú mhóra nó tograí athchóirithe in 2014. Leis na tograí seo soláthraíodh 6,200 áit scoile bhuana san iomlán. Áiteanna buana breise ab ea 2,600 díobh. Lena chois sin soláthraíodh áiseanna feabhsaithe do 7,200 scoláire.

Críochnaíodh 212 thogra faoin Scéim um Chóiríocht Bhreise agus an Tionscnamh um Ionadú Foirgneamh Réamhdhéanta a thugann 6,359 n-áit scoile bhuana.

Le linn 2014 faomhadh 772 iarratas san iomlán faoin Scéim Oibreacha Samhraidh agus 430 iarratas faoin Scéim Oibreacha Fuinnimh.

Ceannaíodh 12 láthair in 2014 a úsáidfear chun cóiríocht scoile a sholáthar do 9 gcinn de bhunscoileanna agus 6 chinn d'iarbhunscoileanna.

7.2 Modheolaíochtaí Éagsúla a úsáid chun Tograí Móra a fhoirgniú

I bplean cúig bliana na Roinne tá modhanna malartacha chun tograí a sheachadadh, an próiseas comhpháirtíochta poiblí príobháideach san áireamh. Tá gníomhaireachtaí cosúil le hOifig na nOibreacha Poiblí, na Boird Oideachais agus Oiliúna agus an Ghníomhaireacht Airgeadais d'Fhorbairt Náisiúnta mar aon le roinnt údarás áitiúil, ag cabhrú chun 69 tograí scoile móra a sheachadadh.

7.3 Tograí Ardoideachais a Chríochnú

In 2014 baineadh úsáid as caiteachas caipitil €79,094m ar bhonneagar ardoideachais chun comhdhlúthú Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Bhaile Átha Cliath a chur ar aghaidh ag Gráinseach Ghormáin. Lena chois sin bhíothas in ann áiseanna nua a chríochnú go dtí an leibhéal praiticiúil leis an airgead, Coláiste Phádraig Dhroim Chonrach. De bhreis air seo bhíothas in ann scéim mhionoibreacha in earnáil na n-institiúidí teicneolaíochta a chríochnú leis an maoiniú seo.

7.4 Córais um Bhainistiú Airgeadais, Iniúchadh, Breithmheas agus Bainistiú Sócmhainní a fheabhsú

Baineann na scoileanna úsáid as an Tairseach Esinet mar chuid de athdheisiú an bhunachar sonraí lárnach de chóiríocht scoile chun an Fardal Cóiríocht Scoile ar Líne (IOS) á chur le chéile. Go dtí seo tá sonraí an fhardail curtha isteach ag 85% de scoileanna.

Rinneadh fardal ar an mbonneagar bunscoile agus iarbhunscoile agus na sócmhainní pobail a ghabhann leis go léir ar bhonn píolótach i gcúig cheantar na tíre le linn 2012. Tá foireann thionscadail ceaptha ó shin chun forbairt sonraí fardail a chur ar aghaidh i dtaobh cuid eile na tíre.

Tá roinnt creatlaí chun comhairleoireacht a cheapadh i bhfeidhm chun tograí níos mó atá casta agus práinneach a éascú.

Le linn na bliana rinne an Roinn 116 chigireacht ar scoileanna a raibh maoiniú tarmligthe faighte acu agus a raibh a gcuid tograí críochnaithe acu faoi dheireadh 2013 d'fhonn a dhearbhú gur críochnaíodh na hoibreacha de réir treoirlínte na Roinne.

7.5 Feabhas a chur ar Chumarsáid agus Comhordú le Luchtanna Leasa Seachtracha

Mar a luadh ag 5.2, tá socruithe déanta chun seachadadh tograí a éagsúlú. Áirítear orthu seo socruithe le boird oideachais agus oiliúna, Comhairlí Contae, Oifig na nOibreacha Poiblí (OPW), an Ghníomhaireacht Airgeadais d'Fhorbairt Náisiúnta (NDFA) agus le Gníomhaireacht Forbartha Ghráinseach Ghormáin.

Cuirfidh an Fardal Cóiríocht Scoile Ar Líne feabhas ar chomhordú agus cumarsáid maidir le tograí.

7.5.1 Meamram Tuisceana le hÚdaráis Áitiúla

Lean an Roinn uirthi le linn 2014 ag obair le hoifigigh ar fud earnáil na n-údarás áitiúil chun ceannach láithreacha a chur ar aghaidh i gceantair ábhartha faoin Meamram Tuisceana idir an Roinn agus Comhghrúpa na mBainisteoirí Contae agus Cathrach. Tugann an idirghníomhaíocht a rinneadh mar thoradh ar an Meamram Tuisceana a chur i bhfeidhm cinnteacht níos fearr don Roinn maidir le torthaí pleanála a bhaineann leis na láithreacha.

