



Annual Report 2006

National Parents Council Primary



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Chairperson's Foreword

This Annual Report and Yearbook marks a very special and historic moment in the life of NPC. We look back with pride at 21 years of achievement, and look forward to a new and even stronger phase in the development of our organisation.

This year, we celebrate the past by looking to the future. We reflect on what we have achieved thus far, but we also want to move on, and create a new vision that fits with the needs of a new generation of parents. NPC is an established organisation, and established organisations have different needs from pioneering ones.

We have spent time, thinking, discussing and planning a strategy for shaping our organisation for this new generation. The diversity that is a mark of Irish society in 2007 brings new challenges and opportunities for NPC. In this, the year of Equal Opportunity for All, the Strategic Plan is aimed at finding new and creative ways of ensuring that every parent and every community of parents has the opportunity to be part of NPC. As a parent from Monaghan, I particularly look forward to the possibilities for closer and fruitful links with parents from Northern Ireland as part of our next phase of development.

Our vision and future plan has been worked out through discussion and consultation with parents in every county, and because it is built on the rich inputs from parents, it will succeed. We have much to offer to Irish education. When our commitment to children guides our future development, we are bound to succeed. The reward will be a strong organisation, with members and staff and hundreds of thousands of parents going forward together, confident that we are serving the needs of the parents, schools and children of Ireland as well as we can.

The hard work and dedication of thousands of parents working at every level of the organisation has helped us achieve what we celebrate today. I would like to thank the national executive for their generous voluntary work, not only at national level but in their counties and schools. The officer board has worked as a team with NPC chief executive and staff. I am proud of their achievements and thank them for their support over many precious weekends and evenings. We all greatly value the professional service given by our dedicated staff.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to warmly express my appreciation of our outgoing chief executive Fionnuala Kilfeather. Fionnuala has, over the 21 years since NPC was established, made a notable contribution to the shape of Irish education and to the success of NPC. We all wish her well for her future.

Francis Linden
Chairperson



Introduction

When National Parents Council was first established, there was hope and excitement about what could be achieved. The founding parents had the vision for an Ireland where, as parents, we would speak about our wishes and our dreams for our children, and be listened to; an Ireland where, because of our constitutional role, our moral obligation to our children, and our stake in their future, which is greater than the stake of any other group, except the children themselves, we would take our rightful place at the table where decisions are made that affect those children.

Over the past 21 years, National Parents Council Primary (NPC) has established itself as a body that speaks on behalf of parents with thoughtful, well debated, well researched ideas. NPC has proved itself to be capable of bringing forward new ideas, defending them, and of not being afraid to take an unpopular position with the educational establishment, when the wishes and interests of children and parents demanded that.

Over the past 21 years, many thousands of parents have invested energy and commitment in playing their essential role in their children's learning, in their children's schools, and in the educational life of the country, at national level. We have worked in a spirit of partnership and respect for other parties in education. Of the many things that NPC can take pride in as we reflect on the past and plan for the future, one of them has been the fact that we have worked always in a spirit of respectful listening to others, linked with a strong commitment to what is best for children.

That partnership is now enshrined in law, but we take nothing for granted. The language of partnership could all too easily become empty of meaning if it did not have the full and active commitment of all the partners. Today, we warmly acknowledge the fact that our Partners in Education share with us the task of making the most of the huge and positive potential of parents in the educational life of children.

However, a great deal has changed in the 21 years since NPC was established. Even by looking around, as we walk down a street anywhere in Ireland, we can see a picture of Irish society that is new and exciting. Most people are better off, most women are working outside the home, family structures are not as they were, and there is a growing diversity of culture and belief evident. Another reality is that housing costs and lack of planning mean that many young parents spend long hours travelling to work, childcare is a constant worry and significant expense. Running parallel with the new prosperity there is dangerous and growing inequity for some of our people.

These changes set the context for how we will give best service to parents as we modernise our own organisation. We now look forward with a sense of purpose as we adopt a strategy for the future.

This publication is divided into three sections the past, present, and strategy for the future of NPC.

The publication reflects through its design the innovative and changing dynamic of National Parents Council Primary.

Fionnuala Kilfeather
Chief Executive

Modernising NPC and making it easier for parents to get involved

Over a period of several years there has been very wide consultation with parents on how the organisation could best meet their needs. This work formed a substantial part of the work of the national executive and staff over the past year.

Alongside this organisational change the chairperson, board, chief executive and staff have worked intensively to ensure that the internal working of the organisation will meet the highest governance and management standards.

In December delegates, at a specially convened meeting, voted for the new structures proposed by the national executive. The national executive established an implementation group to develop a plan to introduce changes. This group worked tirelessly to a tight schedule and the national executive adopted, as a working plan, the detailed strategic plan proposed by the group. The strategic plan forms part of this publication and only an outline is included here;

- **Making NPC accessible to a much wider range of parents**

In addition to affiliation for parent associations in primary schools and early education settings, we will offer associate membership to individual parents and others interested in children and education.

- **Having flexible ways of working at local level**

Many of our county branches are finding it increasingly difficult to operate as small units, relying as they do on voluntary work. We will now offer counties flexibility to operate as a county branch or to join with other county branches to form a regional branch.

- **Focussing on educational issues – a parent and child agenda**

An education policy-making Assembly, will have informed debate and regular consultation with parents. The Assembly will meet several times a year in order to progress the educational agenda for parents.

Every NPC branch may have two representatives on the Assembly. There will be a reserved place for parents of children attending: Irish medium schools; special schools; minority religion schools and children with special needs who are attending mainstream schools.

- **Governance**

The members of the Assembly will elect a small board of directors. As in any company, the board will be responsible for governance and compliance with legal requirements.

- **Stressing the importance of getting back to the grass roots – the parents**

Networking/interest groups/forums/consultation/conferences will be encouraged and supported at national and local level.

“Times have changed-we [parents] really do have a legal role in the school”

NPC services- responding to the needs of parents

NPC services are aimed at empowering parents so that they can support their children in all aspects of education. We also support lifelong learning in parents themselves.

The service includes a help and information line, an education and training programme and a website for parents.

NPC help and information

The NPC helpline is a confidential service for parents. The helpline officers listen, and give information and support to parents to help them make the best possible decisions for and with their children.

In the past year:

- There were over 3,500 helpline calls to the office
- One in six calls were from fathers – an increase from previous years.
- Where possible callers were assisted to resolve problems at school level.
- Where necessary parents were assisted to refer problems to the Ombudsman for Children, the Ombudsman, Department of Education and Science, the National Educational Welfare Board, Barnardos, National Centre for Technology in Education etc.
- The service was expanded - a new helpline officer, Carmel O'Shea, joined Mary Killeen last September.

“It's great to have someone to help me. I had no idea what I could do.”

What the calls were about

Most frequent calls were about bullying behaviour in the school by adults or by children.

Other calls included:

- Safety and supervision of children before and after school and during break times
- Failure of principals and boards to act, for example, on bullying in the school or on a teacher's attitude to a child
- Non-attendance at school because of suspensions, refusal to enrol and for some children fear of bullying behaviour at school
- Difficulties in finding a school place and of accessing resources for children with special educational needs
- Role and responsibilities of boards and parents representatives
- Confusion over funding and fundraising
- Failure to recognise the role and responsibility of a parent association as defined in the Education Act 1998
- Lack of communication between school and parents
- Failure to implement the full curriculum, for example, RSE and Stay Safe programmes, PE, and the English curriculum in some scoileanna lán Gaeilge
- Role of the class teacher where an outside specialist is employed to teach the class
- Parents being put under pressure to pay fees for the curriculum, for example, PE, drama, swimming, dancing

- Provision for children from other traditions during class time spent on preparation for sacraments
- Information about all aspects of children's education and rights.

NPC Training and Development

The NPC training and development programme is a national programme of training, development and support for parents. The purpose is to empower parents to play an active part in their children's education at every level.

In the past year:

- Over 3000 parents participated in NPC training
- Almost 9000 hours of training were delivered
- Training programmes were run in 28 different centres covering every county
- One in every five participants was a father
- 24 trainers delivered NPC programmes countrywide

Skill updating courses for trainers are held annually.

Specialised training was held for the trainers delivering the Special Needs Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme.

NPC programmes are continuously evaluated and a plan is in place for an external evaluation.

The Training and Development Service is funded by the Teacher Education Section of the Department of Education and Science.

The Relationships and Sexuality Education training programme is funded by the Crisis Pregnancy Agency.

NPC website

The first NPC website was launched in 1997. Our website has served us well in providing useful information for parents and offering them opportunities to give us their views. However, recognising that technology has advanced and that parents now have far more access to new technologies; plans are well advanced to launch a bright new parent-friendly website. You will find information linked to this report on www.npc.ie.

Recent publications

A series of leaflets on upcoming NPC training and development opportunities for parents was sent to all schools.

Two editions of 'Newsbrief', the NPC newsletter for parents, were posted to parents in all primary schools with further copies distributed through county branches. Additional copies can be ordered or downloaded.

Newsbrief as Gaeilge is downloadable from the NPC website and can also be ordered by ringing the office.

A regular 'National Report' to update parents on what is happening in NPC, and in education and child related topics, is circulated through the members of the national executive to county branches.

The Annual Report and Audited Accounts are sent to all members and widely distributed.

NPC Guidelines for Parent Associations have been translated into Irish and are awaiting the approval of the Minister before going to print.

This publication with 'wrap-around' strategic plan is being distributed widely and through every school to parent associations.

“The trainer made us all feel so welcome.”

