

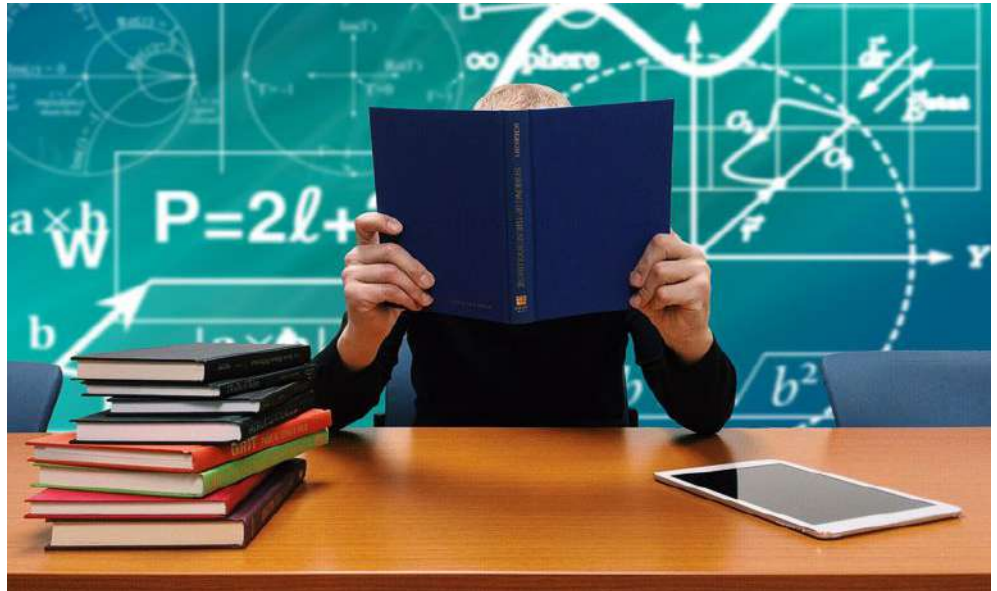
## Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of the LOETB Teaching & Learning Ezine, TaLEz. The aim of this publication is to promote teaching and learning initiatives in our schools and indeed in all our places of learning. In addition we aim to draw attention to key areas that impact on learning such as wellbeing and digital media.

In this edition we introduce you to new faces, new programmes and new projects. We introduce resources that are worthy of further exploration by every teacher, we explain new leadership opportunities, we focus on wellbeing, coding and school achievement: and we highlight some of the many undertakings and achievements of our colleagues across the LOETB sector.

This is an opportunity to share success stories, celebrate achievements and provide a spark that may ignite an interest in the development of new teaching and learning initiatives in your classroom.

We hope you find the publication is of benefit to you in your classroom. Feel free to let us know about any school project for inclusion at a future date.



### LOETB Statement of Strategy 2018 - 2022

In LOETB learning is at the heart of everything we do. That learning takes place in our schools, Further Education and Training (FET) Centres, and in community settings across the counties of Laois and Offaly. The most important factor underpinning all learning experiences, regardless of location, is the excellent staff that represent LOETB across our programmes and services. The professionalism, dedication, and commitment of staff has been the enduring feature of the organisation. This Strategy Statement sets out the direction of our organisation over the next five years to enable us to continue to provide a high-quality education and training experience to the communities of Laois and Offaly.



The Statement of Strategy is available on our website at [www.loetb.ie](http://www.loetb.ie)

**EDUCATION**  
 is the passport to the future,  
 for tomorrow belongs to those  
 who prepare for it today.  
*Malcolm X*

**New Teaching and Learning Centre for LOETB**  
 As part of an LOETB commitment to ensuring a continued high quality education service, we have recently opened a Teaching and Learning Centre, in Castle Buildings, Tullamore. The Centre will focus on teaching and learning across the whole organisation to include schools, further education centres, education and training programmes, wellbeing. It will provide supports to teachers, tutors, and education practitioners in pedagogy, learning environments, use of technology in education, CPD, etc. Part of our communication will be through our ezine: TaLEz. Next edition will be in the Springtime of 2019.

### New Principal for St. Fergal's College, Rathdowney

LOETB is delighted to announce Dominic McEvoy as the new Principal for St. Fergal's College, Rathdowney. Mr McEvoy, a native of the Abbeyleix area, was previously the Director of Kildare Education Centre, taking up the position in 2014. In this role he worked with primary and post-primary schools in the catchment area providing services to these schools and their teachers. Prior to this he was the Deputy Principal of a large second level school in Celbridge, Co Kildare for 8 years. From 2000 to 2006 Mr McEvoy worked with the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) as the National Co-ordinator with responsibility for teacher professional development in ICT. He was also ICT Advisor in Kildare Education Centre and for several years worked at second level as a teacher of Mathematics and Physics and ICT. We wish him every success in his new role.



# FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

**THE FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING ARE SIMPLE ACTIONS YOU CAN DO IN YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE TO FEEL GOOD AND FUNCTION WELL...**

## CONNECT

**MAKE TIME EACH DAY TO CONNECT. SMILE, YOU MIGHT GET A SMILE BACK.**

CONNECT WITH THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU.

With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. By staying connected and nurturing these relationships we feel happier and more secure, giving a better sense of purpose.

## BE ACTIVE

**BRING ACTIVITY INTO THE EVERYDAY = TAKE THE STAIRS, GET OFF ONE STOP EARLY OR GO FOR A TEN MINUTE WALK.**

GO FOR A WALK OR RUN.

Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Discover a physical activity you enjoy and suits your lifestyle and level of mobility and fitness. Scientists confirm physical activity can help maintain wellbeing and good mental health.

## TAKE NOTICE

**BE AWARE OF THE WORLD AROUND YOU AND WHAT YOU ARE FEELING.**

BE CURIOUS.

Catch sight of the beautiful. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Notice how you are feeling and thinking.