7.5.2 Faisnéis ar Thionscadail a Fhoilsiú ar Shuíomh Gréasáin na Roinne

Foilsítear liostaí tionscadal atá faofa i gcomhair a seachadta ar shuíomh gréasáin na Roinne gach mí. Má tá tionscadail mhóra i gceist cuirtear an t-eolas is deireanaí ar dhul chun cinn ar fáil trí chéimeanna éagsúla an phróisis seachadta. Má tá tionscadail bheaga tharmligthe i gceist foilsítear eolas fúthu go seachtainiúil. Liostáiltear ainm na scoile, an cineál tionscadail agus dátaí a bhfaofa.

7.5.3 Córas Iarratais Ar Líne don Scéim Oibreacha Samhraidh

Tá feabhsuithe nach beag tagtha ar an bpróiseas iarratais leis an gcóras ar líne a chuir ar chumas na scoileanna iarratais a chur isteach ar mhaoiniú faoin Scéim Oibreacha Samhraidh 2014. Tugadh isteach é in 2013. Ní gá aon iarratas ar pháipéar a dhéanamh a thuilleadh. Fuarthas breis is 1,700 iarratas ó scoileanna a bhain úsáid as an áis seo.

7.6 Éifeachtacht Fuinnimh i Scoileanna

Tá an Roinn ar cadhnaíochta i ndearadh maidir le héifeachtacht fuinnimh inbhuanaithe i bhfoirgnimh scoile. Leagann ár gcuid Doiciméad Treorach Teicniúla (TGDnna) síos tagarmharc maidir le dearadh inbhuanaithe i bhfoirgnimh scoile i gcónaí. Díríonn siad go soiléir ar éifeachtacht fuinnimh atá á thacú ag clár láidir um thaighde fuinnimh ina bhfuil 6 thionscadal is daichead ag céimeanna éagsúla, an suíomh gréasáin ***www.energyineducation.ie.,*** i gcomhar le hÚdarás Fuinnimh Inbhuanaithe na hÉireann, an Passive schools project (tionscadal na scoileanna neamhghníomhacha) *agus na* Near Zero Energy Building Projects (Tionscadail Tógála Foirgneamh nach n-ídíonn aon fhuinneamh ar bith, nach mór). Tá ar chumas gach scoile atá tógtha de réir na nDoiciméid Treorach Teicniúla Rátáil Fuinnimh Foirgnimh (RFF) A3 a bhaint amach ar a laghad.

Ba chóir an suíomh gréasáin ***www.energyineducation.ie*** a úsáid i dteannta an Phacáiste Fuinneamh san Oideachas mar chuid de réimse tacaíochtaí atá ceaptha chun cabhrú le boird bhainistíochta scoile, príomhoidí, múinteoirí, riarthóirí, foireann cothabhála, scoláirí agus tuismitheoirí nósanna ídiú fuinnimh a fheabhsú agus costais oibríochta na scoile a laghdú agus, ag an am céanna, cabhrú chun an comhshaol a chaomhnú ar mhaithe le glúine amach anseo. Is é atá

ann ná treoir phraiticiúil a bhfuil tástáil déanta uirthi, maidir le fuinneamh a bhainistiú i scoileanna agus eolas maidir le rannpháirtíocht na scoláirí sa phróiseas. Lena chois sin faightear staidéir cháis agus deiseanna oiliúna ann.

8 Feabhas a chur ar ár nÉifeachtúlacht agus Éifeachtacht

Geallann an Roinn seirbhís ardcháilíochta éifeachtúil ar fiú í an t-airgead a chaitear uirthi a sholáthar dár gcustaiméirí agus luchtanna leasa go léir.

8.1 Ag Tacú leis an Clár Athchóirithe

Sa bhliain 2014 lean Oifig an Chláir um Athchóiriú na Seirbhíse Poiblí uirthi ag bainistiú agus ag cur i ngníomh an chlár oibre athchóirithe ar fud na hEarnála Oideachais agus Oiliúna tríd an bPlean um Sheachadadh Athchóirithe Chomhtháite 2014, an Plean um Sheirbhís Roinnte agus an Plean um Sheachadadh Seirbhíse Seachtraí 2014 - 2016 a fhorbairt agus a chur i ngníomh. Go déanach in 2014 rinneadh athbhreithniú ar an bPlean um Sheachadadh Athchóirithe Chomhtháite agus forbraíodh dréachtleagan den bPlean um Sheachadadh Athchóirithe Chomhtháite 2015.

Chuir Oifig an Chláir um Athchóiriú na Seirbhíse Poiblí forbairt struchtúir láidre rialachais chun cinn mar aon le húsáid struchtúir bainistithe chláir agus tionscadail agus modheolaíochtaí ar fud na Roinne agus na hearnála.

Rinneadh na socruithe rialachais i gcomhair tionscnaimh athchóirithe a leabú tuilleadh i gcaitheamh 2014 trí iarrachtaí de chuid an Bhoird um Athchóiriú Oideachais agus Oiliúna, Bord an Chlár Ardoideachais agus Bord Clár na mBord Oideachais agus Oiliúna/SOLAS..

