



Partnership Schools Ireland

What principals say about Partnership Schools Ireland

Planning and prioritisation as a school leader

“The PSI/ATP is time-efficient and easy to interweave into the school programme. The benefits far outweigh the organisational time involved. PSI is a win-win for the entire school community.” *Kathryn Keenan, Principal, Emper NS, Co. Westmeath*



“One of the biggest challenges I face each year as principal is juggling the many aspects of the school plan we are trying to prioritise and imbed. The action team for partnership is a great support to help implement the annual targets of the school plan into actions and support the core curriculum work carried out by staff.” *Fiona Meehan, Principal, Beaumont Boys School, Co. Cork*

Planning and prioritisation as a school leader

“As a school leader, the Action Team Partnership is an ideal way to engage with the Leadership and Management Dimension of the Quality Framework for Primary Schools 2016. Based on our school’s experience, it sits particularly well with the Leading learning and teaching domain by promoting a culture of improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning, with the Leading school development domain by building and maintaining relationships with parents and with the wider community and with the Developing Leadership Capacity domain by empowering staff to take on and carry out leadership roles and by promoting and facilitating the development of pupil voice and pupil leadership.” *Catriona O’Reilly, Principal, Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS, Co. Waterford*

“The planning helps the school choose two areas and keep focus on their implementation. We try combine, if possible, this with School Self Evaluation for the year.” *John Brennan, Principal, O’Growney NS, Co. Meath*

Involving parents in a variety of ways

“Our ATP is such a rewarding and inclusive committee to be a member of. It gives us a wonderful opportunity to capture the voice of the children in our school- those on the committee and the wider pupil voice. It also affords parents a real and meaningful say in the daily life of our school. This in our view is genuine partnership in action. The ATP committee’s work and support have proven to be one of the great successes in our school in recent years.” *Áine Fitzpatrick, Deputy Principal, Mary, Mother of Hope SNS, Dublin 15*



“When we decided to take on this, we invited all parents to become part of our Team and sign up for training. We had a huge response and the training provided was fantastic. The positive thing about the training is that all members are on a level playing pitch and receiving the same training at the same time. This in itself means we are all starting off singing from the same 'hymn sheet'. I think parents felt very respected and equal. It also provided them with a huge sense of responsibility and gave them the tool to take ownership of different goals that we have worked on and achieved. We are a DEIS rural school and for me the Parent Partnership works very well as part of the necessary planning that has to be done.” *Pauline Finnan, Principal, St Ailbe’s NS, Co. Tipperary*

Involving parents in a variety of ways



“We have found opportunities to become more authentic in our involvement of parents with their children’s education, as well as more welcoming to new families to the school community. Far from being stressful, these discussions have been enlightening for all of us. Most notably, the contribution of the parents has brought a creative ‘outside-the-box’ influence to our planning and that is refreshing as schools can easily become echo chambers.

At the same time, we have found the parents to be very realistic and grounded when it comes to setting tangible goals – the ‘small wins’ that generate a positive atmosphere of progress and celebration.”

Heidi Collins, Principal, St Francis Xavier JNS, Dublin 15

Accessing community members’ expertise

“The Partnership Schools Initiative has allowed us to engage with the local community. The local Men's Shed have taken on a project for the school. They are going to collaborate with the PSI and design and make a Library Swap Box that will be accessible to all the community. It will be positioned outside the school. Initially, the local community, especially the older members of the community, were a bit wary of coming into the school but now they are eager and enthusiastic to be involved as are the children eager to be involved more in the community.” *Mary O'Brien, Principal, St. Colman's N.S., Co. Cork*

Hearing the voice of children



Picture of the principal drawn by one of the children in the school

“I think the best aspect of Action Team Partnership for me is the chance to hear the voices of children not usually heard in school. I picked 4 children from 5th and 6th classes that we thought could make a valuable contribution to the committee. We have been so impressed by their honesty and their insight into school life. They are actively involved in the decisions we, as a committee, bring to the staff and to the board regarding aspects of teaching and learning.”

Mel Thornton, Principal, Carrigaline Educate Together NS, Co. Cork

Hearing the voice of children



“The Partnership Team dynamic has given students in Marino Special School opportunities to practice a range of leadership skills in a supportive, learning and social school environment. The student voice is central to the team dynamic in this student-centred learning community.” *Oonagh Kenny, Principal, Marino Community Special School, Co. Wicklow*

School Self Evaluation and the School Improvement Plan

“It ties in directly with School Self Evaluation, especially in involving the voice of parents and students.” *Éilís Dillon, Principal, St Cecilia’s School, Co. Sligo*



“I definitely feel that the Partnership Schools Model is an invaluable asset to me as a school leader in working through the School Self-Evaluation process and in implementing the School Improvement Plan. In approaching our goal setting with the Action Team Partnership, specifically when considering the academic goals, I have always found it extremely useful to begin with the area being currently addressed in our SSE process. In this way our work is never an extra burden for staff or pupils, but rather a vital support to and an enhancement of what we are already trying to achieve within our School Improvement Plan.” *Bernie Farrell, Acting Principal, St Louis GNS, Co. Monaghan*

“The Partnership Schools Ireland Programme has been very beneficial for our school. We have worked on priorities together, linking those priorities with our School Self Evaluation and enabling the children to have a stronger voice. The programme can provide a positive forum for raising issues with all members of the community, which for us has been a great experience.” *Michelle Keane, Principal, St Patrick’s SNS, Co. Dublin*

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