## KEEP LEARNING

**TRY SOMETHING NEW LIKE YOGA, SUDOKU, MEDITATION, COOKING OR LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE.**

TRY SOMETHING NEW.

Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on new responsibility. Setting yourself a new challenge and learning new skills will make you more confident as well as being great fun.

## GIVE

**GIVING TO OTHERS IS GOOD FOR YOU.**

DO SOMETHING FOR SOMEONE ELSE.

Thank someone. Volunteer your time or join a community group. Seeing yourself and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and create connectedness with the people around you.

'The Five Ways to Well Being' (NEF, 2008)

The New Economics Foundation in the UK was commissioned to develop 'five ways to wellbeing' as a set of evidence-based actions to improve personal wellbeing. Further information can be found at [www.mentalhealthireland.ie](http://www.mentalhealthireland.ie). Graphic used by kind permission of Mental Health Ireland (2018).

## 5 Things to Quit

- 1) **Trying to please everyone**
- 2) **Fearing change**
- 3) **Living in the past**
- 4) **Putting yourself down**
- 5) **Overthinking**

## COMMUNICATIONS

**The biggest communication problem is we don't listen to understand; we listen to reply.**

## New Principal for Clonaslee College

LOETB is delighted to announce Ms. Suzanne McMahon as the new Principal for Clonaslee College, Clonaslee. Ms. McMahon, is currently Deputy Principal of Borrisokane Community College, Tipperary ETB, having taken up the position in 2014. In this role she worked with a staff of 55 and a student body of over 600 students. Prior to this she was a teacher of Maths, Physics, Science and IT in Ashbourne Community School for 16 years. She is currently a member of the JCT leadership team and has delivered workshops to school leaders on Well Being, Assessment and Reporting. She has led many initiatives working alongside NCCA, JCT, DES and the NAPD. Suzanne also worked for a number of years as a Software Engineer and Tester with Ericsson. We wish her every success in her new role.



### How to improve your social skills

- 1 Learn people's names
- 2 Interrupt less
- 3 Listen with intent to learn
- 4 Promote others good work
- 5 Hold doors open longer
- 6 Say please and thank you
- 7 Give without expecting a get
- 8 Don't respond to negativity
- 9 Don't nitpick
- 10 Be optimistic

**Life is the most difficult exam.**

**Many people fail because they try to copy others, not realising that everyone has a different question paper.**

**When people praise you, don't let it go to your head. When they criticize you, don't let it go to your heart.**



## Exceptional School Report for Oaklands Community College

Staff and management at Oaklands Community College have warmly welcomed the publication of the most recent Whole School Evaluation Report undertaken by Department of Education and Skills at the school

The Inspection took place over a seven day period and a team of three inspectors examined all aspects of teaching and learning, management and student supports

Inspectors from the Department reported that results from parent, student and teacher surveys were “exceptionally positive” and that these results served only to “corroborate the excellent work of the school”. The report stated that there was an “exceptional level of leadership capacity in the school”

“A key strength of the school is the energy and drive of the staff, among whom an exceptional level of volunteerism is evident, from the provision of extra-curricular activities to devising worthwhile literacy and numeracy interventions to support student learning in the school”.

“The school places an emphasis on the transfer of students from primary to secondary school and substantial work goes into smoothing this transition. Tracking student progress across all year groups is a whole-school focus and informs planning for future improvement”.

The creation of a positive learning environment was emphasised and they also noted that the senior management team of the school, “led by an energetic and dynamic principal”, is proactive and ambitious for the school and its students”

Chief Executive of LOETB, Mr. Joe Cunningham, visited the school to congratulate management and staff on the excellent report.

The Principal, Mr. Gerry Connolly, stated that the report was testimony to the great work of the students, teachers and parents of Oaklands Community College. In particular he stated that he was very pleased that it highlighted the excellent pastoral work of the school.

“Oaklands Community College looks after all students in the school, from the high achievers to those who require extra help to achieve their potential. We have developed specific programmes to help students who are struggling in school for a variety of reasons. We offer additional interventions in counselling, social skills etc. that are not available in other schools.”

“This report is not us saying we are doing a good job, rather the Department of Education and Skills saying we are doing an excellent job”. The full report can be accessed via the recently updated Oaklands Community College website at [www.oaklandsccl.ie](http://www.oaklandsccl.ie).

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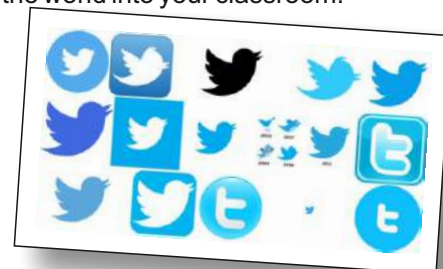
Internet Safety  
Advice available from  
**webwise**.ie

## R U A Twitter Tweacher?

Twitter is an online social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read text-based posts of up to 280 characters, informally known as “tweets” and has many applications for educators.

If you’re new to Twitter then be prepared to find and share resources like never before. Why invent the wheel when you can become inspired, informed and re-shape ideas to suit your individual classes?

There is no dearth of professional and personal learning experiences available from fellow educators around the planet - an opportunity to nurture, develop and share global perspectives, breaking down the barriers of learning and inviting the world into your classroom.



Twitter also provides the ability to join group discussions (chats) with like-minded educators throughout the world. There are numerous chats, on a myriad of subjects, specifically aimed at educators and a full list can be found at <https://sites.google.com/site/twittereducationchats/education-chat-calendar>.

So don’t say you haven’t been informed. Develop your professional learning opportunities, contribute to new global thinking and developments in education. Pick up your smartphone now and become a Twitter Tweacher!

When you’re active on Twitter, don’t forget to follow us [@laioisoffalyetb](https://twitter.com/laioisoffalyetb) for regular updates.