8.2 Feabhas a chur ar ár gcuid Teicneolaíochta Faisnéise agus Cumarsáide

8.2.1 Uasghráduithe TFC Inmheánacha na Roinne

Tar éis dúinn freastalaithe nua agus ceadúnais a fháil in 2013 cuireadh tús leis an uasghrádú Oracle i lár 2014. Faoi dheireadh na bliana bhí uasghrádú déanta ar roinnt bunachar sonraí agus aistrithe ó na seanfhreastalaithe AIX chuig na freastalaithe nua Windows. I mí Dheireadh Fómhair rinneadh uasghrádú Oracle agus CorePay ar phárolla pinsinéirí. Meastar go mbeidh uasghrádú déanta ar na bunachair shonraí agus párollaí go léir agus iad aistrithe chuig na freastalaithe nua faoi lár 2015.

8.2.2 Forbairt na Sonraí Bunscoile Ar Líne

In 2014 leanadh den obair ar bhunachar sonraí foghlaimeoirí bunscoile a fhorbairt (Sonraí Bunscoile Ar Líne). I mí Mheán Fómhair 2014 rinneadh céim 1 de Shonraí Bunscoile Ar Líne beo do gach bunscoil ach amháin scoileanna speisialta, chun gur féidir le scoileanna sonraí scoláirí a chur isteach faoi dheireadh mhí Mhárta 2015. Scaoileadh an dara céim de Shonraí Bunscoile Ar Líne i mí na Nollag 2014 chun gur féidir rollacháin iolracha agus aistrithe idir scoileanna a dhéanamh. Scaoilfear níos mó céimeanna de Shonraí Bunscoile Ar Líne in 2015. Tá an feidhmchlár seo á fhorbairt chun go sioncrónóidh sé le bogearraí é a cheannaigh na scoileanna ó sholáthraithe seachtracha. Agus an feidhmchlár curtha i ngníomh go hiomlán cuirfidh sé sonraí ar fáil i gcomhair measúnú cláir agus ceapadh beartais atá bunaithe ar fhianaise.

8.2.3 Forbairt na Sonraí Iarbhunscoile Ar Líne

Rinneadh an bunachar sonraí iarbhunscoile (Sonraí Iarbhunscoile Ar Líne) beo ar fud na hearnála iarbhunscoile go luath in 2014. Reáchtáladh seisiúin eolais maidir le Sonraí Iarbhunscoile Ar Líne le linn na bliana d'úsáideoirí ionchais Shonraí Iarbhunscoile Ar Líne d'fhonn an oiread eolais agus is féidir a chur ar fáil faoin bhfeidhmchlár nua. Lena chois sin bhí an Roinn ag obair le heagraíochtaí bainistíochta scoile agus úsáideoirí Shonraí Iarbhunscoile Ar Líne chun gur féidir leo é a chur i ngníomh agus chun feabhas a chur ar oibriú an fheidhmchláir.

Tá sruthlíniú déanta ar na tuairisceáin bhliantúla Dheireadh Fómhair mar thoradh ar Shonraí Iarbhunscoile Ar Líne a chur i ngníomh. Déantar na sonraí a bhailíochtú nuair a chuirtear isteach iad agus cuirtear deireadh le hobair leantach a dhéanadh an Roinn chun déileáil le lochtanna agus ceisteanna maidir le sonraí scoile. Baineadh úsáid as na sonraí a taifeadadh ar Bhunachar Sonraí Iarbhunscoile Ar Líne in 2014 i leithdháileadh poist mhúinteoireachta agus maoiniú do scoileanna. Roinneadh sonraí scoláirí do chohóirt scrúduithe ag leibhéal an Teastais Shóisearaigh agus na hArdteistiméireachta le Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit chun cabhrú leo na scrúduithe Stáit 2015 a phleanáil agus a eagrú.

8.2.4 Ár gCóras TF a nuashonrú

In 2014 rinneadh roinnt feabhsuithe nach beag ar phárollaí fostaithe scoileanna. Mar chuid den obair seo cuireadh i bhfeidhm Alt 30 den Acht um Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta 2001 le héifeacht ón 28 Eanáir 2014 chomh maith le socruithe saoire bhreoiteachta nua d'fhostaithe scoile le héifeacht ón 1 Meán Fómhair 2014.

Cuireadh SEPA (Limistéar Aonair d'Íocaíochtaí Euro) i bhfeidhm ar phárollaí fostaithe scoile agus ar an gCóras Bainistithe Airgeadais i lár 2014.

8.2.5 Forbairtí TFC eile

Rinneadh an Scéim Oibreacha Samhraidh beo go déanach in 2013. Mar thoradh air seo bhí ar chumas scoileanna iarratas a chur isteach ar dheontais faoin scéim agus grianghraif agus tuairiscí ó innealtóirí a uaslódáil. Feabhsaíodh an córas in 2014 chun a chur ar chumas scoileanna logáil isteach agus torthaí a gcuid iarratas ar dheontais a fheiceáil agus glacadh ar líne le tairiscintí deontais agus le coinníollacha a ghabhann leo.

Cuireadh tús le hobair ar fheidhmchlár soghluaiste a fhorbairt don gcigireacht in 2014 d'fhonn comhthiomsú sonraí ó chigireachtaí a éascú agus na cigirí ag obair leo ón oifig. Reáchtálfar an feidhmchlár seo ar bhonn trialach go déanach in 2015 sula ndéanfar beo é go luath in 2016.

