





ANNUAL REPORT 2024

INTRODUCTION

The ETBI Annual Report 2024 gives the reader an overview of its initiatives and achievements over the course of the last 12 months. This report also explores the collaboration that took place between ETBI, the 16 member ETBs and other stakeholders all while looking to the future.

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Education and Training
Boards Ireland
*Boird Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Éireann*

FOREWORD

Michael Moegie Maher



In my privileged position as both the President of Education & Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) and the Chairman of Galway & Roscommon ETB (GRETB), I can say with great confidence and truthfulness that the relationship between the 16 ETBs and its representative body, ETBI, is stronger than ever.

I have seen firsthand the immense volume of work and progress that has been done while the two collaborate with one another. We have seen great levels of success and positivity, we have equally been met with challenges that have been tackled head on, as a team with a shared goal of providing excellence in education, care, equality, respect and a sense of community for our learners and staff. I am a firm believer that teamwork divides the workload and multiplies the success.

I would also like to use this Annual Report as an opportunity to thank our close to half a million learners, nationwide. These learners provide the ETBs and ETBI with a collective purpose. This purpose fuels us to ensure that we continue to provide the highest of standards across our community national schools, community hospital schools, community special schools, post primary schools, further education and training as well as youth services.

As we continue on this journey in ETBI, we strive to represent and work in tandem with important stakeholders including government departments, SOLAS and IPB. Navigating this space isn't always easy, but I would like to commend my ETBI colleagues including its members of the board and its forums, its General Secretary Paddy Lavelle and all those working in ETBI who are passionate and dedicated to our learners.

And lastly, a thank you to the ETBs nationwide. Together, in partnership with ETBI, we are showing both nationally and internationally, that we are at the front of educational excellence and will continue to be, playing a significant role in the future of education and training.

Michael Maher



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FOREWORD

Paddy Lavelle

Once again, I am honoured to introduce the ETBI Annual Report to our AGM for 2024.

The ETB sector is a unique one. We educate close to half a million people every year, we employ more than 30,000 members of staff, and we deliver support to government departments in their time of need. We provide 30+ community national schools, 1,000+ learner locations, we are the largest provider of education through the medium of Irish with 48+ scoileanna lán Gaeilge all the while adhering to and promoting our core values; Excellence in education, care, equality, respect and community.

It is with great pride that I say 2024 was another exceptional year for ETBI and the 16 ETBs. As I reminisce on the year just gone, I am reminded of all the activity that took place across our directorates of OSD Internal and External, Schools, including Community National Schools and Post-Primary, Instructional Leadership Programme, as well as Further Education and Training and Youth. These directorates are led by dedicated Directors who have many brilliant colleagues by their side to make the organisation run efficiently and effectively.



As a unit, ETBI continues to thrive. As we build on and expand our relationships with stakeholders, colleagues, government departments and other bodies, we look to the future with great confidence and hope. We are grateful for the funding we receive from the Departments of Education and Youth, Further and Higher Education Research Innovation and Science, Social Protection, Solas, and Tusla.

As I look to the near future for ETBI and the ETBs, I am satisfied that ETBI and its member ETBs will continue to go from strength to strength. I am excited to see what's in store for the coming year. I am looking forward to taking that journey with you all.

Paddy Lavelle





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Structure and Management

Structure

Education and Training Boards Ireland CLG is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in Ireland. The registered office of the charity is Pipers Hill, Kilcullen Road, Naas, Co Kildare, W91 K729, Ireland which is also the principal place of business of the charity.



Management

The ETBI Council is responsible for the preparation of financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and their application, including income and expenditure for the year. The Council is responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud or other irregularities.

The company has a General Secretary that is appointed by the ETBI Council. The General Secretary is responsible and accountable to the ETBI Council for the supervision and control of the administration of the company.

The General Secretary and the Management Team report regularly to the ETBI Council on their delivery of the Strategic Vision. They also manage the company on a day-to-day basis.

The Council examines the major strategic business and operational risks that ETBI faces and confirms that policies, procedures and systems are being continuously refined, in accordance with best practice, to manage and mitigate those risks. The ETBI Finance Audit and Risk Committee meets regularly and reports to the ETBI Council on financial matters relating to the company. The Committee assists the ETBI Council in discharging its internal audit functions, examines and reports to the ETBI Council on risk matters relating to the ETBI Council and the company.