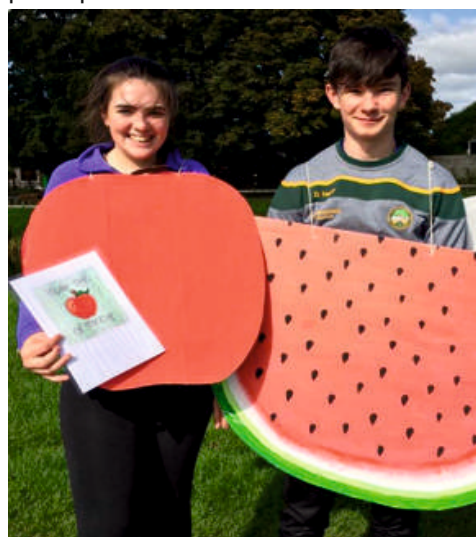
“Every good conversation  
starts with listening”  
**Tom Haak**

# Tullamore College



The 24th – 28th of September saw Tullamore College host its 5th Annual Healthy Living Week. Healthy Living Week is organised by Transition Year Home Economics students with the help of their enthusiastic teachers Ms. Doolan and Ms. Dunstan.

This week-long whole-school event aims to benefit the health and wellbeing of all students and staff, as well as being a learning opportunity for Transition Year students as their first group project and an opportunity to move from student participator to student leader.



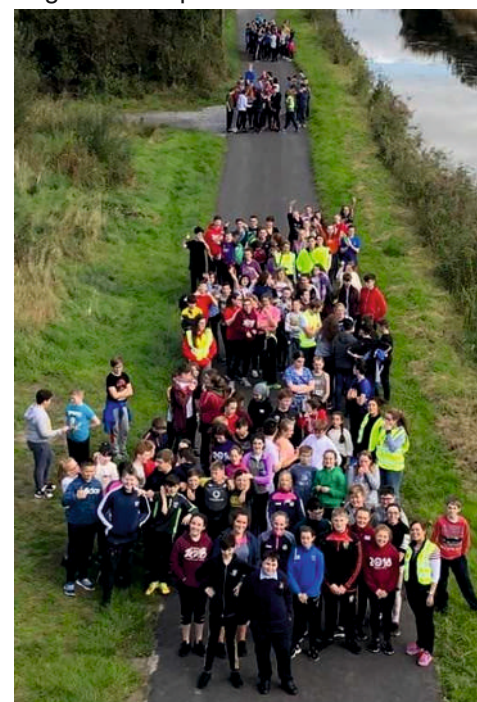
Physical activity is promoted for all students and the workshops give students a chance to try out some activities they may like and may take up as a hobby or join a club. Mental health, wellbeing and social skills are developed through the various group activities and workshops in a fun and caring way that students love and participate well in.

All of the events throughout the week put emphasis on the overall wellbeing of students and is led by the Transition Years, so is focused on what students want and need from their Healthy Living Week.

This year Transition Years organised a number of talks, workshops and activities based on physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing of all students. TYs made connections with



the local community, businesses and clubs to facilitate the events. Throughout the week there was a huge range of activities including: youth clubs, circuits, mental health and wellbeing workshops, cookery demonstration, yoga, sports injury prevent, personal care and hygiene as well as skincare workshops, salsa dancing and Zumba. During lunch times and break times there were also numerous activities taking place such as a soccer blitz, book worms club, music lessons, mindful colouring, puzzles, board games and our Just Dance club. We also supplied free fruit and yoghurt thanks to local suppliers such as Dunnes Stores, Glenisk and Daly's Fruit and Vegetable shop.



The final activity of Healthy Living Week 2018 was the much anticipated whole school walk. Students and staff got out and went walking to encourage physical activity and talk time. As a school we walked a 5k route and everybody got some fresh air, some exercise and a great chat along the way. Our school walk is always a wonderful way to end our busy Healthy Living Week with everyone getting back to school with rosy cheeks, smiles on their faces and a sound of laughter and fun around the school.

## Youth Services

Youth work plays a valuable role in the lives of young people and makes an important contribution to the communities throughout Laois and Offaly. The Youth Work Act 2001 provides a legal framework for the provision of Youth Work programmes and services and gives statutory responsibility at national level to the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and at local level to the ETB's for the development of youth work and its co-operation with other services to young people. In this Act, "youth work" means a planned programme

of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation, and which is ... (a) complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training; and (b) provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations.

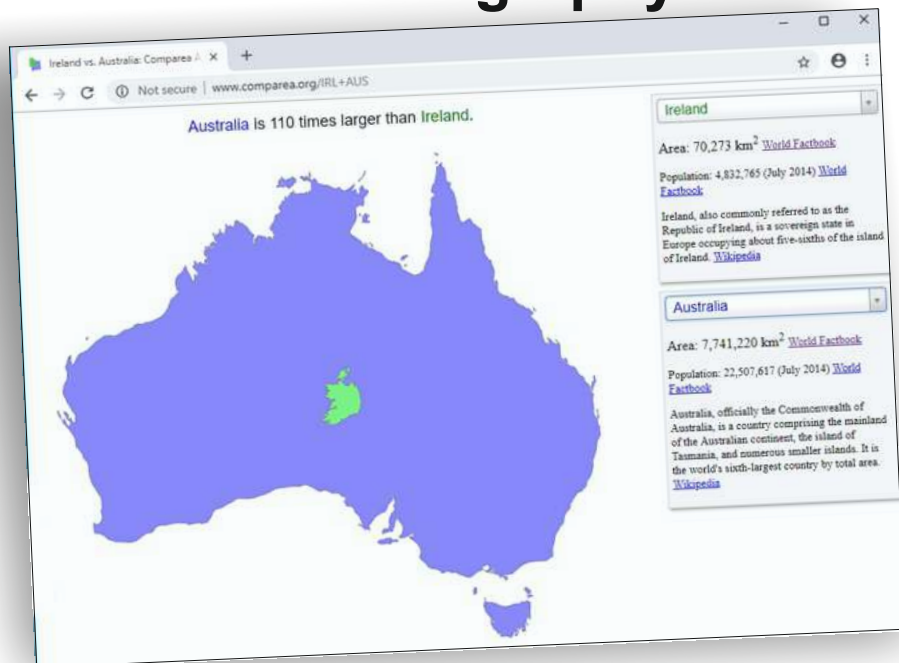
The role of the Youth Officer on behalf of the LOETB is to co-ordinate the following functions ... "to support the provision, coordination, administration and assessment of youth work services in its functional areas and provide such information as may be requested by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in

relation to such support".