Training and Development programmes for parents and teachers in 2006

For individual parents at school and community level	<p>Relationship and sexuality education (RSE) and your child</p> <p>Relationship and sexuality education for parents of children with special needs</p> <p>Early learning starting school</p> <p>Transition from primary to post primary school</p> <p>Information evening on role and responsibility of a school board (in preparation for new boards in November 2007)</p> <p>Workshops on education and positive home school partnership for Traveller mothers and daughters</p> <p>Public lecture series</p>
Parent associations	<p>Training for parent associations in individual schools</p> <p>Training for clusters of parent associations at county level</p>
Parents and school boards	<p>Training for parent representatives on boards of management</p>
County branch members	<p>Organisational training</p>
NPC board members	<p>Induction, governance, role and responsibility of a board</p>
Student teachers - Marino Institute of Education and Froebel College of Education	<p>Workshops on home school partnership</p>
Other work with partners - National Council for Curriculum and Assessment	<p>Focus groups for parents on curriculum/information for parents</p>
Pavee Point	<p>Working with Traveller families</p>
Children First Programme	<p>Child protection issues</p>
Busy Bodies Programme	<p>RSE</p>
Crisis Pregnancy Agency	<p>RSE</p>
Child Care Committees	<p>Information about NPC</p>
National Educational Psychological Service	<p>Information for parents</p>

NPC ‘out and about’

Examples of activities throughout the past year:

Public lecture series

‘A Special Education Journey’ series of lectures planned in consultation with parents of children with special needs was run in counties Laois and Longford.

‘How to recognise a child with special needs’

- Dr David Carey, Psychologist

‘Promoting positive behaviour in children’

- Dr Moya O’Brien, Clinical Psychologist

‘Dyslexia’

- Orla Callan Terry and Martin Murphy, Dyslexia@Bay

‘Transition from Primary to Post Primary’

- Dr David Carey, Psychologist

NPC Roadshow

The purpose of the Roadshow was to let parents know about what NPC does, the plan to modernise NPC and the new opportunities for parents to get involved (see the strategic plan). Following a training day the Roadshow was taken around the country to 20 venues by staff and volunteers.

Class size campaign

Is your child being crowded out?

NPC members at local level joined the INTO in a series of meetings to make class size an election issue.

Bringing information and gathering parents views

NPC staff, trainers and volunteers spoke at public meetings, county branches and schools around the country.

“The RSE workshop helped me talk to my child, I’d been putting it off.”

Examples of activities organised at local level by county branches

NPC county branches through the work of dedicated volunteers organise activities, talks and events for parents at county level:

Cavan: workshops on RSE, nutrition (Health Promotion Unit), screening services (HSE).

Cork West: screening services (HSE), different ways children learn, healthy eating.

Dublin South: curriculum, homework.

Laois: safety in schools, dyslexia and first aid, Special Education Journey.

Longford: Special Education Journey.

Mayo: supervision, computer safety, child protection, dealing effectively with children.

Meath: assessments and individual education plans (IEP), bullying on the Internet, transition from primary to post primary.

Monaghan: information evening for parents of children with special needs (Enable Ireland), curriculum, positive relationships with children.

Sligo: relationships and sexuality education, dyslexia, Fás le Cheile (HSE), school policies, safety on school transport.

Tipperary: bullying (North & South riding), Childline (ISPCC).

Many branches held fun table quizzes for children. Clare, Cork, Limerick and Tipperary joined forces to bring their top ten teams forward to a “Munster Final” held in Limerick in May. This was such a success that a second Munster Final has been scheduled already and will take place in Limerick on 13th May 2007.

Representing the views of parents to our partners and the wider public

Consultation at local level by county branches

The views of parents were gathered on a range of topics:

- Class size, transition from primary to post primary school, parenting courses, healthy eating, substance abuse, taking communion ceremony outside of schools, cost of schoolbooks, uniforms etc., new structures of NPC, NPC's 21st Birthday
- Operation of school boards, supervision before and after school, supervision during breaks, supervision by parents of swimming programmes during school day, health and safety in primary schools, school uniform policy, bullying, curriculum and special needs
- Educational Psychological Service, Whole School Evaluation (WSE)
- Problems associated with school bus service, safety and school transport, behaviour on school buses.

NPC members and staff continue to raise the profile of NPC and to contribute to the education and child welfare debate through: speaking at public meetings and seminars, issuing press statements and writing articles, contributing to television and national and local radio programmes. We received extensive coverage in national and local newspapers.

During the year the chairperson, public relations officer, chief executive and staff members contributed to approximately 150 radio and television news, current affairs and chat show programmes. Members at local level also made a significant contribution.

Topics include:

- The role of NPC, NPC training courses and opportunities for parents, NPC helpline service
- Children's rights in the Constitution, appeals procedures for children who are refused admission or expelled from school, responsibilities of school boards for the quality of teaching, standards of teaching and teacher education, class size, publication of school inspection reports
- Provision of new schools and extensions to existing schools, suitability of school premises, use of school premises by the local community
- Stay Safe and relationships and sexuality education programme, young people and the law, child abuse, sexualisation of children, bullying, Internet safety, advertising and children
- New school year and back to school issues, children starting school, cost of education, fundraising, after school childcare, affordability of childcare
- School transport, seat belts, and supervision of children.

“I think my child needs extra help. What can I do to get it?”

Written submissions made include those on the following topics:

- Funding of the education system (prebudget)
- Funding for the work of NPC (prebudget)
- Review of the operation of boards of management
- Whole school evaluation
- Supervision before and after school
- Appeals about non-admittance to, expulsion or suspension from school
- The delivery of quality public services
- Educational disadvantage
- Oral health

“Our parent association really got up and going after the workshop.”

NPC working for parents and children

Children’s rights in the Constitution

National Parents Council Primary called on the Taoiseach to hold a referendum, so as to offer the people an opportunity to incorporate the best interests of all our children in the Constitution. Constitutional change was recommended in 1993, 1996, 1998 and 2006 by various national bodies and by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

NPC submission on family rights to the All Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution (January 2005) had already sought:

- the recognition of rights for children (as protected in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- a definition of the family that extends beyond marriage
- the definition of rights and benefits to be in terms of the rights of the individual
- a balance of rights between parents and children
- the incorporation of the concept of ‘best interest of the child’

NPC also works in partnership with others through the Children’s Rights Alliance to ensure that the Constitution will underpin the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Established in 1995, the Children’s Rights Alliance is a coalition of 80 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) concerned with the rights and welfare of children and young people in Ireland.

Appeals procedures

Over the past year or two there has been extensive media coverage of children’s behaviour in school. The impression has been given, at least in part through statements from second level teacher unions, that children and young people form an unruly and dangerous section of the population.

There have been calls to make it easier for schools to suspend or expel children from school. The Minister has listened to these voices and has put forward a Bill to weaken the Appeals Procedures in the Education Act 1998. NPC has opposed the weakening of the appeals procedure for children who are being suspended, expelled or refused admission by schools.

We are concerned about the implications of this for equality issues covered in equality legislation.

We are deeply uneasy about what this could mean for children with special educational needs and especially for children whose special needs include behavioural disabilities. The changes in the Act will give schools more power to get rid of children who are experiencing difficulties. What, for example, does this mean for Traveller children who are being excluded from schools?

The focus should be on assisting children in staying in school and on giving schools the resources to keep them in school.

The appeals procedure should be open and fair. The purpose should be to ensure that fair procedures and due process are followed in the school and that a just decision is made. The procedure itself and the persons making the decision that affects the child should not be biased, or appear to be biased. The existing appeals procedure in the Education Act meets these criteria.

What the Minister proposes is closing the procedure down for the person taking the appeal and weighting it in favour of schools. Already schools win the vast majority of appeals. The suggested changes run the risk of making the process unfair and also making the process appear unfair.

The Minister, under legislation, is required to review the operation of Appeals (Section 29 Education Act 1998), in consultation with the partners in education. This consultation did not take place.

Code of behaviour

The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) will issue Guidelines to schools during this school year to assist them in drawing up the Code of Behaviour for the school as provided for in the Education Welfare Act 2000. NPC, together with all the partners in education, will be consulted about the Guidelines before they are issued to schools.

During the past year NPC has strongly put forward clear expectations as to what parents expect of school codes of behaviour. Parents believe that the code of behaviour should apply to everyone in the school and not only the students. We believe that the code should be positive in its tone. It should be about helping children to learn to behave well, and not just about sanctions.

NPC is ensuring that parents and students will have a say in the code of behaviour. This is the best way of making sure that people know about the code and will support it.

NPC would have very serious reservations about the use of suspension and expulsion in a primary school. Primary school children are young enough to learn how to behave and it is the responsibility of teachers and parents to make sure that they learn how to treat other people with respect. Unless in very rare and exceptional circumstances, no primary school child should find themselves in a situation where their behaviour is considered so bad as to justify suspension or expulsion.

NPC looks forward to the draft Guidelines and will be working with NEWB to ensure that there is substantial consultation with parents, children and young people throughout the country. We have successfully made a case to NEWB for having a reasonable amount of time for this consultation.

Supervision of children

In the beginning of this school year one third of the calls to the NPC Helpline were about the safety and supervision of children in primary schools. This situation has been going on for many years with

no sign of a solution. There is emerging evidence of a change in attitude and practice, amongst some principals and boards, towards a school's duty of care for children. Not surprisingly, many of the parents contacting us are worried about the safety of their children. NPC has yet again made representation to the Department:

Parents are being asked to sign indemnity forms, which seek to release the school from responsibility for children before and after school.

Principals are saying that children are only insured between specified hours, for example 9.20am and 3.00pm.

We need clarity on the specific responsibility of teachers at assembly and dismissal, and on how the 37 hours of paid supervision time per teacher are to be used.

Some schools are opening for class at 9.00am and the gates are locked until that time. Children must stay outside in all weathers as they are not permitted to enter the school building until lessons begin.

Children arriving by school bus are being left unsupervised, sometimes for up to 40 minutes, until school starts. Children are being left outside the school at 3.00pm, again unsupervised until the bus arrives to collect them.