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OSD Highlights



Celebrating People, Partnership, and Potential

As 2024 drew to a close, we marked the final chapter of ETBI's three-year strategic journey, centred on the themes of People, Partnership, and Potential. It was a year of progress, collaboration, and transformation. From internal initiatives to sector-wide events, the Organisation Support and Development (OSD) team played a key role in bringing our strategy to life. Here are some of the highlights from the OSD directorate.

People – Supporting and Celebrating Our Community

ETB Week 2024

Our second ETB Week was a vibrant, week-long celebration that brought the ETB community together to honour the achievements of current and former learners. It was a powerful reminder of the impact ETBs make every day across Ireland. The event, which took place in Thomond Park, Limerick, saw exceptional alumni acknowledged, including the late Vicky Phelan, Jamie Duffy and Paralympian Roisin Ni Riain, as well as the awarding of significant bursaries to current learners. 2024 also saw the initiative win a national PR Award for Excellence, from the Public Relations Consultants Association (PRCA).

National Wellbeing Day

We proudly launched the ETBI Wellbeing Strategy, reinforcing our commitment to mental and physical



health. This initiative supports a culture of care and resilience for everyone in our learning and working environments. We welcomed colleagues from across Ireland to HQ in ETBI to celebrate the launch, including our President Michael 'Moegie' Maher.

Professional Growth Series 2024

This year's series offered a rich programme of learning and development opportunities, encouraging staff to share knowledge, grow professionally, and connect across roles and regions. The team considered this a unique opportunity for colleagues to embrace a knowledge sharing and confidence building space.

ETBI Leadership Programme 2024

A new initiative designed to nurture leadership at all levels. This programme is already helping to shape the next generation of leaders within our organisation.





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OSD Highlights



Partnership – Strengthening Connections Across the Sector

ETBI Annual Conference 2024

A standout event that brought together voices from across the education and training landscape. *Hear My Voice: The Learner in Education & Citizenship* was a space for dialogue, innovation, and shared learning.

An address from Minister Patrick O'Donovan and keynote from former City of Dublin ETB learner Deborah Somorin were conference highlights.

Joint Forum Meetings

These gatherings provided valuable opportunities to reflect on sector-wide challenges and align our collective efforts. One of the outcomes of Joint forums was the identification of adaptive leadership priorities. They continue to be a cornerstone of strategic collaboration.



Public Affairs Strategy Launch

Timed with the 2024 elections, our new strategy has strengthened ETBI's engagement with policymakers and stakeholders, ensuring the sector's voice is heard on the issues that matter most, including FET buildings, DEIS schools, youth work, reconfiguration and more.

This was seen at the Public Affairs Strategy Launch which welcomed a host of TDs and Senators and received significant media coverage.





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Potential – Building for the Future



Transition to a Company Limited by Guarantee

This transition was a major milestone in our governance journey. It ensures that ETBI is well-positioned for the future, with a structure that supports transparency, accountability, and growth.

New Systems Implementation

Core Travel System

The Accounts team streamlined financial processes and improved revenue reporting.

Risk Management System

This process has enhanced our ability to identify and manage risks proactively within the organisation.

Year 3 of the ETBI Communications Strategy

In collaboration with the Communications Steering Committee and Network, we continued to strengthen the profile and appeal of ETBs, as well as building the capacity of our member ETBs through the dedicated certificate in ETB Communications, delivered in partnership with the Public Relations Institute of Ireland.



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Corporate Governance – Staying Accountable and Transparent



Governance

The company is governed by a constitution document. In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the company, an ETBI Council was established and appropriate executive powers delegated to it by the Directors. The affairs of the company are under the supervision of the ETBI Council.

The ETBI Council is comprised of sixteen members in total, constituted as follows:

- Eight persons nominated by the Reserve Members Forum, one of whom is nominated by that Forum to be the Chairperson of the ETBI Council ('President of ETBI'). The Reserve Members Forum is comprised of one nominee from each of the 16-member Education & Training Boards ('ETBs'), having been so nominated by their respective Education and Training Boards.
- Eight persons nominated by the Chief Executive Operational Forum one of whom is nominated by that Forum to be Vice Chairperson of the ETBI Council ('Vice President of ETBI'). The Chief Executive Operational Forum is comprised of the Chief Executives of each of the 16 Member ETBs.



Annual General Meeting

The AGM was a key moment in November 2024 to reflect on the previous year's achievements, to share future plans as well as reaffirming our commitment to good governance with a presentation of the annual accounts.