Please contact Joe Thompson LOETB/Youth Officer, for further information, by phone on (085) 887 8578 or by email [jthompon@loetb.ie](mailto:jthompon@loetb.ie)



# Websites for Geography Teachers



There are a number of websites that may be of interest to Geography teachers and indeed may also be useful across some wider subject areas.

www.comparea.org does exactly what it says on the tin, as it compares geographical areas. In terms of land mass it can be difficult for students to conceptualise numbers such as km<sup>2</sup>. However, Comparea, as well as providing the land area in km<sup>2</sup>, also shows a simple visual comparator of land mass for students. For example, in the graphic above Australia is 110 times the size of Ireland (shown in green in the centre of the graphic).

The World Factbook is a product of the Central Intelligence Agency in America and is a reference point for American government officials and policymakers. The factbook is updated regularly and contains such information on the history, people, government, economy, energy, flags, geography, communications, the national anthem, transportation, military, and transnational issues for the 267 world entities. So, visit the site and select Ireland (or any other country) for fascinating facts.

(<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>)

## Memory Sticks - To be, or not to be? That is the question.

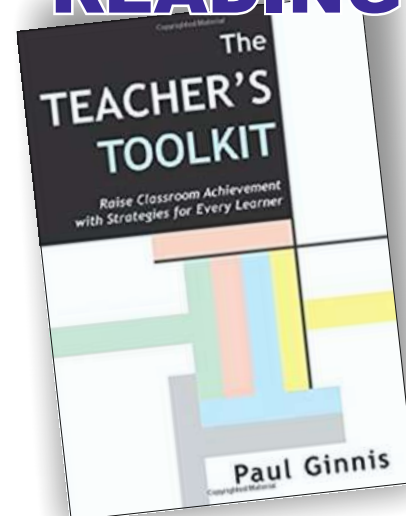


Ah, the thumb drive, memory stick and portable storage solution. It was sooo handy when internet transfer speeds were slow and "the cloud" didn't exist. But, should we still be using them? Well, they're small, can be flushed, put through the washing machine and are physically flimsy. Break the connector port and your data is on a highway to nowhere. Unplug without ejecting it and it becomes susceptible to corruption, plus they have slow read/write speeds.

Then, as they are data storage devices, they can also, unbeknownst to the end-user, easily transfer malicious software such as trojans, key-stroke loggers and a wide assortment of viruses. Plus, they are a nightmare in terms of GDPR when a memory stick is lost.

So, they were beneficial at one point in time, but the potential liabilities attached to memory sticks now outweighs their usefulness. For that reason the use of memory sticks is now being phased out across all LOETB schools and Further Education and Training Centres. Please do not bring or use memory sticks in these facilities.

# SUGGESTED READING



The Teacher's Toolkit gives an insight into recent developments in the area of teaching and learning, presenting in excess of 50 teaching and learning methods for all subject areas and ages, and has a range of suggested activities that you can use directly in your classroom. ISBN: 1899836764

*We can be incredibly disconnected in this day and age with computers and cell phones.*

*Marcia Gay Harden*

HOUR  
OF  
CODE

2018

3rd - 9th  
December

Not joined the coding scene yet? Then how about investigating an Hour of Code between 3rd and 9th December? This is an ideal way to take the first steps in coding. If you're a teacher with little or no knowledge of coding, you can still sign up, follow the tutorials and get coding within an hour. If you've always wanted to get involved with coding, but felt it was outside your reach, then this provides the ideal building blocks and scaffolding to get you started. Simple, structured tutorials will guide you through a visual introduction to writing your first lines of code. The 'Hour of Code™' is an initiative (initially started in 2013) by Computer Science Education Week [csedweek.org] and Code.org [code.org] to introduce millions of students to one hour of computer science and computer programming.

# Banagher College leads MoJo Innovation



There was great news for four midland schools recently when they heard that their application to be part of the new Department of Education and Skills Schools Excellence Fund (Digital) has been successful. The cluster of schools is being led by Banagher College and the cluster was one of only 30 picked from around the country that met the specified criteria of promising to use 'inventive methods to enhance teaching and learning through digital technology.'

In the case of the midland schools, their successful application centred on the use of video technology, with a plan for industry professionals to train both teachers and students in the use of mobile technology for high quality video production. Once equipped with the necessary skills, teachers and students will use these **MoJo (mobile journalism)** techniques to create video content in their respective schools. This involves the schools producing a series of videos over a three year period that will include everything from school news videos; to explainer videos for aspects of the science course; to biographies of famous historical figures in history class, along with much more. The content creation is likely to prove a hugely engaging part of learning for today's 'digital native' students.

This project topic was selected because



it was felt that students today were now engaging with video - through the widespread use of social media in a transformative way. Research showing their daily interaction levels with platforms like Youtube and Snapchat makes it clear that video now plays a significant role in the lives of the vast majority of our students. Consequently, video is a natural fit for enhancing both teaching, learning and assessment in the contemporary classroom.

The project will be adaptable to various aspects of the different curricula available at post-primary level. It will allow students, through a medium that is widely familiar to them, to create content in an active way that will facilitate their positive engagement with the curriculum content, while also creating resources that can be widely utilised.

The fact that content created can be easily used as part of a blended classroom or flipped classroom approach to learning is another obvious benefit to the creation of video material. The use of video in this capacity facilitates learning at a pace that the student is comfortable with; while using content created by themselves or their peers. It also leads to increased levels of positive student engagement.