Rinneadh uasghrádú teicniúil ar an inlíon mar réamhobair do thionscadal dá athfhorbairt.

Leanadh den obair ar chur i ngníomh céimneach an VoIP chuig oifigí réigiúnacha nó oifigí áitiúla mar aon le huimhreacha 0761 a chur thabhairt dóibh.

Cuireadh SolarWinds i bhfeidhm chun feabhas a chur ar mhonatóireacht an struchtúir TFC.

Lena chois sin tugadh amach táibléid hibrideacha nó ríomhairí glúine ar bhonn céimneach.

8.2.6 Nuashonrú ar an Suíomh Gréasáin

Le linn na bliana lean an Roinn uirthi ag déanamh athbhreithnithe agus feabhsú ar inneachar an suíomh idirlín. I mí Mheán Fómhair 2004 sheolamar ardán nua do shuíomh gréasáin don tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais. Leis an ardán nua is fusa do thuismitheoirí, scoileanna agus oideachasóirí teacht ar eolas faoin tSeirbhís, ar acmhainní agus ar fhoilseacháin dá cuid.

8.3 Feabhsuithe ar ár gcuid Seirbhísí Dlí Inmheánacha

Chríochnaigh an tAonad Seirbhísí Dlí na *Guidelines on the Legislative Process (Treoirlínte maidir leis an bPróiseas Reachtaíochta)* sa bhliain 2014 agus d'fhoilsigh sé iad. Tá seo ar fáil d'fhoireann na Roinne ar inlíon na Roinne agus tá d'aidhm aige tacú le seachadadh seirbhíse trí eolas a thabhairt do chustaiméirí inmheánacha atá ag obair ar ullmhú reachtaíochta.

8.4 Feabhsuithe ar an bPreasoifig

I gcaitheamh na bliana chuir an Phreasoifig tús le físeáin den Aire agus í ag caint le hiriseoirí ag imeachtaí, a uaslódáil d'fhonn tuiscint ar obair an Aire agus na Roinne araon a mhéadú.

Glacadh cinneadh in 2014 freagraí ón aire ar cheisteanna parlaiminte ó bhéal (PQnna) a fhoilsiú ar líne. Dá réir sin d'obair an Phreasoifig d'fhonn freagraí stairiúla ó 2014 a fhoilsiú. Faoin am seo, foilsíonn sí freagraí laistigh de 36 uaire ó d'eisigh an tAire iad. Tá siad ar fáil ar shuíomh gréasáin na Roinne. In 2014 foilsíodh freagraí ar 289 gceist pharlaiminte.

Rud eile atá nasctha leis seo is ea gur thug an Phreasoifig faoi théacs díospóireachtaí atrátha agus tráthúla maidir le hoideachas a fhoilsiú shuíomh gréasáin na Roinne. Foilsíodh téacsanna 16 díospóireachta in 2014

8.5 Caiteachas na Roinne in 2014

I leithdháileadh buiséid na Roinne do 2014 glacadh san áireamh bearta coigiltis a chinn an Rialtas agus a mheastar a dhéanann coigiltis €33 milliún le linn na bliana. Rinne an leithdháileadh soláthar do ghlanmhéadú 1,400 ar líon múinteoirí áfach, mar fhreagra do bhrú déimeagrafach. Lena chois sin glacadh san áireamh soláthar múinteoirí acmhainne breise mar aon le 390 Cúntóir Riachtanas Speisialta breise. Lena chois sin rinneadh soláthar do thionscnamh a thacóidh le méadú eile ar na scéimeanna leabhair ar cíos chun go bhfreastalófar ar gach bunscoil, ar mhaithe le cur i ngníomh céimneach na Straitéise Náisiúnta Litearthachta agus Uimhearthachta, d'athchóiriú an Teastais Shóisearaigh agus chun leathanbhanda ardluais a chur ar fáil d'iarbhunscoileanna a rinneadh sin. Lena chois sin cuireadh maoiniú a bhí curtha ar leataobh ar fáil do 2,000 áit oiliúna ar a laghad, do dhaoine gan phost faoi bhun 25 bliana, faoi chlár a leanann ar shála an chláir Momentum.

Comhaontaíodh meastachán caiteachais forlíontach €103 milliún don Roinn in 2014 chun freastal ar na costais phinsin mhéadaithe agus ar choigeartú teicniúil caiteachais idir 2013 agus 2014. Tháinig glanchaiteachas vótáilte sealachach €7.941 billiún don bhliain isteach tuairim is €11 milliún faoi bhun an leithdháilte arb é €7.952 bhilliún é, an meastachán forlíontach san áireamh.

Mar chuid de mheastacháin chaiteachas ilbhliantúla don tréimhse 2015-2017 a dhearbhú, chuir an Roinn athbhreithnithe cuimsitheacha ar chaiteachas reatha agus caipitil faoi bhráid na Roinne Caiteachais Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe le linn 2014.

8.6 Monatóireacht ar ár gCórais agus ár bPróisis

Tá an tAonad Iniúchóireachta Inmheánaí ag an Roinn freagrach as cinnteacht a thabhairt don Oifigeach Cuntasaíochta maidir le leordhóthanacht, éifeachtacht agus éifeachtúlacht próisis na Roinne chun riosca a bhainistiú, um chórais rialaithe inmheánaigh agus um rialachas.