Parents of children who are using the school bus scheme and arrive at school before school starts, or who must await the arrival of the bus after school, are being asked to supervise the children during these periods.

Parents with children in junior and senior infants are being told they must collect their children at 2.00pm even though the bus arrives an hour later.

The Department clarified the schools responsibilities in this regard in 1998. 'The fact that some children cannot be collected by the school bus until 30 or 40 minutes after the classes end for the day does

not in any way diminish the duty and responsibility of a school towards its pupils and any attempt by a school to establish the contrary is unlikely to have the support of the law.' However, the practice in many schools is not in line with Department directives.

Parental choice of school

In recognition of the changing nature of Irish society, and of the many and very welcome newcomer families, NPC has sought diversity of school provision, including recognition of the Vocational Education Committees (VEC) as school Patrons. We are pleased at the significant first step taken by the Minister for Education and Science in approving the establishment of the first community primary school under the auspices of County Dublin VEC.

The challenges of a changing Ireland for parents, policy-makers, teachers, school managers and young people must be the subject of consultation. NPC continues to seek consultation with local communities before a school is established, in order to ascertain their views on school type.

Improving and supporting school management

NPC has made repeated representation to the Department of Education and Science on improving and supporting school management. The Department is now engaged in a review of Rules and Procedures for school boards. NPC has reminded the Department, before every new term of office of the boards, that a review of the structure and operation of the boards formed part of the agreement made by the Department with the partners. This agreement was made prior to the enactment of the Education Act 1998.

NPC has considerable feedback from parents on the operation of school boards, through our helpline, through feedback from participants on training workshops for parents' elected representatives. We also have information from members of the national executive and county branches and from parent associations. In light of the Department review additional feedback has been sought from members.

A review should be an examination of the extent to which boards are delivering on their statutory duties and responsibilities under the Education Act 1998. The Education Act and the duties of Boards deriving from that Act must be a key starting point for the review.

The Board is a key instrument for delivering on the state's responsibility to children. If the boards are not functioning the system is not functioning. It is therefore essential that a full and comprehensive review be held.

National Parents Council Primary has made the Department aware of the concerns of parents about the operation of boards, some of which relate to procedures and others to practice.

There is a significant voluntary contribution made by parents, teachers and members of the local community to the running of our primary schools. This work is done with little training or support, and sometimes very little appreciation or recognition by the state, the patrons, or even their own school community. Can the present model of board continue? Because of the volume of legislation and significant legal responsibilities the burden of responsibility on a voluntary board may be too high.

Also, because of the large number of very small schools and the difficulty of attracting people to serve on the boards, consideration may need to be given to other models of governance.

Consideration also needs to be given to the manner of choosing/appointing the chairperson of the board. NPC has always favoured the chairperson being elected by the members of the board.

Not all boards understand the nature of corporate governance. Clarity is needed as to whether the board fulfils a governance role or a management role.

Many boards meet once a term only, while respecting people's time it does not seem possible that they could fulfil their responsibilities with so few meetings.

Boards need to ensure that school buildings, with appropriate safeguards, should be available outside school hours to parent associations and community groups.

Whole School Evaluation (WSE)

NPC has made many submissions and kept up consistent pressure since 1998 during the development of Whole School Evaluation. NPC had sought a system of school evaluation that would be in the best interests of children and their parents, be supportive to teachers and schools, and provide an open and accountable evaluation of the work of schools. We have succeeded to a great extent.

Parents are now consulted on their views by the inspectorate. At second level, students have a voice and we expect that steps will be taken to hear the voice of children at primary level. The results of WSE, although still rather timid, are publicly available. The Department has published a leaflet for parents on the entire process.

One area where we had not succeeded, was on obtaining a system for ensuring the quality of teaching and professional conduct of individual teachers. In other words there was no mechanism for dealing with ineffective teaching. The recent proposal of the Minister to make boards and principals responsible for the quality of teaching and professional conduct of individual teachers was welcomed by NPC.

“Children have only one chance at early and primary education.”

NPC and the wider world

General election campaign

Priorities agreed by NPC for a pre-election campaign include:

- **Pre-school and after school childcare**
At present this is ruinously expensive, hard to find, variable in quality, there is no tax relief
- **A maximum primary school class size of 20**
A start to be made with the junior classes
- **Increase the number of educational psychologists**
Too few educational psychologists to do assessments for children with special needs
Teachers need educational psychologists to help with children with behaviour problems
Support services: psychologists, speech and occupational therapists to work together for children
- **A modern language in all schools for 5th and 6th class**
About a third of schools have a modern language on offer through a Department of Education and Science pilot scheme
- **School transport**
A study of the age profile of buses used to bring children to school. Escorts on buses that bring children with special needs to mainstream school
- **Local or personal issues**
The need for a new school in a developing area, safety outside your child's school etc.

European Parents Association (EPA)

EPA is the European-wide organisation for parents. Its membership comprises 40 national parent organisations representing more than 100 million parents. EPA aims to promote the active participation of parents at all levels of education and works to influence education policy-making at European level.

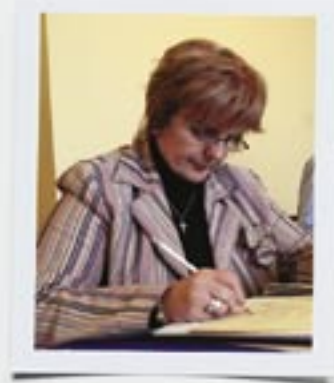
NPC is an active member of EPA and participated in conferences in Belgium and Austria.

The Commission of the European Union provides financial support for EPA.

Arion programme

NPC participated in a study visit on environmental and heritage education in Poland.

‘There are approximately half a million parents with children in pre-school or primary school, so there shouldn't be an election candidate in the country who won't know what parents want’.



Board (from left to right)

Mary Haughney / Joan McLoughlin, Maeve O'Hair / Paul Stevenson / Sheila Barrett / Geraldine Graydon, Sharon McGinity, Amanda Allen / Anita McCann / Beatha Keatley, Liza Toye, Carol Ollry / Martin Kiernan / Martin McLernon, Maria Murphy / Maureen Brennan / Gile MacLochlainn / Francis Linden (Chairperson) / Joan McLoughlin, Fionnuala Kilfeather (CEO) / Philip Mudge.
Not Pictured: Siobhan Daly.



Par
3 Dec



The woman who is trying to change the face of education

1. It has parents b... indemnity... primary sc... a letter fro... dated Octob... parents in th...
The position... Schools requ... precautions... Board of Man... tion with the... sibility for ma... possible to sup... hours and shou... cover claims for... arise from inju... Circular 24/71, de... liability for inju... circular states that... school transport serv... involves children be...
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Education and Living



BID TO GIVE "VOICE"

17 October 1986

Evening Herald



At National Parents Co...
Minister for Education and



Parents Must Participate

September 1986 Evening Press



TO PARENTS



...ncil-Primary (NPC) annual delegate conference in Cork were Emily Logan, Children's Ombudsman; Mary Hannafin TD, ... Science; Anita McCann, Chairperson of the NPC and Fionnuala Kilfeather, Chief Executive NPC. Picture Maurice O'Mahony



**THOUSANDS MARCH OVER SCHOOL CUTS
PARENT POWER!**

9 December 1987

Evening Herald

Michael Foley



1988- Parents Review Body establishe







National Pa

Are Parents Being He

10 February 2004

Irish Times

Emmet Oliver



ary Killeen
President of EPA 1993



Tim
system

30 August 2

heard?

to open up the school
to scrutiny.

2005

Irish Times





Staff (from left to right)

Mary Kileen / Nora Harris / Carmel O'Shea / Deirdre Sullivan / Fionnuala Kilfeather / June O'Neill / Michelle Davern / Carmel Grahame / Caroline Clynes.

National Parents Council Primary (NPC) - the first 21 years

1984-87

Government Programme for Action in Education promises the establishment of National Parents Council, with two tiers, primary and post primary.

'Recognising the primary role of parents in education and the important contribution they have made to educational development, parents will be facilitated in organising themselves into a Parents' Council through which the views of parents may be expressed. The Department will consult with the Council, once established on a national basis, on matters related to educational development. The Council should be broadly representative of all parents.'

1985

Minister for Education, Gemma Hussey TD, sends Circular 7/85 to school boards, seeking the establishment of a parent association in every school, and setting the election process for the first National Parents Council in motion.

Following elections, organised by the Inspectorate throughout the country, the elected parents met in Coláiste Mhuire, Parnell Square. This first adhoc executive set about developing a constitution.

1986 At a meeting on the 9th of February in Dublin, National Parents Council Primary was formally constituted.

14 February 1986, Irish Times, Christina Murphy PARENTS QUESTION TEACHERS' CLAIM

The National Parents' Council last night challenged the teachers' assertion that their pay dispute has the support of the majority of parents. "We question the recent poll which was used to suggest that parents support teachers in their handling of the dispute," the council said. They "did not and will not condone disruption of the school programme and we told the teachers that last November and we reiterate this position again unequivocally," the statement said.

16 October 1986, Evening Herald SUCH A LONG WEIGH TO SCHOOL TODAY

Children are expected to take so many books to school that they are becoming like mobile libraries and some are suffering from strained joints and muscles as a result, says a physiotherapist.

17 October 1986, Irish Independent SCHOOLBOOK SYNDROME

The National Parents' Council said it would be better if children could leave some books in secure lockers in school. The Department urged school principals and teachers to use their common sense in the matter.

17 October 1986, Evening Herald

BID TO GIVE "VOICE" TO PARENTS

A nationwide drive is under way this month to give a voice to parents of pupils in the country's 3,500 primary schools. The National Parents' Council is busy trying to set up a network of parent groups in every primary school around the country. Its aim is to have a parents' association in every school. Elections will be held at annual general meetings to elect county delegates. Each county will then elect a delegate to the national executive. "We want to get parents of primary school pupils organised and achieve for them recognition on an equal standing with managerial bodies and the unions" said Helen Lane, assistant secretary of the council's primary division.