The collaborative and co-creative nature of video production lends itself to significant self-directed learning, where student autonomy is central to the content creation. Working in teams, with various roles assigned, students can interact with different areas of the curriculum, with the aim of producing a finished artefact that the team can take real pride in. The artefact can be used by

a teacher as a summative assessment but also for formative assessments using Edpuzzle etc.

The skills learned by students will also equip them for a world where video editing skills are now an essential part of a competent individual's digital literacy toolkit. Everything from video resumes to viral marketing videos now require an ability to create carefully produced content where premium video shooting and editing skills are paramount.

The project will allow students, through a medium that is widely familiar to them, to create content in an active way that will facilitate their positive engagement with the curriculum content, while also creating resources that can be widely utilised in schools across the country. The digital project was chosen along with other innovative initiatives from around the country, including projects involving coding, computational thinking and even the use of drones to assist with core elements of the Junior and Senior Cycle Geography curricula.

"A picture is worth a thousand words..... and a video is worth a thousand pictures!"  
**Ankala V Subbarao**



When announcing the successful clusters chosen from around the country, the Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton commented, "There are some very novel approaches being taken in some really important spheres and it is fantastic to see such creative solutions being applied to these complex problems. I look forward to seeing what we can learn from each and share more broadly across the school sector."

The Minister continued; "I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the teachers, school leaders, students, schools, higher level institutions and businesses who came together to work on these really exciting projects. Leadership is the key to making this approach work and we are very lucky in Ireland to have excellent school leaders."

The projects will take place between 2018 and 2021, with the ultimate aim of expanding successful projects into more schools across the education system into the future.

# Academic Achievement in State Examinations Celebrated by Laois and Offaly ETB

**CONGRATULATIONS!**



The highest achievers in the Leaving Certificate 2018, the Leaving Certificate Applied 2018 and the Junior Certificate 2018 were acknowledged, celebrated and honoured for their applications and dedication to their studies, culminating in significant attainment in their relevant examinations. The eight LOETB schools each nominated their two outstanding students based on their academic attainment in each of the categories. This resulted in 41 students being honoured on the night.

Speaking on the evening, Mr. Joe Cunningham, Chief Executive of Laois and Offaly ETB, congratulated all of the students who achieved such high grades. "It is a privilege to be here tonight, celebrating the outstanding academic achievement of our students. We are justifiably proud of the results obtained, with many of our students achieving top grades in their chosen subject areas, and many surpassing the national average. Such results are not easily attained, and it is a testament to the students, their families, and the professional teaching staff of our schools that our students have become consistently high achievers in the State Examinations". Mr. Cunningham stated it was also worthy of comment that so many of these Leaving Certificate students had now progressed to third-level institutions, taking their places in Universities, Institutes of Technology and other institutions. "...these students have become academic ambassadors of Laois and Offaly ETB and we have no doubt the solid foundation achieved this year, will stand as a legacy towards the future potential of these young adults".

Mr. Cunningham also made a particular point to congratulate the high achievers in the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA). "It would be remiss of me not to mention

your excellent achievement in the State Examinations. The LCA Programme provides a much-valued progression pathway for those students who do not wish to attend third-level. Your needs, aspirations and attitudes must also be catered for, and it is only correct that all achievements are celebrated here tonight. Our world has become a complex place for learning, working and living. This complexity makes each and every student an individual that brings their own unique skill-set to a modern world. There are many routes to take a journey, our job and our focus, is to get you prepared for that journey, whatever the destination". He then continued by saying "Judging by the results obtained by this year's Leaving Certificate Applied cohort, it is obvious that you are now well prepared for the highways and byways of modern life. We are delighted to celebrate your achievements tonight".



Mr. Paul Fields, Director of Schools for Laois and Offaly ETB was equally ebullient in his words of praise for the highest achievers in the Junior Certificate exam results this year. "We have been delighted, once again, with the results obtained in the Junior Certificate examinations. ETB schools are consistently achieving high grades and we are delighted that we match the national results, and in some cases exceed them." He continued by acknowledging that the educational journey for our students is a partnership between students, parents, teachers.

"Results such as those attained by our students in the Junior Certificate examinations this year, are a demonstrable outcome of what happens when partnerships work together for a positive and worthwhile outcome. Your son or daughter's achievement is also a celebration of this team effort. Based on their achievement to date, we very much look forward to their continued success in their senior cycle examinations".

It was also acknowledged that while the focus of the night was on academic achievement, there are also a large number of success stories that occur outside of the formal state examinations. These are stories of personal and group attainment in the wider context from the arts to programmes of community involvement. "It is important that their work, involvement and outcomes are also acknowledged tonight. Such commitment, dedication and achievements also play a huge aspect in developing a wider education and make significant contributions to school life".

Special Guest for the evening, Dr. Jennifer Byrne, commented on the significance that education has played in her life to date. "It has become vitally important that students are well-prepared for an ever-changing world. Exam results play a predominant role in developing a career path and climbing the ladder of success. Changes facing society demand that we have school leavers that have a set of adaptable, fluid and dynamic skills that will allow them morph into situations that we do not yet know exist. Achieving such outstanding results in your state examinations provides a solid base from which to move forward. Dr. Byrne then concluded by congratulating the students, their parents, and teachers on their results. She thanked Laois and Offaly ETB for their invite to speak at the event and acknowledged the huge role played by the ETB in the support of education across the midlands. (>Cont'd Page 12)



# Employee and Health Wellbeing Initiative

**The Employee and Health Wellbeing Initiative implemented by LOETB was introduced in early January 2018. It aims to promote personal mental and physical health and wellbeing among staff and to assist individuals in implementing the changes necessary to live healthy and balanced lives.**

## Why this initiative?

The LOETB strongly support this initiative as it linked with the ambitions of the World Health Organisation (WHO) who define a healthy workplace as one in which workers and managers collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect and promote the health, safety and wellbeing of all workers. Furthermore, a recent article published in The Irish Times stated that the World Health Organisation 'has thrown its weight behind wellbeing initiatives as it believes the workplace is an ideal large-scale setting in which to promote mental and physical health, not least because many workers are also parents with the power to influence the health of the next generation'.