Cinntíonn an tAonad um Rialú Airgeadais de chuid Ciste Sóisialta na hEorpa go gcomhlíonann Éire riachtanais rialála an Aontais Eorpaigh i ndáil le hiniúchadh ar Chiste Sóisialta na hEorpa, cuireann sé chun cinn deachleachtas i mbainistiú, rialú agus iniúchadh ar Chiste Sóisialta na hEorpa in Éirinn agus déanann sé deimhin de go ndéantar iniúchtaí de réir caighdeáin iniúchóireachta idirnáisiúnta d'fhonn tuarascálacha ardcháilíochta atá cothrom cóir a chur ar fáil.

Ullmhaítear cláir iniúchóireachta bliantúla faoi choimirce an Choiste Iniúchóireachta agus tuairiscíonn an tAonad Iniúchóireachta Inmheánaí agus Údarás Iniúchóireachta an Chiste Shóisialta araon don gCoiste faoi sheoladh na gclár agus críochnú na dtuarascálacha iniúchóireachta. Críochnaíodh fiche tuarascáil san iomlán in 2014 agus déanann an dá réimse rianú, ar bhonn ráithiúil, ar an dul chun cinn ar chur i ngníomh na moltaí a eascraíonn ó thuarascálacha iniúchóireachta.

8.7 Acmhainní Daonna

Thacaigh Aonad Acmhainní Daonna na Roinne le hathchóiriú na seirbhíse poiblí le linn 2014 ar shlite éagsúla: Coinníodh líon soláthar foirne níos lú, athshannadh baill foirne chuig réimsí ina raibh géarghá leo de réir mar ba ghá, rinneadh nuashonrú ar an gCóras Bainistithe agus Forbartha Feidhmíochta agus ar rialacháin um shaoire breoiteachta, aistríodh feidhmeanna áirithe na nAcmhainní Daonna chuig PeoplePoint agus rinneadh ullmhú chun an fheidhm párolla a aistriú chuig an Lárionad Seirbhísí Roinnte Párolla. Lena chois sin leanadh ar aghaidh leis an bpróiseas pleanála lucht saothair a fhorbairt.

Tháinig laghdú ar líon foirne na Roinne ó tuairim is 1,316 (Coibhéis Lánaimseartha) ag deireadh 2008 sular tugadh isteach an moratóir ar earcaíocht agus ardú céime, go tuairim is 1,200 (Coibhéis lánaimseatha) ag deireadh 2014. Is ionann sin agus laghdú 10% nach mór.

8.7.1 Aistriú Feidhmeanna Acmhainní Daonna chuig PeoplePoint

Bhain an Roinn a cuid spriocanna uile amach in 2014 maidir le haistriú feidhmeanna Acmhainní Daonna trasghníomhaíochta agus pinsin chuig an Lárionad Seirbhíse Roinnte d'Acmhainní Daonna, PeoplePoint i mí Feabhra 2014. Áiríodh air seo sonraí a ullmhú agus faisnéisiú a thabhairt d'fhoireann uile na Roinne faoin tseirbhís nua. Lena chois sin rinne an Roinn athlonnú roinnt bhall foirne chuig obair ag PeoplePoint a éascú.

Tá an Roinn ag obair as láimh a chéile le PeoplePoint ó rinneadh an t-aistriú, d'fhonn an tseirbhís a thugtar a chobhsú agus chun dul i ngleic le bearnaí nó fadhbanna ar bith sa tseirbhís.

Tá athruithe móra tagtha ar sheachadadh seirbhísí Acmhainní Daonna sa Roinn mar thoradh ar an aistriú chuig PeoplePoint agus tá níos mó freagrachta i dtaobh saincheisteanna Acmhainní Daonna tarmligthe ar bainisteoirí líne. A luaithe agus atá an tseirbhís PeoplePoint cobhsaithe díreoidh an tAonad Acmhainní Daonna ar oibríochtaí níos straitéisí, oibríochtaí a bhaineann le pleanáil agus forbairt lucht saothair.

8.7.2 Earcaíocht

Tar éis cead ón Roinn Caiteachais Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe a fháil thosaigh an tAonad Acmhainní Daonna ar phainéil inmheánacha a chur ar bun thar na gráid riaracháin go léir den chéad uair ó tugadh isteach an moratóir ar earcaíocht agus ardú céime. Le linn 2014 cuireadh painéal Príomhoifigigh Chúnta ar bun mar aon le painéal Ardoifigigh Fheidhmiúcháin. Rinneadh pleananna chun painéal Príomhoifigigh agus painéal Oifigigh Fheidhmiúcháin/Fhoirne a bhunú in 2015.

Lena chois sin d'aimsigh an Roinn bearnaí acmhainne criticiúla san Aonad TF. Ar di cead ón Roinn Caiteachais Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe a fháil d'earcaíomar acmhainní TF breise trí chomórtas oscailte.