Looking Ahead

The OSD internal unit can look back with pride when closing its strategic cycle, while looking forward to the next strategy with confidence. The progress that has been made in 2024 reflects the dedication of our people, the strength of our partnerships, and the potential we continue to unlock together as the ETB community. #ETBStrongerTogether.



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OSD Sectoral Highlights



Strengthening Systems, Supporting People:

In 2024, the OSD External Unit at ETBI continued to play a vital role in supporting the operational structure of the sector. Through a number of high-impact conferences and events, the unit brought together professionals from across the country to share knowledge and shape the future of shared services, governance, and sustainability in education. These gatherings reflected a shared commitment to collaboration, continuous improvement, and sector-wide alignment.

ESBS/ETB HR & Payroll Conference: Empowering Teams Through Collaboration & Learning

In March 2024, the Department of Education and Education Shared Business Services (ESBS), in partnership with ETBI, hosted the ESBS/ETB HR & Payroll Conference in Athlone. Themed *Empowering Teams Through Collaboration & Learning*, the event served as a key forum for HR and payroll professionals across the ETB sector.

The conference featured a programme of speakers and sessions, including a forward-looking presentation on the *Future Programme of Work for ESBS* and *The ETB Sector in the Shared Services Environment* by Micheál Lenihan and Jacqui Gaines. Attendees engaged in rich discussions around evolving service models, digital transformation, and the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration in delivering efficient, people-centred services.

The event showcased the critical role of HR and payroll teams in enabling the smooth operation of ETBs and highlighted the value of shared learning in navigating complex operational landscapes.

Legal Updates Day 2024: Supporting School Leaders with Practical Guidance

Between April and May 2024, ETBI's Legal Services Support Unit (LSSU) delivered a series of Legal Updates Days for ETB Principals and Deputy Principals. Held across four regional venues—Dublin, Limerick, Athlone, and Sligo—these sessions provided school leaders with timely, practical legal guidance on key issues affecting school management.

Topics included:

- Admissions, including considerations for special classes
- Code of Behaviour and its implementation
- Managing Parents and navigating complex interactions
- Managing Staff within a legal and procedural framework

The regional format ensured accessibility and strong engagement for those based across the country, with each session capped at 100 participants to allow for meaningful interaction. Feedback from attendees highlighted the value of the sessions in building confidence and clarity around legal responsibilities in school leadership.



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OSD Sectoral Highlights

ESBS/ETBI Finance & Procurement Conference: Shaping the Future Together

In October 2024, the ESBS/ETBI Finance & Procurement Conference brought together finance professionals, procurement leads, and senior stakeholders under the theme *Shaping the Future Together*. Organised by the Department of Education, ESBS, and ETBI, the event provided a strategic platform for exploring the evolving landscape of financial governance and procurement in the ETB sector.

Keynote speakers included:

- **Bernie McNally**, Secretary General, Department of Education
- **Martin Clohessy**, Head of Major Operations, ESBS
- Representatives from Ernst & Young, offering insights on financial best practices
- **Paddy Lavelle**, General Secretary, ETBI

The conference focused on enhancing transparency, accountability, and innovation in financial operations. Sessions explored the integration of digital tools, the importance of data-driven decision-making, and the role of procurement in supporting sustainability and value for money.

ETB/SEAI Climate Action Conference: Empowerment & Opportunities for ETBs

Also in October, the third annual ETB/SEAI Climate Action Conference took place, marking a significant milestone in the sector's sustainability journey. Themed *Empowerment & Opportunities for ETBs*, the event was coordinated by the Climate Action & Sustainability Working Group, which now includes over 60 members from all 16 ETBs.

A major highlight was the unveiling of a proposal for a new Energy Bureau, designed to support ETBs in identifying energy-saving opportunities, prioritising key focus areas, and aligning with the national Climate



Action Mandate 2024. The Bureau will work closely with ETB Energy Officers to drive progress toward ambitious targets: a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and a 50% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030.

Speakers included:

- **Aideen Foley**, Principal Officer, Climate Action and Capital Planning, DFHERIS
- **Karen Whitlow**, Department of Environment and Climate Change
- **Declan Meally**, Director of Business, Public Sector, Regulatory & Transport Sectors, SEAI

The conference reinforced the sector's leadership in climate action and the importance of embedding sustainability into every aspect of ETB operations - from capital planning to curriculum design.

Looking Ahead

Across all events, a common theme emerged: the power of collaboration to drive meaningful change. Whether through legal updates, shared services, financial governance, or climate action, the OSD External Unit's work in 2024 reflected a deep commitment to supporting ETBs in delivering high-quality, future-focused education.