7 November 1986, Irish Times, Editorial PARENTS IN EDUCATION

Gemma Hussey may have been sacked for antagonising the teachers, as she suggests in her recent Hot Press interview, but she certainly made no enemies among the parents. The small revolution which she initiated when she began the process of setting up a National Parents' Council is still rippling its way through the schools. This month thousands of national schools throughout the country are setting up their first ever parents' committee or council. For many this represents the first time they have come together as parents to discuss the business of their children's school.

Parent power it is not, as yet; but there is a heady whiff of parental democracy in the air. County, regional and national committees are being put in place, a head office and full-time staff are in the offing. There is ministerial commitment to formally consulting the National Parents' Council on important education issues.

It is an extraordinary fact of education in this State that the Churches and teachers' unions are consulted on everything while the parents, the primary educators according to the Constitution, have been virtually ignored. The Churches are given no rights or veto on educational matters in the Constitution, the teachers are not even mentioned; yet the one group which is accorded important constitutional rights in matters educational has been mainly ignored in educational decision-making.

A National Parents' Council has been long overdue; its arrival should bring a welcome breath of fresh air into our schools and hopefully, also, a new partnership between teachers, parents and the Churches.

The onus is on the parents; there is no point in building a network of parents' councils which will spend their time organising bring-and-buy sales and running the school football team. In these areas parents can make a valuable contribution to school life but they must also have a real say and involvement in the important decisions which affect their children's schooling. And for

this they must assert themselves, it will not be given to them on a plate. The teachers, the Churches and other powerful lobbies have won their positions through hard work. Parents must do the same.

**7 November 1986, Irish Times, Christina Murphy
MANY PARENTS' COUNCILS SET UP**

Hundreds of national schools around the country have established parents' councils over the past few weeks. And yesterday, the National Parents' Council opened its first national office in Hogan House, Dublin.

**22 November 1986, Irish Times
PARENTS IN EDUCATION**

Sir, - belated congratulations for your editorial of November 7th. The setting up of parents committees and of a National Parents Council is indeed a long awaited "revolution". Thirty years ago when Owen Sheehy Skeffington suggested such committees and parent-teacher cooperation, when speaking on primary education in the Senate, the then Minister for Finance (FG) exclaimed "Soviets!" A few years later this was echoed by the leader of the new Government (FF) in the Senate.

Successive Ministers for Education at that time had one idea: to disturb nothing in the system. As one of them put it, his function was that of a plumber: to see that all connections worked.

Congratulations to Gemma Hussey for having shown a deeper concern and understanding of her role as Minister for Education. - Yours, etc.,

ANDREE D. SHEEHY SKEFFINGTON

3 December 1986, Irish Times, Announcement:

COMHAIRLE NÁISIÚNTA TUISMITHÉOIRÍ
THE NATIONAL PARENTS COUNCIL
Primary and Post-Primary Schools
announce the opening of a joint office at
HOGAN HOUSE,
HOGAN PLACE,
DUBLIN 2
613022, 613126/7/8/9
Telex 91293
Cuirfear fáilte roimh gach fiosrúchán
All enquiries welcome.

1987

Parents vote overwhelmingly, after heated debate at Annual Delegate Conference, to seek sex education in primary schools.

**22 March 1987, Sunday Independent
BISHOP'S CALL FOR PARENT POWER**

Bishop Michael Murphy of Cork has suggested such revolutionary steps as transferring control of school

boards of management from Church representatives to parents and giving them real powers and he intends taking the first steps in his own diocese to set this in motion. He called for a major review of primary school boards of management.

**4 May 1987, Irish Times
PARENTS CONFERENCE**

The Minister for Education, Mrs. O'Rourke, praised the NPC for the way it had performed its consultative role with the Department of Education. She told reporters after the conference that there was no provision for the organisation in the estimates which she inherited but she would review the position in the next budget. In the chairman's address, Mr. Liam Kirwan said the NPC was very concerned at the inadequate funding of the primary school sector. The fact that no increase in the capitation grant has been allowed for in the recent budget will cause even greater financial difficulties for many boards of management and will lead to further demand on parents, he said.

**4 May 1987, Evening Herald
EDUCATION CUTS TO HIT PARENTS**

Cuts in education spending will hit families in their pockets, a parents' leader has warned "the antiquated stock of school buildings" would continue to deteriorate and parents would have to pay to stop schools from falling down. At the meeting in Coláiste Mhuire, Dublin, yesterday delegates heard the Minister for Education, Mary O'Rourke, recognise the "endless" hours put in by parents to help schools.

**6 October 1987, Irish Times, Michael Foley
MEMBERS OF NEW CURRICULUM BODY NAMED
- parents included**

The Minister for Education, Mrs. O'Rourke, yesterday announced the establishment of the review body on the primary school curriculum. Ms. Carmel Naughton was nominated to represent the National Parents' Council Primary on the Primary Curriculum Review Body.

Mrs. O'Rourke told a press conference that the review body's terms of reference would include analysing the aims and objectives of the present school curriculum and identifying how the aims and objectives were being achieved with specific reference to Irish, English and mathematics. She said that specific attention should be paid to the last two years of primary school and their alignment to the post-primary curriculum.

**20 November 1987, Irish Independent, John Dowling
PARENTS IN SCHOOL JOB CUTS PROTESTS**

Parents' opposition to job cuts among primary teachers is gaining momentum. A huge demonstration was held

yesterday and another is planned for today. And last night Opposition Education Spokesperson, Gemma Hussey, TD, called on parents to seek a meeting with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to ensure the proposal is scrapped. Mrs. Hussey predicted that “parent power” would show the teacher redundancy plan as Fianna Fail’s biggest blunder.

Yesterday hundreds of parents in the Dublin suburb of Clondalkin, which, combined with adjoining Tallaght, had Europe’s highest school-going population, took to the streets in protest. The demonstration followed a meeting of some 1,000 people the previous evening. There was alarm that six teacher jobs are to go in Clondalkin. And today, with a total of eight teacher jobs under threat in four schools in Malahide, Co. Dublin, parents are also planning a demonstration.

23 November 1987, Irish Times, Michael Foley O’ROURKE OFFERS TO EXTEND REVIEW OF SCHOOL CUTS

The Minister for Education is prepared to allow all 1,000 national schools affected by the teacher cutbacks to have access to her proposed quota review committee, allowing it to examine a far wider range of schools than initially believed. However, reaction has been almost entirely negative. The National Parents’ Council’s spokesman referred to the quota review committee as a sop. But he did say that the Minister’s announcement showed “that the parents’ campaign is getting to her.”

23 November 1987, Irish Times Leader

The protests of thousands of parents around the country over the weekend have obviously had an impact on the Minister for Education.

The parents organisations have mobilised themselves very effectively - and rightly so - against the teacher cutbacks.

5 December 1987, Irish Times PARENTS REQUEST NEW REVIEW BODY

The National Parents’ Council has requested that the Minister for Education, Mrs. O’Rourke, establish a major commission on primary education to review the whole sector. A delegation from the council met the Minister on Thursday evening and told her that the council was opposed to the implementation of circular 20/87 “now or in the future”.

8 December 1987, Evening Press MARCH TO THE SOUND OF PROTEST

Dublin city centre will resound to martial music from the Artane Boys Band tomorrow afternoon when they lead what is expected to be the biggest protest since the tax marches against the proposed increase in the primary school pupil teacher ratio. Leaders of the National Parents’

Council and the INTO will head the procession behind specially designed banners. Outside the Dáil, INTO president, Mr. Tom Honan, and general secretary, Mr. Gerry Quigley, will address the rally as will chairperson of the National Parents’ Council, Ms. Anne Colgan and secretary, Ms. Patricia Hickey.

10 December 1987, Irish Independent, John Walshe SCHOOL PEACE BID OFFER TO REVIEW CLASS SIZES

Education Minister Mary O’Rourke last night made a new offer aimed at stemming the massive wave of school protests, inviting parents, teachers and managers to review the effects of increased class sizes and iron out any difficulties that may arise.

She also invited the groups to take part in a major review of the primary sector, which is expected to look at the effects of the drop in the pupil population on schools over the next few years. Her offer came in the wake of yesterday’s huge march in Dublin which took an hour to pass through the city centre. By the time the speeches began the crowd had filled Molesworth Street and more were still coming up Nassau Street.

Mrs. Anne Colgan of the National Parents’ Council, told the huge crowd they did not seek to challenge the Government’s overall economic strategy, but appealed for it to calmly and reasonably exempt the special precious service of primary education. “We hold that the savings are so small they could in no way justify their severe impact on the quality of education. It would, we believe, be difficult to find any other area where saving of so little could result in reducing the quality of education for so many,” she said. Afterwards the INTO and the National Parents’ Council met to discuss stepping up the campaign.



Anne Colgan on the back of a lorry outside the Dáil.

**12 December 1987, Irish Independent, John Walshe
REVIEW OF PRIMARY EDUCATION**

Meanwhile, the National Parents' Council Primary last night welcomed in principle the Taoiseach's announcement of a major review of primary education. They said the review is in line with the proposals made by the council to the Minister for Education last September, and repeated to her again last week, at a meeting. "The proposed review will offer an opportunity to put in place a process of planning and consultation, on the basis of which long-term decisions on resource allocation can be made," a statement said. The council also welcomed the commitment both of the Minister for Education and the Taoiseach to participation by the council in the review. "The NPC primary looks forward to early discussions concerning the scope of the review. If assurances can be given concerning class sizes in the course of these discussions a speedy resolution of this issue may well be reached".