We should all aim to be active for 150 minutes (2½ hours) each week. Walking has many encouraging benefits. Firstly, it's free! You can do it anywhere – at work/at home, it easily fits around busy schedules, you don't need special equipment, you can do it with friends and family and it is safe and low risk.

## What did the Wellbeing Initiative involve?

The initiative incorporated a Pedometer/ Step Challenge where the number of steps were recorded by individual staff members over an 8 week period. Teams were established to represent each centre with the aim to increase their daily step counts over the 8 week period by using a pedometer, provided by the LOETB. Each centre reported their participant's daily step count on weekly basis to Enda Kennedy, the LOETB Health Promotion Officer. Furthermore,

a Physical Health and Fitness presentation along with fitness classes to include Pilates and circuits, in addition to online support was offered. Niall Moyna, a Professor and Head of the School of Health and Human Performance, and a member of the Centre for Preventive Medicine in DCU, was welcomed to Tullamore as a guest speaker. On March 8th, Niall excitedly spoke of the physical and mental benefits of exercise and the need to put more emphasis on optimising fitness levels in children and youth.

## What were the outcomes of the initiative?

This initiative proved to be very successful with over 150 participants from 11 centres reaching over 76 million steps! In addition to this, a total of 250 pedometers were distributed among staff members. Hence, the initiative was fully embraced by staff in FET Centres and services, in addition to staff from Training Services, Administration and Quality Assurance.

In order to bring the initiative to a conclusion, an outdoor trek in the Spinc Walk, Glendalough, Co Wicklow took place on Monday the 16th April. This outing was open to all staff in all centres, not just those participating in the pedometer challenge. Without doubt, the 9km 'White Route' was challenging, testing all fitness levels, but the beautiful scenery and views most certainly made all the post-walk aches and pains worthwhile. The day concluded with lunch and a prize-giving ceremony.



## CPD OPPORTUNITIES

### **Technology Enhanced Learning**

This is a newly developed intermediate level programme which has been made available to LOETB staff through the National College of Ireland. The 1-year Certificate in Technology-Enhanced Learning is specifically designed for practitioners who are already using some digital technologies to enhance learning and want to deepen and extend the range of their digital practices. The programme will guide participants through a model of practitioner inquiry to complete three projects which systematically explore the effective use of digital technologies and develop strategies to enhance practitioners' practice.

### **Office 365 training for staff and students**

LOETB is currently rolling out the delivery of Office 365 training in a number of centres. Office 365 is a package full of powerful tools and is accessible from anywhere, anytime. Through Office 365, tutors and teachers can capture and organise all class materials in a safe, reliable place, create interactive lessons and as a result instil student creativity. It will inevitably improve classroom and school collaboration. As a result of the successful pilot training delivered in Clara Youthreach, it is intended that all LOETB staff will undergo the training.

### **Masters in Teaching and Learning**

LOETB has collaborated with IT Carlow to offer our Further Education and Training staff the opportunity to complete a number of modules in the area of Teaching and Learning. The aim of this Professional Development Initiative is to further develop the knowledge, skills, and competencies of LOETB staff to lead, design, teach and evaluate further education and training programmes. Additionally, completion of all modules will also afford staff the opportunity to study for a Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning.



Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE), implemented by LOETB, is an internationally recognised programme designed to facilitate young people to develop core skills in entrepreneurship and business, through creative and critical thinking, and to do so within a learning environment.

LOETB strongly supports the promotion and development of youth enterprise awareness and education for 14-18+ year olds, as it linked with the Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019 which notes that it is one of the Government's ambitions for Ireland "...to be among the most entrepreneurial nations in the world and to offer a world class environment in which to start and grow a business...growing the number of entrepreneurs and start-ups is hugely important".

What does the NFTE programme entail?  
Young people from the Tullamore Community Training Centre and five Youthreach centres in Laois/Offaly develop their enterprises via this intensive business training programme. Target groups participate in business mentorship sessions, business visits, trading opportunities, and are exposed to numerous guest speakers from the business community. Furthermore, they develop a business plan and present their work to a panel of judges, 'dragons den' style. This project is committed to supporting young people to reach their full potential through educational and



Finalists of the Foróige Youth Entrepreneur of the Year Awards 2018, with their creative business 'Funkee Tee's', MaryAnn Harty and Wynetta Cawley from Mountmellick.

entrepreneurial opportunities, and has been successful in building self-confidence, and interpersonal skills.

The Foróige NFTE Entrepreneurship Programme has multiple positive impacts on the young people who take part in it. Such include an increase in career aspirations, an increase in interest in attending college, business knowledge increases, leadership behaviour increases, and a belief that attaining goals is within their control, significantly increases. Here are some of our NFTE programme success stories....

Two Laois students in the Foróige Youth Entrepreneur of the Year Awards 2018. Two young Laois ladies made it to the final of the Foróige Youth Entrepreneur of the Year Awards 2018. MaryAnn Harty and Wynetta Cawley from Mountmellick reached the finals of the Foróige Youth Entrepreneur of the Year Awards 2018, with their creative business 'Funkee Tee's'.

The Youth Entrepreneur of the Year Awards 2018 were held on May 15th, hosted by Foróige, the leading youth development organisation in Ireland, in the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland in Dublin.

MaryAnn and Wynetta's company 'Funkee Tee's' produce customised baby grows and the girls hope to further expand their product range. Their baby grows consist of three colours; white, blue & pink in sizes 3-6, 6-9, 9-12 and 18-24 months. Both girls are 19 and attend Mountmellick Youthreach. They reached the finals after competing against 1,200 other young entrepreneurs throughout Ireland in county and regional finals.

The companies represented on the day included Leitrim, Donegal, Sligo, Laois, Offaly, Dublin, Cork, Tipperary, Waterford and Westmeath. The girls have been very successful in their sales, trading at the National RDS Craft and Design Fair and through online marketing.