These conferences not only provided practical tools and insights but also fostered a real sense of shared purpose and professional community. As the sector looks ahead to 2025, the foundations laid will continue to support innovation, resilience, and excellence across the OSD landscape.



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FET Highlights



Celebrating Progress and Pathways in FET

The Further Education and Training (FET) sector came together in February 2024 for a vibrant and inspiring two-day conference at the Athlone Springs Hotel. With the theme 'Pathways', the event brought together educators, policymakers, and industry voices to explore the many routes learners can take through the FET system. Anne McHugh, Chief Executive of Donegal ETB, opened the conference, followed by a thought-provoking keynote from Dr. Justin Rami of DCU. The stage was shared by dynamic speakers including Sonya Lennon, Triin Lassi Oige, and David Delaney, each offering fresh perspectives on the evolving FET landscape.

In another exciting development, the iVET module is set to transform Transition Year (TY) by integrating vocational education and training into the senior cycle. Developed in partnership with the NCCA, ETBI, and SOLAS, iVET offers TY students hands-on experiences in fields like mechanics, culinary arts, and health and beauty. This initiative builds on existing collaborations between schools and FET providers, addressing previous challenges through a flexible, student-centred approach. With the module's publication expected in January 2025, schools and ETBs are gearing up for increased engagement in the 2025/26 academic year.

Supporting the professional growth of FET staff remains a cornerstone of ETBI's work. The Professional Learning & Development (PL&D) Hub, funded by SOLAS, continues to drive capacity-building across all 16 ETBs. In 2024, a national Skills Needs Analysis survey—developed through a collaborative 'Think Tank' workshop—helped shape the year's learning priorities. Monthly themed



webinars, all recorded and accessible via ETBI's Digital Library, ensured staff across the country could engage with relevant, high-quality training.

Bespoke programmes addressed emerging needs, with topics ranging from AI in education and sustainability to voter education and universal design. The PL&D Hub also plays a key role in advancing FET Guidance, both nationally and across Europe, through its involvement in the Euroguidance network.

The Academia Mobility Study Visits offered guidance professionals the chance to learn from peers across Europe. Coordinated by ETBI, these short-term exchanges fostered international collaboration and brought fresh ideas back to Ireland's FET sector.





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FET Highlights



Fostering Inclusion, Guidance, and Wellbeing in FET:

In October 2024, the FET sector gathered at the Athlone Springs Hotel for *Euroguidance: A New Era*, an event that brought a European lens to guidance practice. With over 90 professionals in attendance, the day featured insights from the Department of Education, QQI, and Euroguidance representatives from Latvia, Estonia, and Sweden—strengthening international connections and broadening perspectives.

Inclusion remained a key focus throughout the year. The Wider Benefits of Learning project highlighted the personal and social growth learners experience in FET—such as confidence, resilience, and emotional intelligence. Piloted across eight ETBs and involving over 800 learners, the initiative was shaped by extensive collaboration and supported by a dedicated microsite. The next phase aims to expand access to all 16 ETBs.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) also advanced significantly. ETBI played a leading role in the VPL Biennale, an international event with 370 attendees from 31 countries. Irish FET voices featured prominently, including a joint presentation with Finnish partners on inclusion through RPL. This engagement led to the creation of a new FET-specific RPL Network, launched in



November, and continued contributions to the national RPL Practitioners Network.

Mental health and wellbeing were championed through the FET Learner Mental Health Accreditation, launched on World Mental Health Day 2023. Thirty-six initiatives were recognised for promoting positive mental health, with a showcase at the 2024 FET Conference. A microsite now shares best practices, and the 2024 edition expanded to include Tier 2 initiatives, supported by a themed webinar and contributions from psychologists and awardees.

ETBI also promoted civic engagement through an Active Citizenship and Voter Education webinar in April 2024. Ahead of the local and European elections, four regional training sessions equipped tutors to deliver the DALC Voter Education course, helping learners make informed choices and engage in democratic life.

The Consistent Learner Support Framework, launched in July 2024 in partnership with SOLAS, offers a unified approach to enhancing learner support across FET. This online resource aims to ensure a consistent, high-quality experience for all learners.



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

FET Highlights



A new ETBI–LGMA protocol strengthened collaboration between ETBs and libraries. A revised Migrant Eligibility for FET resource was released to ensure clarity and consistency. ETBI hosted impactful EDI seminars and contributed to national and international conferences. The FET Skills Box Project, launched in April, reached all 727 secondary schools, promoting FET career pathways through vibrant, sector-informed materials. These initiatives reflect ETBI's commitment to equity, opportunity, and learner-centred progress across the education landscape.