**12 December 1987, Irish Independent, Editorial
PARENT POWER**

The intervention by the Taoiseach in the primary school class row is a welcome development. It is to be hoped that the forthcoming talks will lead to a solution to what had seemed to be an intractable problem. If there is one positive aspect to the present controversy it is the involvement of parents in the campaign. But, will parents be as involved in educational issues when the present row is resolved. Relations between parents and teachers have not always been as good as they should have been, One of the weaknesses in the boards of management structure for primary schools is that the boards have so little power, mainly, it must be said because of opposition from the INTO.

Is that now to change with the evidence of clear co-operation between both groups in the recent campaign? The National Parents' Council which is still in its infancy will hardly be content with a minor role in future after its high profile involvement now. The Council will demand a say in future negotiations and the INTO can hardly deny it that say.

**30 December 1987, Irish Times, Michael Foley
PARENTS TO SEEK VOICE IN PRIMARY REVIEW**

Parents are expected to be involved in the major review of primary education, which is to take place at the invitation of the Taoiseach, although they were not present at the first meeting just before Christmas, nor have they been invited to take part in the next meeting in January. Yesterday a spokesman for the National Parents' Council said his organisation was anxious to be involved in the review and added that they also wished to be involved in the drawing up of the review's guidelines and the scope of the review.

1988

A positive outcome of the campaign against Circular 20/87, was the establishment of a Primary Education Review Body in 1988. This was a direct result of the NPC-Primary representations to the Minister for Education to set up an educational planning body to consider the position of primary education in a climate of economic cutback. The Review Body was charged with the task of undertaking a comprehensive examination of all aspects of primary education. NPC was represented on this by Anne Colgan and Patricia Hickey.

**30 March 1988, Irish Independent, John Walshe
PARENT TEACHER ROW LOOMS FOR TAOISEACH**

When it became clear this week that discussion of Circular 20/87 [to increase class size] was outside the scope of the Primary Education Review Body, both parents and teachers were furious.

1 & 2 April 1988, Irish Times

**MODIFIED SCHOOLS PLAN SETS CLASS SIZE LIMIT
AT 39**

A maximum primary school class size of 39 and a reduction of teacher redundancies are the major elements in settlement terms agreed yesterday between Government, national school teachers and parents' representatives.

1988

EUROPEAN PARENTS ASSOCIATION (EPA) SEMINAR

NPC hosted an international seminar in December 1988, in Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.

**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CURRICULUM AND
ASSESSMENT (NCCA)**

NCCA was established in 1988, as a successor to the Curriculum and Examinations Board. Parents were represented on the NCCA during its first term by a representative from the Post-Primary tier of the NPC.

First issue of NPC newsletter "Newsbrief" published.

EDUCATION ACT 1998

NPC sees much of its representation has been successful. The Act includes rights for NPC, for parent associations and for parents as individuals. Most importantly, the Act lays down rights for all children, with specific mention of the rights of children with special educational needs.

**24 February 1989, Irish Press, Pat Holmes
PARENTS FURY ON GAP IN FUNDING**

The gap between the haves and the have nots is becoming all too apparent within the education system, says the journal of the National Parents' Council, "Cúram". Inadequate national funding for schools has meant

increasingly that managers are seeking voluntary subscriptions from local parents to bridge the shortfall in capitation grants. "Inadequately equipped schools are making ever greater demands on local fund-raising activities, as parents dig deeper into their pockets," says the editorial. The result of this is to produce a two tier system of education, characterised by under-equipped schools in areas where parents are unable to subscribe.

13 May 1989, Irish Times, Michael Foley

PARENTS CALL ON EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGE

The problem of educational disadvantage not only needed additional funding, but a strategy where parents are at the centre of a community-based approach, the chairwoman of the National Parents' Council (Primary), Mrs. Anne Colgan, told the opening session of the council's third annual meeting last night. She said it was time to reinstate the concept of education as an investment in the improvement of living and working conditions, rather than an item of consumer spending, and she repeated the council's view of the importance of primary education in setting the foundation for the economic and social future of children.

15 May 1989, Irish Independent, John Walshe

PROBE INTO PUPIL COVER

Education Minister Mary O'Rourke wants the high cost of school insurance to be examined by officials from her Department and the Department of Industry and Commerce. She told the National Parents' Council meeting over the weekend the enquiry might also look into restrictions imposed by insurers on school activities. The council estimates that up to £3.5 million is spent every year by primary schools on insurance and says huge premiums are eating into school budgets.

1989

NATIONAL PARENTS PRIMARY MAKES SUCCESSFUL CASE FOR AN EDUCATION ACT

NPC-Primary presented a persuasive case to the Primary Education Review Body for the introduction of legislation to protect children's right to education. The Council's representatives have secured the support of teacher unions and management, and the Review Body will recommend that Ireland should have its first comprehensive Education Act.

MAJOR NPC REPORT ON THE COST OF EDUCATION

Almost 1000 parent associations were surveyed on the details of financing of their schools. It was found that 35% of primary school funding comes from parents and the community, extra curricular activities average cost was £25 – 30 per annum for each activity.

1990

NPC'S FIRST QUIZ FOR CHILDREN

The first Quiz took place in Mullingar, Co. Westmeath. 40 teams took part in the final.

9 June 1990, Irish Independent, John Walshe TEACHER ROW OVER LONGER SCHOOL YEAR PROPOSALS

A major row has developed over proposals put forward by a Government appointed committee that the primary school year be lengthened by up to six days. At present most primary schools operate a 184 day year within which there are some half days or early closings. Under the proposals, recommended by the Primary Education Review Body, set up in February 1988 at the time of the row about primary class sizes, and chaired by Dr. Tom Murphy, teachers would have to teach a full 184 days while up to six other days would be used for school planning, staff development meetings, in-service and other activities "at the discretion of the board".

A paper tabled two years ago by the Department of Education representative opened the debate on this issue when he pointed out that teachers' work days should be 190 in a year. This was arrived at by taking into account 104 Saturdays and Sundays, a maximum of 56 annual leave days and a maximum of 15 public and religious holidays and "special days" – a total of 175 and subtracting them from the total of days in the year. The paper had suggested 184 minimum teaching days and six directed days which could be used for school planning, curriculum development, in-service, school trips, and extra teaching days or compensation for lost days.

The Review Body at a recent meeting agreed to this but it is strongly opposed by the teacher representatives. The INTO's six representatives walked out of a recent meeting in Barretstown Castle which addressed this issue but returned last Thursday and sought to raise the matter again.

1990

Parents of children with Special Needs demand Psychological Services for primary schools

NPC seeks a Complaints Procedure for parents.

9 June 1990, Irish Independent, Kate Cruise O'Brien SCHOOL HOLIDAYS : WHY WE NEED A RETHINK

You are not going to solve the problem of the silly shape of the school year by tinkering with six days here or there when what is needed is a major rethink.

1990

First employee of NPC Primary, Fred O'Connell Development Officer.

1991

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT (NCCA)

When the NCCA was being re-constituted for a second term early in 1991, the Minister responded to frequent requests from National Parents Council Primary for a place, and included two parent representatives, one from each tier.

National Parents Council Primary is represented on the Council by Fred O'Connell.

PARENTS HAVE A VOICE IN WHAT CHILDREN WILL LEARN

NCCA first subject curriculum committees are established with NPC representatives - Gaelge, Maths, English and Assessment.

SPECIAL EDUCATION REVIEW BODY

The Special Education Review Committee had its inaugural meeting in the office of the Minister for Education on Friday 20th September 1991. National Parents Council Primary represented by Paul Niall one of the Special Education Representatives on the National Executive.

NPC HOSTS MAJOR EUROPEAN CONFERENCE

European Parents Association (EPA)

On the 9 November 1991 National Parents Council Primary hosted a conference on "Culture in Education" in Dublin Castle. The European Parents Association General Assembly was held at the conference.

The main initiative undertaken by EPA during 1991 was the launch of the Alcuin Award for Europe's most promising project on innovation in education involving parents. The young Irish artist Linda Bruncker designed the trophy, which was presented to Rita Schwark for a project to help parents of children with dyslexia.

The Minister for Education Mary O'Rourke held a state reception for 1000 delegates and guests, but was unable to attend herself due to political upheaval.

1991

Parents as Partners Circular Letter 24/91

As a culmination of long term representation and discussion the Minister for Education sent a landmark directive to schools. This Circular is concerned with ensuring that partnership for parents is positively pursued at a local level by each national school, and covers school family relationships, parent associations and National Parents Council.

"As a first step, the Board should call a general meeting of parents for the purpose of the parents forming a Parents' Association where one does not already exist. It would be desirable that the Board arrange with the National Parents' Council-Primary to have a representative present to advise the parents.

The Booklet entitled Parent Associations – Making them Work will be of particular assistance to schools in promoting parental involvement. A copy is being sent to the Chairperson of each Board for this purpose. Further copies may be purchased from the National Parents' Council, 16-20 Cumberland Street South, Dublin 2 (01-6789980), price £2.00.

It is in the best interests of the school that positive and effective communication exists between the Parents' representatives on the Board and the Parents' Association. To this end, parent representatives should be ex-officio members of the Parents' Association Committee".

1992

GREEN PAPER ON EDUCATION

A consultative paper on the education system is launched by the Minister.

**27 June 1992, Irish Times, Pdraig Yeates
QUALIFIED WELCOME FOR GREEN PAPER**

Ms. Maria Murphy, chairwoman of the National Parents' Council - Primary welcomed the endorsement of a child's right to 184 full teaching days and the inclusion of a strategy to provide greater resources for disadvantaged areas. Any school closures would have to be agreed on a consensus basis.

**27 June 1992, Irish Independent, Fergus Black
PARENTS FEAR OF REDUCED POWER**

The National Parents' Council (NPC) at primary level hit out strongly last night at any moves that would weaken their participation on newly empowered boards of management. In his Green Paper proposals, Education Minister Seamus Brennan has suggested 11-member boards for larger schools with the owners or trustees getting 5 places, and parents and teachers 2 places each. But the NPC said if parents were to be real partners in education they would be pressing for an equal voice in school management.