### Offaly finalist in Foróige Best Innovation Award 2018

In addition, Katelyn Casey made it to the finals of the Foróige Youth Entrepreneur of the Year Awards 2018 with her business 'Katelyn's Creations', in the category Best Innovation. Katelyn competed against twelve hundred other young entrepreneurs in county and regional finals over the last year to make it to the finals with sixteen other competitors. Katelyn, aged 17, attends Tullamore Community Training Centre in Offaly.

Katelyn's Creations offers nutritional healthy snack bars. The business' mission is to give people a quick boost of energy by eating a delicious snack. Katelyn sells her products locally in Tullamore and is using a portion of her profits to fundraise for the Offaly Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA). She has completed the 'Start your own Business' course, and received numerous mentorship sessions provided by the Offaly Local Enterprise Office (LEO). She intends on continuing her businesses' success by developing her product further. She practices her business skills in Café Inspire (Tullamore), and has sold her product in two local cafes in Tullamore.

# Scholarship Bursary at Portlaoise College



Each year at Portlaoise College we award two students with a Scholarship Bursary worth €1,000 each which goes towards their third level education fees. This Scholarship Bursary has only been made possible through the hard work of our excellent Parents Council. Our Parents Council has financially supported student third-level progression at Portlaoise College by fundraising each year to sponsor the Bursary.

This year Alex Peters and Wiktoria Myja were presented with cheques of €1,000 each to help with their higher education studies. Alex is studying for a Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Biotechnology at DCU and Wiktoria is completing a Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Sport & Exercise Science at WIT.

These students were selected as they demonstrated a commitment to their studies throughout their Leaving Certificate, a strong work ethic and great enthusiasm in the classroom.



# CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION

We are once again seeking a design for our 2018 Christmas Card, which will be used by the LOETB as part of its Christmas wishes to partner groups, individuals and local communities. We are working with all nine of our schools and asking that students in **1st year** take part in the design a Christmas Card for 2018. Criteria: • Entries should be in hard copy only. • Entries should be no greater than A4 in size. • The competition is open, only to **1st year** students of an LOETB school. • There must be a reference to LOETB on the drawing/artwork. • Any wording used on the drawing can be in English, Irish, or both. • The entry should be a drawing/painting, it does not have to be presented or made into a card for the competition. There will be one student prize of €30 per school. There will be a prize of €50 for the overall winner: this will be the card chosen to represent the LOETB's Christmas wishes for 2018. It will be professionally printed and distributed to the various groups within LOETB during December. Schools are invited to send entries to Ann Marie Fitzpatrick, LOETB, Ridge Road, Portlaoise, before close of business on **30th Nov. 2018**.



## LOETB Aspiring Leaders Programme 2018/19

Earlier in 2018, LOETB developed an *Aspiring Leader Programme* to focus on the professional development needs of aspiring leaders within our schools. We have been delighted with the success and feedback from this initial programme.

With this in mind LOETB has now commenced another such programme during the academic year 2018 – 2019, with a particular focus on teachers who are in a leadership position in schools, or who are interested in developing and nurturing their leadership roles within a school. The programme is based on a series of three workshops and attendance of participants at all three workshops is expected.

The first workshop of this academic year took place in Laois Education Centre on Saturday, 13th October last. Topics covered at this initial event included a) The diary of a Deputy Principal, covered by Keith Mc Clearn, Deputy Principal in Portlaoise College. This provided participants with a day-by-day and sometimes an hour-by-hour account of the pragmatic events, challenges and occurrences that form

some of the workload associated with the role of Deputy Principal in a school.

This was followed by Gerry Connolly, Principal, Oaklands Community College, who provided participants with a fascinating insight into the development, challenges and changes, associated with growing a post primary school over the past decade. It was obvious from this workshop that whilst there are many challenging aspects to the role of Principal, the position affords one the opportunities to be a champion for positive change.

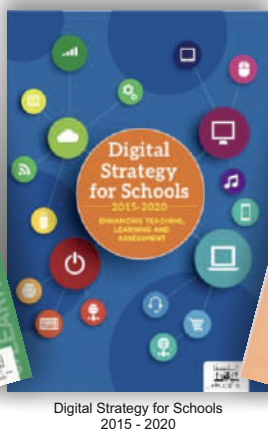
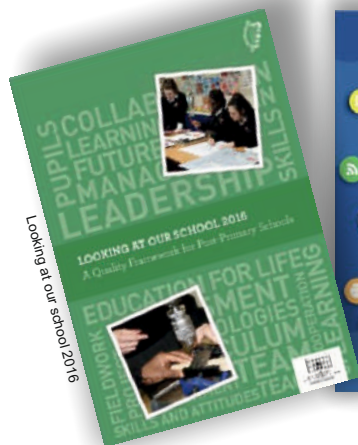
Following a comfort break, Aoife Elster, Principal, Dunamase College, Portlaoise offered participants a Principal's insight into a digital school, detailing the complexities, challenges, hurdles and rewards associated with moving towards a digital school status. Throughout all three workshops there were frequent opportunities for activities, questions, answers, discussions and stories. The day afforded those present an insight into the pragmatics of leadership positions and allowed for professional discourse at a level not always available within a busy school setting.

## Staff Welcome and Induction

On Monday, 15th October, Laois and Offaly Education & Training Board held an Induction Workshop for teachers who have just joined the staff of LOETB. The attendees were welcomed by Mr. Joe Cunningham, Chief Executive, and during the course of the induction an opportunity was provided to meet with staff to discuss the areas of payroll, contracts & leave, pensions, travel pass and the bike to work scheme. The evening concluded with an information session on Health & Safety, GDPR, the pragmatics of working in an LOETB school and a focus on the area of teaching and learning for new staff.