In 2024, ETBI continued to enhance visibility and access to FET opportunities. The ETBI Digital Library was updated to host all FET Skills Box career charts and programme details, now mobile-optimised for ease of access. The Operational Guidelines for Onward Grant Providers were revised through a sector-wide working group, with a final draft issued for stakeholder feedback. ETBI's presence at major national events—World Skills Ireland, the National Ploughing Championships, and Higher Options—helped promote FET to thousands of students, parents, and educators.

The Future Building Skills unit led initiatives like the Construction Apprenticeship Careers Fair and a Women in Construction event in Galway, empowering women to explore careers in the sector. These efforts, alongside ongoing collaboration with DSP and CIF, reflect ETBI's commitment to inclusive, accessible, and future-focused education and career pathways.



Looking Ahead

Building on the momentum of 2024, the FET sector is set for continued innovation, inclusion, and impact in the year ahead. The rollout of the iVET module in TY promises to deepen school - FET collaboration, while the expansion of the Consistent Learner Support Framework will enhance learner experiences nationwide. Professional development remains a priority, with the PL&D Hub set to explore emerging themes like AI and sustainability.

Inclusion, guidance, and civic engagement will continue to shape national and European partnerships. With a strong foundation and a shared vision, FET is ready to chart new pathways that empower learners and strengthen communities.





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Instructional Leadership Programme

Empowering Educators, Enriching Learning

2024 was a year of reflection, renewal, and progress for the Instructional Leadership Programme (ILP). As a professional learning initiative, ILP continues to support educators across primary, post-primary, and further education in enhancing teaching and learning. At its very core, the programme is about empowering its teachers to reflect deeply on their practice, refine their instructional strategies, and enrich the learning experiences of their students.

Vision in Action

The ILP is grounded in a mission:

- To nurture reflective practice among teachers
- To encourage intentional, evidence-informed instructional choices
- To deepen understanding of how teacher actions influence student engagement and achievement
- To support inclusive, motivating, and safe learning environments
- To promote awareness of diverse learning needs and styles
- To strengthen classroom management and its student-teacher relationships
- To foster a culture of continuous review and improvement at all levels—individual, departmental, and whole-school

In December 2023, the ILP National Steering Committee launched a new Strategic Plan for 2023–2026, setting out five priorities to guide the programme's development. These include:

1. Sustainable Delivery of the ILP
2. Support Structures for Graduate Schools and Teacher Leaders
3. Research and Evaluation to inform and improve practice
4. National and International Partnerships
5. Professional Learning Opportunities for school and teacher leaders

The full plan can be seen at
www.instructionalleadership.ie.



Sharing 'Our Story' on the Global Stage

In January, ILP was featured at the 37th International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI) at Trinity College. This allowed ILP to share its journey with international researchers and educators.



Farewell to Professor Barrie Bennett

March saw the long-standing collaboration with Professor Barrie Bennett come to a close. After 16 years of extraordinary contribution, Barrie retired. A heartfelt celebration was held on March 8th, with messages of appreciation from An Tánaiste Micheál Martin and Minister for Education Norma Foley. His legacy will continue to shape the programme.



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Instructional Leadership Programme



Welcoming New Graduates and New Beginnings

- Cohort 15 graduated in March, representing a diverse group of school and teacher leaders from across the post-primary sector.
- In November, Cohort 16 began their journey, the first to be facilitated by Dr. Rebecca Saunders of Mary Immaculate College. This new phase includes a focus on leading educational change and Tribes, a framework that promotes collaborative, respectful, and emotionally supportive learning environments.

Supporting Primary Education

ILP was excited to expand its work in the primary sector with the launch of *Eochair – The Key to Happy, Active, and Inclusive Learning*. Facilitated by Sandra Larkin and Linda O'Meara, this summer course supported teachers in implementing the new primary curriculum and was delivered through the Limerick Education Centre.

International Collaboration: Lasair

In partnership with NAPD and DRUŠTVO RAVNATELJ (Slovenia), ILP secured Léargas KA210-SCH funding to

develop Lasair, a professional learning programme for senior school leaders.

- In January, it welcomed our Slovenian colleagues to Cork.
- In May, ILP representatives visited schools and the National School of Leadership in Slovenia.
- Lasair was piloted with 12 schools between March and May, with stakeholder events held in September and December.