1992

NPC Table Quiz for children, previously supported by Brennan Insurance is sponsored by Cadbury Ireland. National Quiz Co-ordinator, Margaret O'Donoghue

**3 February 1993, Irish Independent, Eilish O'Regan
SCHOOLS PLAN TO "DILUTE ROLE OF PARENTS"**

Government plans to shake up board structures in primary schools would weaken parental involvement and breach the principle of partnership, the National Parents' Council (NPC) said last night.

In a submission on the Green Paper on Education, the NPC put forward other proposals aimed, it said, at protecting the key role played by parents in ensuring

a school's effectiveness. It welcomed the green paper's acknowledgement of parents' involvement at every level of the education system but said that if this was to become a reality it must be enshrined in law.

The NPC said boards should be appointed by trustees and owners, and reflect the expectations of the community of those who send their children to be educated in the schools. It criticised the current capitation system for not looking after the fixed level of spending and said it was not appropriate for schools when numbers are dropping. "The current capitation rate is placing an intolerable burden on schools, and parents must now fund-raise for basic necessities," the NPC stressed.

The NPC also expressed deep concern about proposals for the initial training of teachers and said that the skills required to impart a child centred education programme could not be acquired in a one year training course. On curriculum proposals, it said it welcomed priorities such as science, health education and modern European languages, but suggested these could not be fitted into the current school day. "Time allocation across the curriculum must be approached with an open mind and be planned to meet the needs of children and young people for a changing world." The NPC regretted the lack of proposals for a complaints procedure set in the context of the structures for partnership between home and school.

1993

WHEN THINGS GO WRONG FOR A CHILD

NPC again voices serious concerns at the lack of an adequate complaints procedure for parents.

4 March 1993, Irish Times, John Walshe STATE AID URGED FOR NEW SCHOOLS

Small groups who want to set up schools without diocesan backing from the churches should get additional state aid, the National Parents Council Primary has suggested to the Department of Education. "In the case of such groups, we propose that the full capital cost be met by the state, or that property be secured and put at the disposal of such groups. The finding of a local contribution should also be waived." It suggests in its submission on the Green Paper.

The submission also favours the position that children at primary level should have 184 full days teaching. It supports amendments to the Rules for National Schools which would clarify the definition of a full day.

1993

IRISHWOMAN ELECTED PRESIDENT OF EUROPEAN PARENTS ASSOCIATION

At international level National Parents Council Primary was honoured by the election of Mary Killeen to the position of President of the European Parents Association.

PRIMARY PARENTS OPEN THE NATIONAL EDUCATION CONVENTION

NPC representative, Anne Colgan, in an impressive opening presentation stated, "we come to the work of this Convention, and to the longer-term task of helping to construct education legislation, with a strong value position. That law and the structures it provides must place a premium on children's needs."

The Convention, which took place in Dublin Castle from 11-21 October 1993, was an unprecedented democratic event in the history of Irish Education. It brought together representatives from forty two organisations - educational bodies, the social partners and the Department of Education - to engage in sustained discussion on key issues of educational policy in Ireland, before the publication of a White Paper setting out the Government position on the future of education.

The secretary general of the Convention Professor John Coolahan said that, "When it comes to parents and communities, I think that the convention represents a distinctive landmark in relation to them. I believe that their central-stage place has become more assured and that many productive linkages can be forged which will give new emphases to the education system."



Coffee break at National Education Convention: Mary Killeen, Maria Murphy, Helen Lane, Anne Colgan.

1993

GROUPS GET TOGETHER TO PROMOTE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Children's Rights Alliance was founded, with NPC as one of the founding members. The overall aim of the Children's Rights Alliance is to secure the changes in legislation, policies and services required to ensure the implementation in Ireland of the principles and provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Fionnuala Kilfeather was vice chairperson.

1993

National Coordinator appointed, Fionnuala Kilfeather, also working in the office Carmel Grahame and Helen Lane.

PARENTS HAVE A VOICE IN REVISING THE PRIMARY CURRICULUM

Parents have a real voice on what children will learn - NPC has a representative all every area of the primary curriculum committees of NCCA.

NPC participates in the International Year of the Family (1994).

NPC publication 'Boards of Management – a parents guide' was launched by Minister Niamh Bhreathnach.

1994

A FIRST FOR NPC

The NPC proposal for a programme of education and training for parents is awarded a grant of £74,000 from the Incareer Unit of the Department of Education and the EU Social Cohesion Fund. This is the first such programme in Europe. The programme is a national programme of training, development and support for parental involvement and partnership. The purpose is to offer parents skills to help them play an active part in their children's education at every level.

INFORMATION SEMINAR FOR PARENTS

A seminar for parents on the Report of the Special Education Review Committee was held in Dublin.

Minister sets up Expert Advisory Group on RSE; Fionnuala Kilfeather invited to be a part of this group, to advise Minister on RSE in primary and post primary schools. NPC ensures parental involvement on programmes and policy at school level.

1995

NPC moves from a one room office in Hogan House to several rooms in Cumberland Street and now employs four people.

Department of Education Circular 2/95

Minister for Education Niamh Bhreathnach launched circular letter on RSE which will guide and assist primary and post primary schools in the introduction of this programme. Much controversy at meetings around the country, by small groups.

NPC Board of Management book reaches finals of Alcuin Award, jury said "what is striking in this book is its clarity and usefulness. It is informative and focussed on the role that parents can play in governing schools".

NPC reprints both its handbooks for parents "Parent Association's making them work" and "Board of Management – a guide for parents".

OMBUDSMAN FOR CHILDREN

Children's Rights Alliance, a coalition of 75 Irish non-governmental organisations concerned with the rights and needs of children, mounts a campaign to establish an Office of Ombudsman for Children in Ireland.

CHARTING OUR EDUCATION FUTURE -THE WHITE PAPER IN EDUCATION

Following NPC representation on the Green Paper the role of parents is secured in the White Paper.

"At national level, the NPC is formally recognised as the representative body for parents at first and second levels. Parents are full partners in the consultative process between the Minister, the Dept. and the other partners in education. This formal recognition will be given statutory confirmation." Many of the principles and practices sought by NPC are evident in the White Paper: local education boards are planned. And the inspectorate will be responsible for the evaluation and monitoring of the quality of education within schools.

1996

NPC PROPOSALS FOR RADICAL CHANGE IN STRUCTURE OF BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT ARE ACCEPTED

NPC proposals, which have been accepted by patrons, Teacher Unions, management and the Minister for Education, will give parents an equal representation on Boards of Management, and will also ensure that the local community is represented on the Boards. Proposals from NPC that each Board should elect its own chairperson have not been accepted.

1996

NPC FAILS TO SECURE A CHANGE IN THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SELECTING PRINCIPAL TEACHERS

NPC is unhappy with the exclusion of members of Boards of Management, other than the Chairperson, from the appointment of the Principal Teacher. This is a key appointment in the school, and the Board should have a majority on interview boards. Instead, people from outside the school have the major say in the appointment. NPC will continue to campaign for a change in these arrangements.

8 October 1996, Irish Times

ARMING PARENTS WITH INFORMATION

As part of its 10th anniversary celebrations NPC recently opened a new Parents Resource Centre. The NPC, recently piloted, programme on whole school partnership was launched to give parents, teachers and children practical experience of working together on an educationally worthwhile project.

1996

NPC Partnership in Action Conference, opened by Minister Niamh Bhreathnach, Keynote speaker John Bastiani.

Exhibition of 59 projects on Home School Partnership at this Conference, over 1500 parents, 152 Teachers and 3500 children took part.

NPC undertakes a nationwide Survey on the experience of parents and children on School Transport

Video on the White Paper:

NPC given a substantial role in the making of the video which was available free of charge to all schools throughout the Country.

NPC makes strong representation on the issue of school evaluation.

8 January 1997, Irish Times

Funds needed to integrate children with special needs.

8 January 1997, Irish Times

Statutory role for parents in Education Bill praised.

1997 - NPC website is launched.

Minister Austin Currie recently announced that he will establish an office of Ombudsman for Children. NPC is delighted – we had been seeking this for many years.

April 1997, Irish Times

A warm welcome [from NPC for the Education Bill] with a few changes.

Parents urged to oppose dilution of Education Bill.

15 April 1997, Irish Times

Parents group welcome release of information booklet on sex education.

17 July 1997, NPC Press release

NPC welcomes the announcement by the Minister for Education, Science and Technology that planning is commencing on the establishment of a National Educational Psychological Service. NPC has been seeking an educational psychological service for many years.

SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION COMMISSION

NPC submission seeks more diversity of school type and consultation with parents before new schools are set up.

“Careful planning is needed to ensure that a proper and accountable system of consulting with parents and local communities is put in place. The resourcing of consultation is crucial to its success.

A working group, representing the Department and the partners, should be established. The working group should include people with expertise in local democracy and consultation with local communities.”

2 October 1997, Irish Times

Primary school agreement sets out ethos, governance [structures of boards of management].

5 November 1997, Irish Times

Steering group on schools aims for establishment of National Teaching Council, NPC on Steering Group.

November 1997

Ireland is Alcuin Award Winner – “Home/School/Community Liaison Scheme” Geraldine Mulgannon, Scoil Bhride, Shantalla, Galway.

13 January 1998, Irish Times

PUTTING PARENTS AT THE HEART OF EDUCATION

It’s been a long road for National Parents Council Primary since its early years when meetings were held at kitchen tables in member’s homes.

1998

NPC helpline set up.