# RECOMMENDED READING



## Droning on about Coding



The important role of coding can be seen through the development of a new DHL drone designed to deliver medicines in Tanzania. It's a practical example of how modern technology can change lives for the better, and also great class material for discussions around a number of cross-curricular topics. Search YouTube using "deliver future: parcelcopter 4.0"

# INTERNET SAFETY

## Web Browser Security

The biggest change you can make is, think before you click. You will see a huge amount of advertisements like "You will NOT believe what these celebs are doing!!" or "Doctors don't want you to know about this amazing weight loss program!" or more. These are designed to prey on our curiosity for clicks. They don't want to create content, they want to make a quick buck. Any ads you see like this are a massive NO! I know you want to click on them, I do too. They do not vet their advertisers and are badly secured websites. It's not uncommon to have malware built into these websites.

There are some services that web browsers offer which they don't do very well. The big one that almost everyone uses is username and password storing. Web browsers will offer to save your password for your Office365, or your Facebook/Twitter log in. The problem is, this is not a safe way of storing passwords. Malicious attackers will imbed scripts into web pages or even some advertisements that trick your web browser and ask it for all the passwords that it's holding.

[https://www.pcworld.com/article/261259/can\\_you\\_trust\\_your\\_browser\\_with\\_your\\_passwords.html](https://www.pcworld.com/article/261259/can_you_trust_your_browser_with_your_passwords.html)

The biggest problem with having your browser save your passwords involves prying eyes. Not only can other users who have access to your computer log in to your accounts and see your actual passwords or credit card details, but so



can a thief if your computer, smartphone, or tablet gets lost or stolen. And the same risk applies if you haven't properly erased your data from your PC when you get rid of it; whoever ends up with it next might be able to recover your information. Also, some viruses and malware can steal your saved passwords or credit card details.



<https://www.popularmechanics.com/technology/security/a24687/autofill-bad/>

"Most modern web browsers, like Chrome and Firefox, have some form of autofill function that tries to make life a little easier by remembering things like your name, phone number, and address and automatically ... the autofill function will automatically fill out all the boxes on the webpage, regardless of

whether you can see those boxes or not. This lets people with bad intentions hide invisible boxes on their webpages so they get more of your information than you wanted. You might think you're just submitting your name and email, but those hidden boxes could also get your address, phone number, and a whole range of personal info."

A very common thing for malware to do is download all the passwords saved in Firefox Chrome, IE or another other web browser you happen to use and forward that information on to the attackers. If you want to try and be secure with your passwords and use different or even slightly different passwords on every website. There are a few ways of doing this.

Something like Lastpass is very handy as it will auto fill the forms for you but only when you're on the proper website. It will also encrypt all the passwords stored so even if you do get attacked by a fake website or a script embedded in a website you won't give away any of your passwords. Lastpass also offers to auto generate passwords for you. This will allow you to have a huge amount of truly random passwords on every website.

### Banagher Youthreach introduce Literacy Hub

The literacy hub is a space where students receive additional literacy support two days a week from a literacy teacher. Students are encouraged to use a small initiative such as 'Word of the Week' whereby specific literacy words are displayed in the centre to support student learning. In addition to this, some students are participating in the SNIP programme whereby students are taught a programme which is aimed at increasing reading and spelling and uses the primary high frequency words (HFW).

It is felt that this programme is appropriate for students who have previously been exposed to effective phonic/literacy teaching but continue to struggle. The programme approaches literacy acquisition at the word level and addresses the gaps in phonics knowledge through the application of analytic phonics (drawing pupils' attention to the makeup of words as they break up the target word). This safe space is a place where students can focus on their work in a technology free environment with natural light. Students have commented that this space allows students to practice some mindfulness and is a space for 'just some free time thinking.'



CELEBRATING  
20 YEARS

## Celebrating Young Talent

### SECONDARY SCHOOLS WRITING COMPETITION

The GAA Museum is inviting secondary school students to show off their writing prowess with an essay, short story or poem using the theme 'The GAA is at the heart of who we are.' Entries will be judged by a panel of talent-spotting experts, including writers Fiona Looney and Paul Howard.

There are two categories in this competition:

- **Junior Cycle** (open to 1st year, 2nd year and 3rd year students)
- **Senior Cycle** (open to 5th and 6th year students, as well as Transition Year students)

Entries will be accepted in both the Irish and English languages. There will be a prize for both the best English and Irish entry in each category.

Winners will be honoured with a special awards ceremony in Croke Park with their parents, teachers and the esteemed the judging panel. They'll also get a chance to spend the day with the GAA Communications Department, where they might even uncover a future calling! **Closing date for entries is Friday 23rd November** at 5pm. Best of luck! Full participation and prize details from <https://crokepark.ie/celebrating-young-talent>

"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."

Albert Einstein

### Academic Achievement in State Examinations Celebrated by Laois and Offaly ETB (cont'd)

Concluding, Mr Fields also paid tribute to all schools in Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board. "Our schools have excellent teachers and the results of their work can be seen here tonight. It is important that such work is affirmed, for there are many educational changes underfoot and our teachers in LOETB continue to respond to those changes and challenges as true professionals. The work of these teachers is supported by management teams and Principals in each school. Working cohesively, these schools lead learning and push educational boundaries. Laois and Offaly ETB are justifiably proud of our wonderful commitment to education in the midlands".

Each of the students present received a framed certificate and a small bursary. The event was supported by AIB who continue their strong commitment to both local education and LOETB.

## Evening of Celebration for Portlaoise Institute Graduates

On Friday evening 28th September 202 students graduated from Portlaoise Institute and celebrated the occasion with their families and teachers.

We were delighted to welcome three former students as our guests of honour for the graduation who inspired their audience with accounts of their time in Portlaoise Institute and how the College prepared them for their working life.

Over 60% of this year's graduates are progressing on to Colleges including UCC, UL, UCD, Maynooth, Carlow IT, Athlone IT, Limerick IT, and Waterford Its.

While other graduates are returning to Portlaoise Institute to further their studies in the Institute's Level 6 or Diploma programs, "With the current buoyancy in the Economy many graduates are going directly into work in the Business, Healthcare, Childcare, Beauty, Hairdressing and Leisure industries"



#### CONTACT US

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