Peer Instructional Conferencing and Coaching

Cohort 2, facilitated by Dr. Rebecca Saunders, began in October. This programme equips teachers with coaching skills to support peer learning and sustained professional growth. Sessions 2 and 3 have been scheduled for 2025.

Research and Reflection

ILP launched a Research Plan to guide data collection and evaluation across key areas, including Professional Reflection and Lasair. This work is already informing our understanding of impact and guiding future development.

Looking Ahead

This report reflects the dedication, innovation, and collaboration that define the ILP community.

As ILP moves into 2025, it will remain focused on deepening its impact, expanding its reach, and supporting educators in their vital work as instructional leaders.





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Schools Directorate: Community National Schools (CNS) and ETB Patronage



In 2024, the CNS Directorate continued to advance the distinct identity and inclusive ethos of ETB schools nationwide. Through a range of strategic initiatives, the Directorate supported the growth and development of both primary and post-primary schools under ETB patronage, ensuring alignment with the values of inclusion, diversity, and learner-centred education.

Curriculum Innovation: Identity Multi-Belief and Values Education (IMBVE)

Following the successful 2023 pilot of the Identity Multi-Belief and Values Education (IMBVE) curriculum in 44 ETB post-primary schools, 2024 saw its expansion to an additional 62 schools. IMBVE represents the first curricular expression of ETB ethos at post-primary level, engaging students in three key areas:

- Exploring Our Values
- Fostering Identity and Belonging
- Appreciating Diversity of Religions and Beliefs

The curriculum is supported through a blend of in-person training, online webinars, and comprehensive

"IMBVE has been a missing component in many ETB schools. It truly meets the needs of our diverse student communities."

- IMBVE Teacher

"With 20 nationalities in our school, IMBVE allows students to understand and appreciate different perspectives, shaping more rounded individuals."

- IMBVE Principal

teaching resources. By September 2025, 89 ETB post-primary schools are expected to be delivering IMBVE, with further growth anticipated over the next five years.

Primary Curriculum Support: Goodness Me, Goodness You! (GMGY)

The GMGY curriculum, in place since 2018, continues to be a cornerstone of values-based education in ETB primary and special schools. In 2024, ETBI enhanced its support for GMGY through:

- Induction programmes for new staff
- School-based visits and training
- A middle leaders' community of practice

A significant milestone was the development of new support materials to promote inclusive teaching approaches within GMGY. Additionally, a 20-hour summer course titled *Enhancing Learning and Teaching in GMGY*.



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Schools Directorate: Community National Schools (CNS) and ETB Patronage

Building Capacity: Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Engagement

ETBI's commitment to embedding ethos and patrons' curricula begins at the earliest stages of teacher preparation. In 2024, the CNS and Patronage Team engaged with approximately 1,000 student teachers across seven ITE institutions, including:

- Atlantic Technological University – Sligo
- Dublin City University
- Hibernia College
- Marino Institute of Education
- Mary Immaculate College – Limerick and Thurles
- University of Limerick

The most strategic development in this area was the continued work on the Framework for the Recognition of Certification to Teach Ethical, Multi-Belief and Values Education Patrons' Curricula. Developed in partnership with Educate Together and in collaboration with all five primary ITE providers, this framework—set to launch in 2025—will enable pre-service teachers to be certified to teach patrons' curricula in both Community National and Educate Together schools. This marks a significant step toward parity in teacher preparation across school types.



Supporting School Leaders: CNS and CSS Leadership Networks

Community of Practice for School Leaders

With 32 Community National Schools and 9 Community Special Schools (CSS) now operating under ETB patronage, ETBI continues to support school leaders through a dedicated Community of Practice. In 2024, eight online meetings were held, offering:

- Expert inputs from organisations such as OIDE, IPPN, the Inspectorate, and NCCA
- Peer-led discussions in breakout rooms tailored to school context (e.g., administrative principals, teaching principals, special school leaders)
- Opportunities to share best practices and build leadership capacity
- Addressing Administrative Challenges

In response to feedback from CNS and CSS Principals regarding administrative burdens that they face, the schools team undertook a consultation process with school leaders and ETB head office staff. As a result, a series of practical solutions were approved by the Chief Executive Forum. These changes streamline governance processes while maintaining compliance with ETB frameworks, particularly benefiting principals with full-time teaching responsibilities and are considered, "teaching principals".