1998

CHILDREN WHO ARRIVE EARLY AT SCHOOL

Response to NPC from Minister for State Willie O’Dea
‘The fact that some children cannot be collected by the school bus until 30 or 40 minutes after the classes end for the day does not in any way diminish the duty and responsibility of a school towards its pupils and any attempt by a school to establish the contrary is unlikely to have the support of the law.’

February 1998

NPC again seeks a complaints procedure that is fair and open.

17 March 1998, Irish Times

WHOLE SCHOOL EVALUATION (WSE) – PARENTS ARE OUT IN THE COLD

‘Parents have a real role to play – but they are being marginalised and the concept of partnership is being called into question’ [in evaluating the work of schools].

20 April 1998, Irish Times

Parents’ Council demands voice for children in deciding schools policy.

28 April 1998, Irish Times

DISGRACEFUL FAILINGS IN SPECIAL-ED SERVICES.

According to Fionnuala Kilfeather, National Coordinator of National Parents Council Primary ‘the Special Education system is a complete maze for parents. There is no coordination of services; parents experience great difficulty finding out what is available.

1998

STAY SAFE 1 IN 6 SCHOOLS MISSING OUT

Board of Management training for parents representatives run throughout the country by NPC. 441 participants.

6 April 1999, Irish Times

LITERACY, SAFETY ARE FOCUS FOR MEETING OF PRIMARY PARENTS

Following the publication of an OECD report which indicates that about a quarter of the adult population of Ireland has difficulties with literacy skills, the theme of this year’s annual delegate conference of the National Parents Council (Primary) will be the role of parents in the development of their children’s literacy skills. NPC commissioned a research paper on children and literacy by Eugene Wall, Educational Psychologist and Assistant Dean of Education at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick. This was presented at ADC in Limerick in 1999.

6 April 1999, Irish Times

MEETINGS: WORTH THE HASSLE?

Holding a meeting for all the parents at the beginning of the year, a general discussion on what the children will be doing, can also be helpful. The National Parents Council (Primary) has produced a video for teachers on how best to facilitate this sort of meeting.

14 September 1999, Irish Times

**PRIMARY CURRICULUM – TIME FOR A CHANGE
PARENT POWER PAYS DIVIDENDS IN OPEN PROCESS**

‘The curriculum is not just the business of teachers and the Department of Education, but is the business of society it says something about what we want for our children. It is a unique situation in Ireland that the curriculum that has been developed has taken that on board. All of the partners in education have been involved. It reflects societal values rather than official values.’ Fionnuala Kilfeather.

1999

PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The introduction of the primary school curriculum 1999 represents a major departure in the history of primary education in Ireland. It was the culmination of many years of development and planning that involved all the partners and interests in primary education.

Parental involvement in planning at school level (as provided for in the Education Act 1998) is welcomed by NPC.

October 1999, Education Matters

Grass Roots gives revised curriculum the thumbs up. Home education is a parents right.

26 November 1999, Irish Independent

EARLY ROW OVER LEAGUETABLES

‘The real issue is how and where parents can get hold of the information they need to make a decision about their child’s education’. NPC

28 December 1999, Irish Times

The issue of teacher accountability smoulders on – at the top of the parental angst league.

2000

NEW NPC ADVOCACY SERVICE FOR PARENTS

NPC pilot scheme to give skilled support to parents who are pursuing a formal complaint, to help parents put their case in a calm and clear way at a Board hearing.

The continuing erosion of the school year is an ever-growing cause of concern to parents.

22 February 2000, Irish Times

GIVE US A BREAK, JUST ONE BREAK

NPC seeks coordination of mid term holidays.

15 April 2000, Irish Times

Enough time has been wasted discussing language teaching, the time has come to get on and do it.

2000

NPC guidelines for parents "Working Effectively as a Parent Association" launched by the Minister, who sends two copies to each primary school. The guidelines are agreed with the Minister and affiliated parent associations must work within them (Education Act 1998).

15 April 2000, Irish Independent

Student councils should be set up in the Country's 3200 primary schools.

17 April 2000, Irish Times, EDITORIAL

Protecting the School Year

PARENTS CRITICISE EROSION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL YEAR BY NON TEACHING ACTIVITY

NPC calls for the identification of the number of children with special educational needs and appropriate provision to meet the needs of the children.

17 April 2000, Irish Independent

Parents entitled to data on quality [of education provided by schools] instead of hearsay.

Parents are entitled to meaningful information when choosing a school for their child or to be reassured that their school is continuing to do a good job. This is an issue of particular importance to the parents of primary school children as these are the parents making, with their children, important choices.

ADC 2000

Trond Waage, Norwegian Ombudsman for Children – a massive hit with parents.

"UN Convention on the Rights of the Child offered children protection against harmful material [Internet] and it was up to governments to stop this pollution."

24 August 2000, Irish Times

INFORMATION COMMISSIONER FINDS SYSTEM FOR PARENTS' COMPLAINTS UNSATISFACTORY

The present system of dealing with complaints against teachers is not "wholly satisfactory", the Information Commissioner, Mr Kevin Murphy, has said. Persons making complaints are not always told whether their complaint has been upheld and the reason why, Mr Murphy said. He said he had been informed by the National Parents Council for primary schools that parents

are not generally advised of the outcome of complaints they make and that only if a parent persists will they get an answer from the Department of Education. "If so, this is clearly an unsatisfactory situation," he said.

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL WELFARE BOARD ESTABLISHED

Fionnuala Kilfeather appointed to the Board by Minister Michael Woods, who notes that the Board is gender balanced – this did not last! NPC strongly promoted the welfare focus of the Board and the rights of children and young people to a full education. NPC brought weight to the argument that the reasons for school dropout and non-attendance were complex and could not all be put down to home and community factors.

September 2000

LAUNCH OF CURRICULUM GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS "YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING".

NPC collaborated with NCCA in the development of the guidelines. Subsequent research by NPC showed that not all schools had distributed them to parents.

October 2000

NPC moves office to Marlborough Court, Dublin 1.

2001

DISABILITIES BILL

Bill is not rights based and has come in for wide spread criticism from NPC and groups representing people with disabilities.

Foot and Mouth Disease causes NPC events to be cancelled throughout the country.

20 February 2001, Irish Times, Emmet Oliver HELP FOR PARENTS TO RUN ASSOCIATIONS

About one-third of primary schools - more than 1,000 in total - still have no parents' association, three years after the Government gave such associations legal recognition. The council yesterday published guidelines for parents on how to set up an association in their children's schools.

11 June 2001, Irish Times, Emmet Oliver

LACK OF DATA ON LOCAL SCHOOLS SENDING 'STRANGE MESSAGES'

She said the Department had failed to put in place even one "mechanism, report or process" for giving information on the education system to the public or parents. Resistance also came from teacher unions.

2 March 2002, Independent Newspaper

SMALLER CLASSES BIGGEST ISSUE (election issue)

21 March 2002, Irish Times

EDUCATION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES BILL

(subsequently became the Education for People with Special Educational Needs Bill 2003)

New education rights for children with disabilities.

This Bill surprised everyone by how rushed it had been leaving virtually no time for consultation.

21 March 2002, Irish Examiner

BULLYING – NPC HELPLINE FLOODED BY PARENTS’ CALLS.

25 March 2002, Irish Independent

“Parents should be party to talks within the partnership process which relate to children’s education.” NPC

2002

NPC succeeds in having local/parish contribution abolished.

8 October 2002

FIRST EUROPEAN DAY OF PARENTS AND SCHOOL

Projects throughout the country, include a north/south children’s visit to Croke Park and City Hall; NPC and the National Centre for Technology in Education promote the safe use of the Internet for Children; lecture on anti-bullying; promoting environmental responsibility.

2003

PARENT/TEACHER MEETINGS

NPC has insisted for over 10 years that parent/teacher meetings should not deprive children of their entitlement to 183 full teaching days and now makes representation to Benchmarking Body.

NPC, with the NCCA, held focus groups for parents on draft guidelines for teachers of children with general learning disabilities.

PRESENTATION TO JOINT OIREACHTAS COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY BILL

Parental participation in all aspects of decision making must be strengthened in the Bill.

2003

Independent Appeals Board set up for parents who wish to appeal decision in relation to school transport system.

The Minister decides to begin the process of Whole School Evaluation, NPC is concerned that the quality of the individual teacher is not included and that results may not be made known to parents. Following lobbying by NPC, parents to be consulted as part of the process.

Planning for the future of NPC - regional consultations held.

September 2003

SPECIAL EDUCATION JOURNEY

Series of 8 talks for parents of children with special educational needs are a huge success in Dublin. Hundreds attend.

NPC continues to seek the Standardisation of the School Year.

EUROPEAN TRAINING MODULE LAUNCHED IN ROME

NPC training officer Deirdre Sullivan worked with partners from four countries to develop the training module on partnership for student teachers.

EDUCATION FOR PERSONS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (EPSN) ACT 2004

NPC made representations in the lead-up to the Act, including presentations to the Joint Oireachtas Committee, and saw many of its concerns addressed in the Act, including mechanisms for pre school children and appeals procedures for parents.

A major change sought by NPC and others saw the original Government proposal for a ‘medical model’ for children with special educational changed to a ‘social model’.

29 January 2004, Irish Independent

Parents critical of teachers deal on meetings – NPC had sought meeting times outside teaching time and to suit working parents. The deal allowed for these to take place partly in and partly outside teaching time.

10 February 2004, Irish Times, Emmet Oliver ARE PARENTS BEING HEARD?

Organisations representing parents are trying their best, but underfunding and a lack of representation on decision-making bodies are silencing an important voice in children’s education.

The recent arbitration hearings on the parent-teacher meetings issue did not involve parents as a negotiating party, although Fionnuala Kilfeather of the National Parents’ Council (Primary) was a witness.