8.7.3 Beartas maidir le Soghluaisteacht Foirne

Lean an tAonad Acmhainní Daonna air ag éascú soghluaisteacht foirne mar ndearnadh soláthar dó faoin Bheartas Soghluaisteachta Foirne. Rinneadh an Roinn a dícheall má thugtar san áireamh go bhfuil suíomhanna na Roinne scaipthe ar fud na tíre.

8.7.4 Oiliúint agus Forbairt Foirne

Le linn 2014 bhí Aonad Oiliúna agus Forbartha Foirne na Roinne i dteagmháil i gcónaí le baill den bhfoireann agus na bainistíochta chun na riachtanais oiliúna agus forbartha is tábhachtaí a aithint. Bhí roinnt deiseanna oiliúna spriocdhírithe agus sainoiriúnaithe ar fáil don bhfoireann chun freastal ar na riachtanais sin. Cuireadh tuairim is 2,500 lá oiliúna ar fáil i gcaitheamh na bliana.

Soláthraíodh an oiliúint go mór mór in-tí. Díríodh ar réimsí lena n-áirítear bainistiú togra, bainistiú airgeadais, riarachán pinsean, feabhsú próiseas gnó agus Saoráil Faisnéise. Lena chois sin lean an Roinn uirthi ag tabhairt tosaíochta d'oiliúint i mbainistíocht d'fhonn cur lena cumas freastal go cuí ar dhúshláin nua agus ar dhúshláin atá ag teacht chun cinn trí dheiseanna oiliúna a chur ar fáil do bhainisteoirí meánacha agus bainisteoirí sinsearacha. Chun feabhas a chur ar chumarsáid agus rannpháirtiú foirne ar fud na Roinne rinneadh tuilleadh forbartha ar an bhFóram Foirne.

De bhreis air seo cuireadh oiliúint shainoiriúnaithe ar fáil don gCigireacht, don tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais, don Aonad Pleanála agus Tógála agus don Aonad TF, chun freastal ar a gcuid sainriachtanais ghairme agus sainriachtanais oiliúna teicniúla.

Lasmuigh den oiliúint agus forbairt eagraithe a dtugtar cuntas uirthi thuas, lean an Roinn uirthi ag cothú cultúr foghlama trí tacú le bail foirne chun go bhfreastalóidís ar chúrsaí breisoideachais ina gcuid ama féin. Sa chúrsaí seo pléadh réimsí a bhaineann le hobair na Roinne agus leis an tseirbhís phoiblí i gcoitinne. Áiríodh iontu Bainistíocht Straitéiseach, Rialachas, Aistriúchán Gaeilge, Síceolaíocht Oideachais, Acmhainní Daonna, Bainistíocht Phoiblí, Teicneolaíocht Faisnéise, Párolla agus Oideachas.

8.8 Feabhsú ar Phróiseas Gnó

Rinneadh tuilleadh forbartha ar chur chuige struchtúrach i leith próisis ghnó a shruthlíniú agus a fheabhsú. Chuige seo baineadh úsáid as an modheolaíocht Lean Six Sigma um Fheabhsú Próiseas Gnó. Rinneadh ceithre thionscadal nua thar an Roinn san Aonad Tógála, sa Rannóg Ardoideachais, sa Chigireacht agus san Aonad Airgeadais. Cuireadh oiliúint faoi na huirlisí agus teicníochtaí próisis ar na foirne tionscadail ina raibh baill foirne laistigh den aonad gnó lena mbaineann, agus tugadh na scileanna dóibh chun athrú san ionad oibre a bhainistiú. De bhreis air seo fuair baill foirne oiliúint trí thionscadail.

8.9 Pleanáil Ghnó

Tá próiseas pleanála gnó na Roinne ríthábhachtach chun gur féidir linn ár gcuid spriocanna a bhaint amach go tráthúil. Iarrtar ar rannóga gach bliain na tascanna is tábhachtaí don chéad bhliain eile a aithint trí thagairt do dhoiciméid ar nós ár Ráiteas Straitéise, agus pleanáil a dhéanamh chun iad a chur i ngníomh tríd an bpróiseas pleanála gnó. De bhreis ar thascanna ríthábhachtacha a aithint, tugann an próiseas pleanála gnó deis don bhfoireann feabhsú ar phróiseas gnó a bhreithniú a mbíonn éifeachtacht níos mó, éifeachtúlacht níos mó thaobh costais de agus seirbhís custaiméara níos fearr mar thoradh air. Is príomhghnéithe de Phlean um Athchóiriú na Seirbhíse Poiblí de chuid an Rialtais iad seo go léir. Ghlac gach rannóg den Roinn páirt sa phróiseas pleanála gnó do bhliain 2014.

8.10 Forbhreathnú ar Ídiú Fuinnimh na Roinne in 2014 agus Gníomhartha atá Beartaithe i gcomhair 2015

Caitear tuairim is 70% den bhfuinneamh a ídíonn an Roinn inár gcuid oifigí i mBaile Átha Luain agus i mBaile Átha Cliath. Ídítear beagnach 15% i dTulach Mhór agus ídítear an méid atá fágtha sna hoifigí áitiúla agus réigiúnacha. Caitear tuairim is dhá thríú den bhfuinneamh inár gcuid foirgnimh oifige ar sholas, trealamh oifige agus lónadóireacht. Baineann an chuid eile le teas.