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Schools Directorate: Community National Schools (CNS) and ETB Patronage



Additionally, ETBI remains committed to supporting the Department of Education's planned national survey of parents (ages 0–12) to assess demand for multi-denominational schooling. The expansion of Community National Schools continues to be a strategic priority for the sector.

This work reflects a deep commitment to inclusive, values-based education that is responsive to the needs of diverse school communities. From curriculum innovation to leadership support and teacher preparation, the Directorate continues to shape a future where ETB schools are recognised for their distinctive ethos and educational excellence.

Leadership Development: CNS Principals and Deputy Principals' Conference

A key professional learning highlight in 2024 was the CNS Principals and Deputy Principals' Conference. Building on the monthly online Community of Practice meetings, the in-person event provided a valuable space for school leaders where they were able to engage with national policy updates, share leadership strategies, and strengthen collaboration across the ETB network. The conference underscored the importance of collective leadership in developing inclusive, high-quality education.



Looking Ahead

The CNS Directorate is set to build on 2024's progress with several exciting developments in 2025, including:

- The official launch of the IMBVE specification
- New Patrons' Curricula Teacher Handbooks for GMGY and IMBVE
- An eLearning module to support ETB staff in affirming social, racial, and ethnic diversity, developed by Dr Anne Marie Kavanagh (DCU)





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Schools Post Primary Directorate



The Post Primary Schools directorate of ETBI continued to advance its mission in 2024 by fostering leadership, collaboration, and inclusive education across the post-primary sector.

The team undertook a series of impactful events and initiatives throughout the year which supported the professional growth of school leaders and educators, while promoting innovation and inclusivity in teaching and learning.

Principals & Deputy Principals Conference

The year kicked off with the much-anticipated Principals and Deputy Principals Conference, which took place over two days in February and saw the attendance of Minister for Further and Higher Education, Patrick O'Donovan.

Key themes included leadership in a changing educational landscape, digital transformation, and student wellbeing.

The conference also provided a valuable platform for networking and peer support, reinforcing the collaborative ethos of the ETB sector. We were delighted to welcome keynote speaker and author Dr Katriona O'Sullivan, who passionately spoke to delegates about how they can make a change to a child's life. Other speakers included the Ombudsman for Children Niall Muldoon and Prof Selina McCoy, Associate Research Professor ESRI. The evening closed with a performance from Music Generation with the Ukrainian Ambassador to Ireland in attendance as a guest.

Newly Appointed Principals & Deputy Principals Seminar

In March, the Directorate hosted a dedicated induction seminar for newly appointed Principals and Deputy Principals. This one-day event focused on equipping new leaders with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to navigate their roles effectively. Sessions covered governance, leadership for learning, and the unique values of the ETB sector.

ETBI Summer School for Middle Leaders



The ETBI Summer School for Middle Leaders continues to be a highlight of the professional learning calendar. Designed to empower aspiring and current middle leaders, the programme offered workshops on instructional leadership, team development, and leading change. Participants engaged in reflective practice and collaborative learning, strengthening their capacity to lead within their schools and contribute to whole-school improvement. A keynote from Dr Colman Noctor, *Leading from the middle* and another from Professor Patricia Mannix McNamara were cited as highlights for delegates.



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Schools Post Primary Directorate

SPRAOI'24

Bringing Fun to Irish Language Learning Nationwide



ETBI launched Spraoi'24, a dynamic national campaign designed to celebrate and promote the Irish language across ETB post-primary schools. The initiative brought the language to life through creative, inclusive, and engaging activities that encouraged every student to participate, regardless of their Irish proficiency or school type.

Supported by An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) and Gaeloideachas, Spraoi'24 ran from September to December 2024, featuring a diverse range of competitions including Seanchaí sa Teach (Storytelling), Béal gan Stad (Commentary), and Na Teagascóirí Tiomanta (Rap/Songwriting). School-wide initiatives such as Ár dTeanga, Ár Scoil, Ár ndualgas and Ár Scoil mar Ambasadóir na Gaeilge further encouraged students to promote Irish within their schools and local communities.

Broadcaster Máire Treasa Ní Dhubhghaill, an ETB Hero and well-known presenter with TG4 and RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta, served as the campaign's ambassador, inspiring students to engage with Gaeilge in new and exciting ways.

Leading Inclusive Special Education: Provision Mapping Showcase

A significant milestone in inclusive education was marked by the *Leading Inclusive Special Education: Provision Mapping Showcase*. This event highlighted the work of schools in developing and implementing



provision maps to support students with additional needs. The showcase demonstrated the sector's commitment to inclusive practices, collaborative planning, and data-informed decision-making. It also provided a forum for sharing successful models and strategies that can be scaled across the system.