13 April 2004, Irish Times

TEACHER’S PET - An insider’s guide to education

Last week’s National Parents’ Council (Primary) conference in Limerick was a triumph for NPC boss Fionnuala Kilfeather. The conference was widely regarded - even by visiting hacks - as one of the best they had attended.

This was helped in no small way by the forum on the future of education. The engagement between Noel Dempsey and parents was both interesting and stimulating. Praise too for RTÉ broadcaster John Creedon, who did a fine job chairing the proceedings.

22 May 2004, Irish Times

PARENTS' GROUP WELCOMES SCHOOL REPORT RULING

Parents' representatives have welcomed a High Court decision, which may allow school inspectors' reports to be made public for the first time.

17 July 2004, Irish Times, Arthur Beesley

PARENTS CALL ON UNIONS TO BE 'OPEN-MINDED'

The body representing the parents of primary school pupils has called on the teaching unions to adopt an "open-minded" stance on the move to make compulsory testing a requirement in all primary schools.

After the main primary teaching union, the INTO, said it would oppose the measure, the National Parents' Council Primary said there was a responsibility on all in education to be open to such testing.

"Information is a valuable resource, and the real debate should be around how the information is used in the best interests of children," said the council's chief executive, Ms Fionnuala Kilfeather.

In what she described as a "cautious welcome" to the initiative, Ms Kilfeather said a systematic approach to assessment was essential to monitor the progress of individual children.

17 August 2004, Irish Times

THE COST OF SCHOOL: WHAT PRICES TO EXPECT THIS AUTUMN

According to the National Parents Council (Primary), the average cost of sending a child to school is €2,618.81. Although some parents buy expensive uniforms, schoolbags and lunch bags, the fundamental costs are pretty similar.

19 January 2005

ALL PARTY OIREACHTAS COMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION

NPC make submission seeking changes that are in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2005

Special Education Book for parents "A Guide to Understanding Special Needs Education for all Parents" launched by Cork NPC Group.

28 February 2005

TEACHING COUNCIL LAUNCHED

NPC welcomes the Council and looks forward to the promotion of high morale and professional standards in the teaching profession and states that all children and teachers will benefit from this. Anita McCann is nominated to the Council.

1 March 2005, Irish Times

LEARNING TO TALK ABOUT THE BIRDS AND BEES

A new era in sex education was marked yesterday with the launch of the State's first ever DVD resource pack to help parents teach their children about sex.

DVD and book produced for the Crisis Pregnancy Agency (CPA), with input from parents, Health Service Executive (HSE) officials, youth workers and officials from the Departments of Health and Education.

Deirdre Sullivan, NPC training officer, says children should be allowed to set the pace. "Don't fob them off. Listen to them and answer their questions honestly without giving too much detail," she says. "If it's done at their pace, then children won't be sexualised at too young an age."

Sullivan also calls for better parental involvement in the RSE programme in schools, particularly with the introduction of this new resource pack.

2005

NPC yet again seeks safe school transport, seat belts for all children and escorts on school buses that carry children with special needs.

21 June 2005

EDUCATION BUDGET UNDERSPENDING

National Parents Council Primary has called on the Minister for Education and Science and her Department to develop an overall multi annual plan for education spending.

A strategic approach to the development of the education system is essential otherwise we will continue to have a piecemeal approach with whoever shouts loudest (sometimes rightly so) getting a big unplanned slice of the budget. Policies and strategies must be based on evidence of what works best for children - what provides the best outcomes for children.

27 July 2005

Following the tragic deaths of five Meath schoolgirls in a school bus accident the Minister announces that seat belts are to be fitted on school bus fleet. This would be phased in as quickly as possible.

23 August 2005, Irish Times, Sean Flynn, Education Editor

PARENTS GET ACCESS TO SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORTS

Parents are set to gain access to Department of Education school inspection reports under new plans being prepared by the Minister for Education, Mary Hanafin.

29 August 2005, Irish Times

FINDING OUT ABOUT SCHOOLS

While there is much that is commendable in the education system in this State, there remains something of an information vacuum about schools

and their performance. Indeed, one respected parents' representative, Fionnuala Kilfeather, of the National Parents' Council (Primary), says the Republic's education system exists in a kind of "time warp where parents and the public cannot get information on schools".

30 August 2005, Irish Times

TIME TO OPEN UP THE SCHOOL SYSTEM TO SCRUTINY

"Parents need to be able to compare schools, and that includes being able to compare the results they have achieved" writes Fionnuala Kilfeather.

"The quality of education affects the lives and the life chances of each and every person. At any one time, almost two-thirds of the population are directly affected by the educational service provided by the State, either as students or as parents. This is the reason why our teachers and our schools occupy such a central place in the public endeavour.

This is the reason parents and the public need to know everything there is to know about the education service for children. We have a need to know, and we have a democratic right to know, because unless we know, unless we are well-informed, we cannot fulfil our own roles as citizens and parents.

1 October 2005

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION (NCSE)

Formally established under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (EPSEN Act). NPC is unhappy at having failed to secure a place for parents.

12 October 2005, Irish times, Sean Flynn

INSPECTORS INVESTIGATE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN GAELSCOIL

Department of Education inspectors are being sent into a Co. Kerry Gaelscoil following complaints from parents that very young children were being denied lessons in English.

NPC TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR PARENTS

Almost 4000 parents participated in NPC training and development events. This represented 11,000 hours of training. 95% of participants found the training 'very helpful, 4% found it 'helpful' and 1% found it unhelpful.

6 December 2005, Irish Times

GEMMA HUSSEY RECALLS HER ANNUS HORRIBILUS

1985 was an annus horribilus for Gemma Hussey. As minister for education it was her words that finally lit the flame that was to lead all the way to Croke Park. She recalls a challenging time.

Education, however, was, for the most part, spared from any severe cuts. Progress in 1985 was made on several policy fronts - the establishment of the National Parents' Council, the "Ages for Learning" decisions which introduced the transition year to schools, the newly-created Curriculum and Examinations Board's announcement of the new Junior Cycle examination, the production of the Green Paper "Partners in Education" with its proposals for unifying post-primary structures, and the introduction of oral and aural examinations for foreign languages. It was the government's continual ambition to do as much as possible in every policy area, knowing that increased spending was not an option.

NPC involvement in other organisations

Organisation	Committee/Group	Name
National Council for Curriculum & Assessment	Language Committee	Anita McCann
Teaching Council		Anita McCann
Dept. of Education & Science	School Development Planning Advisory Committee	Anne Colgan
National Educational Psychological Service		Deirdre Sullivan
Pavee Point		Deirdre Sullivan
Dept. of Education & Science	Curriculum Implementation Group	Fionnuala Kilfeather
Dept. of Education & Science	Leadership Development for Schools Advisory Committee	Fionnuala Kilfeather
Dept. of Education & Science	Performance Verification Group	Fionnuala Kilfeather
Dept. of Education & Science	New Schools Advisory Committee	Fionnuala Kilfeather
National Council for Curriculum & Assessment	Early Childhood & Primary Committee	Fionnuala Kilfeather
National Educational Welfare Board	Board	Fionnuala Kilfeather
Dept. of Education & Science	Advisory Committee on Traveller Education	Francis Linden
Children's Rights Alliance		Geraldine Graydon
National Council for Special Education	Consultative Committee	Geraldine Graydon
National Children's Advisory Council		Geraldine Graydon
Centre for Early Childhood Development & Education	Consultative Committee	Irene Cassidy
National Educational Welfare Board	School Implementation Group	Joan Mc Loughlin
National Council for Curriculum & Assessment	ICT Steering Committee	Maria Murphy (until 22 Sept 06) Liza Toye (since 22 Sept 06)
Dept. of Education & Science	National Assessment of Mathematical Achievement Advisory Committee	Maria Murphy
National Council for Curriculum & Assessment	Council	Maria Murphy
National Council for Curriculum & Assessment	ICT Steering Committee	Maria Murphy
Dublin North HSE	Bug Busting (Headlice)	Maria Murphy
Dept. of Education & Science	Commission on School Accommodation Needs	Marion Lyon
Dept. of Education & Science	National Reading Survey & Reading Survey in Disadvantaged Schools	Mary Killeen
Dept. of Education & Science	Commission on School Accommodation Needs	Micheal Ó Cinnéide
National Council for Curriculum & Assessment	Special Education Steering Committee	Nuala Uí Dhuill
EPA	Irish Representative on the Administrative Council	Philip Mudge
Mary Immaculate College	Accounts projects/ FSCEP Advisory group	Philip Mudge
Dept. of Education & Science	Arion Study Visit	Mary Haughney

National Executive Members 2006/2007

POST ADC 2006

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Dublin North
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Gile Mac Lochlainn, Leitrim
Philip Mudge, Limerick
Joan McLoughlin, Longford
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(Gwen Mitchell), Mayo
Maria Murphy, Meath
Francis Linden, Monaghan
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Mary Mulvey
Mary El Wafaie
Mattie Lynch

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

Gile MacLochlainn
Carol Ollry
Paul Stevenson
Francis Linden
Deirdre Sullivan
Fionnuala Kilfeather
Facilitator: Peter Cassells

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Aileen Barry
Benne Simpson
Ann O'Sullivan
Irene Cassidy
Margaret O'Sullivan
Olive McGuinness
Margaret Tuohy
Patricia Dunne
Noreen McMahan
Colette Fleming
Marie Nee
Edel Geraghty

Staff - March 2007

Chief Executive*
Fionnuala Kilfeather

PA to CEO, Administration, Website*
Michelle Davern

Finance, Company Secretary
Carmel Grahame

Information/Helpline Officers
Mary Killeen
Carmel O'Shea (Sept 06)

Receptionist
Nora Harris

Training and Development Officer*
Deirdre Sullivan

Administration/secretarial T & D
Sinéad Tighe
June O'Neill (March 07)
Caroline Clynes

* Full time positions

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