Sna táblaí thíos mínítear caiteachas na Roinne ar fhuinneamh in 2014, mar aon le gníomhartha um choigilt fuinnimh ar tugadh fúthu i gcaitheamh na bliana.

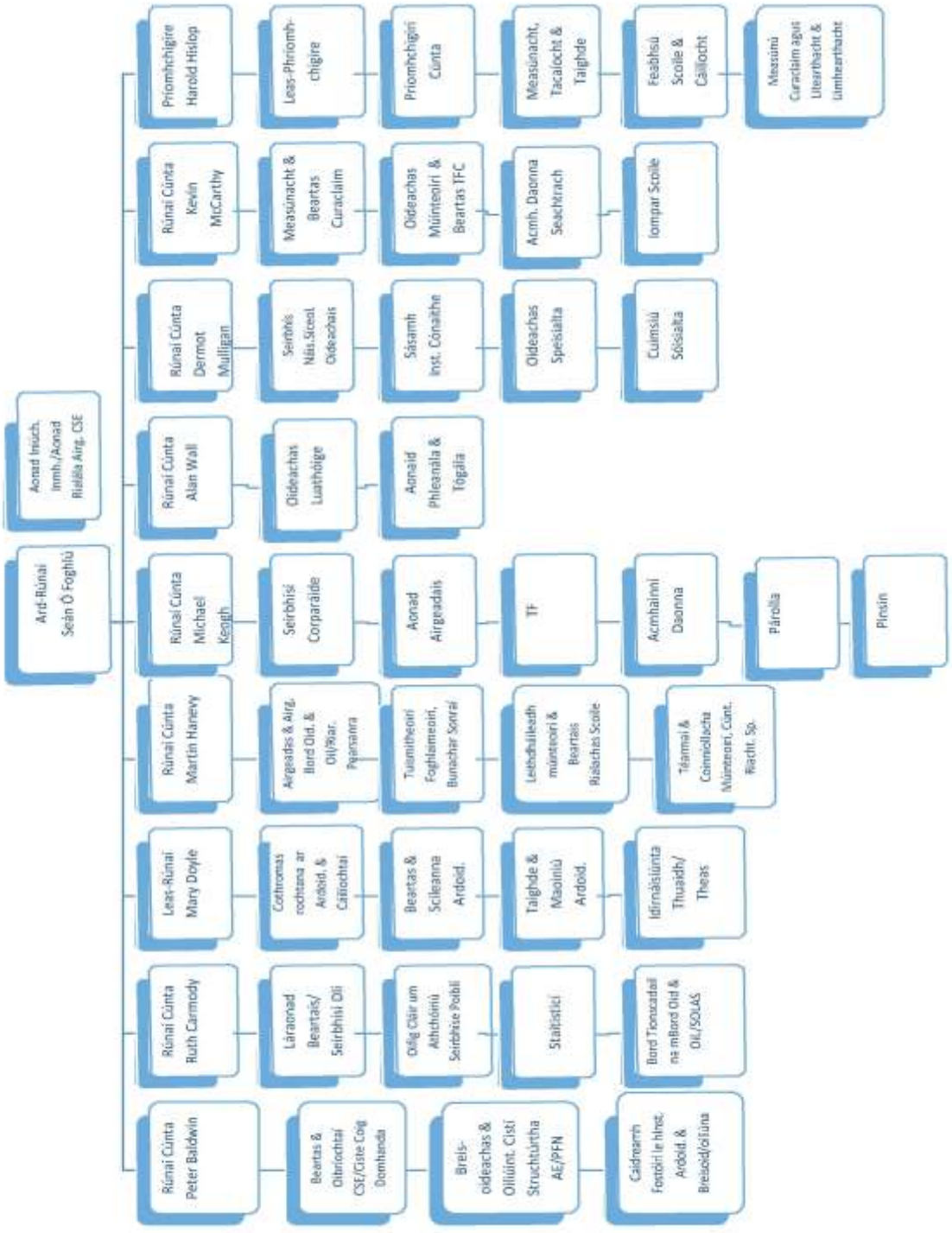
Caiteachas na Roinne ar fhuinneamh in 2014	
Leictreachas	**€432,917**
Gás	**€135,079**