Deputy Principals' Network

ETBI in partnership with Oide, held a year-long structured programme for established deputy principals. Through this programme, participants were asked to reflect on leadership to enhance their own learning and learn through collaboration with peers.

Looking Ahead

In reflection of 2024, the Schools Post Primary Directorate remains proud of the collective achievements across the ETB sector. Through leadership development, inclusive practice, and a shared commitment to student success, it will continue to build a dynamic and responsive post-primary education system. Collectively, we look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead, guided by our core values of excellence, equality, care, respect and community.



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Youth Services Highlights



Youth Services Directorate 2024

The Youth Work function of Education and Training Boards is grounded in the responsibility to “*support the provision, coordination, administration and assessment of youth work.*” Since 2013, ETBI and the 16 member ETBs have played a central role in enhancing the personal and social development of young people across Ireland.

In 2024, the Youth Services Directorate marked a year of significant progression and innovation, underscored by the launch of *Opportunities for Youth: The National Strategy for Youth Work and Related Services 2024–2028*. This is the first national youth work strategy since 2003 to explicitly recognise the role of ETBs, reaffirming their importance in the youth work landscape.

Launch of Opportunities for Youth (2024–2028)

A landmark strategy that sets the direction for youth work and related services over the next four years.

Youth Work Matters Conference

ETBI hosted its inaugural national youth work conference, creating a platform to showcase the collaborative efforts between ETBs and youth work services in delivering improved outcomes for young people. Green Party TD and Chair of the Children’s Committee Patrick Costello TD addressed delegates at the event in Thomond Park.

Funding and Investment

In line with their statutory functions, ETBs administered a total of €53.8 million in youth work funding in 2024. This funding supported a wide range of programmes



and initiatives across the country. This funding is spread accordingly amongst:

- UBU Your Space Your Place
- Local Youth Club Grant Scheme
- Youth Information Centres
- Integration Fund
- Targeted Youth Employability Scheme
- Resilience & Effectiveness

Opportunities for Youth: Strategic Themes in Action

The implementation of *Opportunities for Youth* is already underway, with several innovative projects aligned to the strategy’s key policy themes.

Promoting Mental and Social Wellbeing

- In Sync Youth and Family Services (KWETB): Delivered the *Asking For It* workshop, led by youth facilitators, to challenge rape culture and promote gender respect.
- Foróige Croom (LCETB): *Sailing into Wellness* engaged over 20 young people in therapeutic sailing experiences to build resilience and teamwork.

Supporting Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

- Midlands YWI (LWETB): This relationship-based programme for 15–24-year-olds focused on personal development and vocational skills. Since June 2024, 31 young people participated, with 5 progressing to education or employment.



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Youth Services Highlights



Inclusion, Outreach and Intercultural Approaches

- Poppintree (CDETB): Engaged hard-to-reach young men through cross-border cultural exchanges and the *New Island Initiative*.
- Involve (MSLETB): Supported young Traveller men through culturally affirming activities, including traditional wagon-building, promoting pride and inclusion.

Participation in Arts, Culture and Outdoor Recreation

- Mullingar Youth Project (LWETB): Partnered with Grange United FC to engage at-risk youth through football, leading to infrastructure development and community leadership.
- Rialto Youth Project (CDETB): *Boys in the Making* used creative arts to explore masculinity and identity through storytelling.

Youth Civic Engagement and Volunteering

- Clare Youth Service (LCETB): Delivered a leadership programme for 16–18-year-olds, culminating in youth-led summer camps and ongoing community volunteering.



The Digital Environment

- Foróige (MSLETB): *Winter Lights 2024* showcased youth-created digital art in Ballina, in collaboration with special education and inclusion groups.

Information and Misinformation

- Bradóg Youth Service (CDETB): Developed the *Grooming Awareness Programme (GAP)*, an educational board game on criminal exploitation.
- Youth Information YWI Tipperary (TETB): Delivered media literacy training to combat misinformation.
- Foróige (MSLETB): Launched *What's the Panic About Vaping?*, a youth-led research and video campaign.

Looking Ahead

As we reflect on a year of renewed strategic direction and impactful youth engagement, ETBI remains committed to supporting inclusive, innovative, and responsive youth work across Ireland alongside the 16 ETBs. Through continued collaboration with ETBs and youth services, we will build on the momentum of 2024 to ensure that all young people are empowered to thrive in their communities.



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