Cáin mhaoine áitiúil agus Ola	**€24,839**
Iomlán	**€592,835 (CBL san áireamh)**

Fuinneamh: Tábla na nGníomhartha a Rinneadh in 2014
• **Bunaíodh Coiste Stiúrtha um Ghníomh i dtaobh Fuinnimh agus tá Beartas um Ghníomh i dtaobh Fuinnimh dréachta mar aon le Pleananna um Ghníomh i dtaobh Fuinnimh don trí phríomhláthair.**
• **Rinneadh measúnachtaí fuinnimh ar an trí phríomhláthair i dTulach Mhóir, Baile Átha Luain agus Baile Átha Cliath.**
• **Seoladh feachtas um fheasacht fuinnimh 'Switch-It-Off' (Múch é) sa roinn agus tá tuilleadh gníomhartha beartaithe againn i gcomhair 2015.**
• **D'fhreastail bainisteoirí áise/fuinnimh ar sheisiúin eolais agus oiliúna a reáchtáil an tÚdarás Fuinnimh Inbhuanaithe Éireann.**
• **Cuireadh roinnt athruithe agus uasghráduithe i bhfeidhm ar an gcineál agus ar an úsáid soilsithe, inslithe, aerchóirithe, coirí uisce te agus téimh i mbaill éagsúla sa Roinn d'fhonn ídiú fuinnimh a laghdú**
• **Uasghrádaíodh an córas soilsithe sa charrchlós faoi thalamh i mBaile Átha Cliath.**
• **Suiteáladh braiteoirí solais sa cheaintín i dTulach Mhór.**
• **Baineadh coirí uisce nach n-úsáidtear ón láthair i mBaile Átha Cliath.**
• **Suiteáladh fo-mhéadar i mBloc 3 i mBaile Átha Cliath.**

Fuinneamh: Tábla na nGníomhartha Beartaithe i gcomhair 2015
• **Caidreamh le hOifig na nOibreacha Poiblí/Foireann Optimising Power at Work de chuid Aramark beartaithe.**
• **Reáchtálfar laethanta feasachta don bhfoireann ar na trí phríomhláthair.**
• **Leanfar den bhfeachtas fuinnimh 'Switch-it-Off'.**
• **Tá oiliúint EnergyMap beartaithe**
• **Tá roinnt uasghráduithe agus athruithe beartaithe d'fhonn ár n-ídiú fuinnimh a laghdú. Áirítear orthu soilsiú níos éifeachtaí ó thaobh fuinnimh de a shuiteáil mar aon le uaineadóirí, balúin simléir, fo-mhéadair agus insliú. Lena chois sin rinneadh athruithe ar shocruithe ríomhairí.**

Aguisín A - Cairt na hEagraíochta - Nollaig 2014



Aguisín B - Forais faoi Choimirce na Roinne

- An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG)
- An Coimisiún chun Mí-úsáid Leanaí a Fhiosrú (CICA)
- Gníomhaireacht Forbartha Ghráinseach Ghormáin (GGDA)
- An tÚdarás Ardoideachais (HEA)
- Léargas - an Biúró Malartaithe
- An Lárionad Náisiúnta um Threoir san Oideachas (NCGE)
- An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta (NCCA)
- An Chomhairle Náisiúnta um Oideachas Speisialta (NCSE)
- Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann [1] (QQI)
- An Bord Sásamh d'Institiúidí Cónaithe (RIRB)
- An Coiste Athbhreithniúcháin d'Institiúidí Cónaithe (RIRC)
- Caranua - Ciste Reachtúil d'Institiúidí Cónaithe (RISF)
- Skillnets Ltd
- SOLAS - An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna
- An Coimisiún Scrúduithe Stáit (SEC)
- An Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta

Tá tuilleadh eolais ar ár gcuid gníomhaireachtaí mar aon le sonraí teagmhála agus sonraí boird ar fáil ar ár suíomh gréasáin www.education.ie tríd an nasc seo a leanas: Gníomhaireachtaí

[1] Bunaíodh Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann (QQI) go déanach in 2012 mar ghníomhaireacht nua chomhtháite chun dul in ionad na Comhairle Dámhachtainí Ardoideachais agus Oiliúna agus Údarás Náisiúnta Cáilíochtaí na hÉireann. Lena chois sinn glacann sé le feidhmeanna Bhord Cáilíochta Ollscoileanna na hÉireann.

Aguisín C – Naisc dhíreacha chuig ár suíomh gréasáin www.education.ie

Faisnéis Staidrimh	http://www.education.ie/ga/Foilseacháin/Staitistic%C3%AD/Staitistic%C3%AD.html
Tuairiscí ón Chigireacht	http://www.education.ie/ga/Foilseacháin/Tuairisc%C3%AD-Cigireachta-Foilseacháin/
Reachtaíocht Oideachais	http://www.education.ie/ga/An-Córas-Oideachais/Reachta%C3%ADocht/Reachta%C3%ADocht-Oideachais.html
Gach Foilseachán	http://www.education.ie/ga/Foilseacháin/
Ciorcláin agus Foirmeacha	http://www.education.ie/ga/Ciorcláin-agus-Foirmeacha/
Oideachas Speisialta	http://www.education.ie/ga/An-Córas-Oideachais/Oideachas-Speisialta/
Dearadh Scoileanna	http://www.education.ie/ga/Dearadh-Scoileana/
Preas agus Imeachtaí	http://www.education.ie/ga/Preas-agus-Imeachta%C3%AD/
Seirbhísí agus Faisnéis do Thuismitheoirí	http://www.education.ie/ga/Tuismitheoir%C3%AD/
An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais	nasc chuig NEPS
Seirbhísí agus Oideachas d'Fhoireann Oideachais	http://www.education.ie/ga/Foireann-Oideachais/
Seirbhísí agus Faisnéis d'Fhoghlaimeoirí	http://www.education.ie/ga/Foghlaimeoir%C3%AD/