DIGITAL STRATEGY FOR SCHOOLS

Embedding ICT to Enhance Teaching, Learning and Assessment 2015 - 2020

Seán Ó Foghlú – Secretary General, Department of Education and Skills

16th September 2015

Overview of the Education and Training Sector

- 67,000+ pre-school children
- 916,000 children and young people in schools
- 270,000 further education and training places
- 173,000 full-time and 38,000 part time students in higher education
- Over 1,100,000 learners across the education and training system

- 4,000+ schools
- 16 Education and Training Boards
- 31 State funded higher education institutions
- Range of private providers

Public Service Reform Plan 2014-2016

The Public Reform Plan 2014- 2016 is about improving public services while continuing to achieve greater efficiency in how those services are delivered.

The key priorities of the Reform Plan include:

1. The use of alternative models of service delivery and better engagement with customers;

2. Making maximum use of digitalisation and open data to deliver services and information in innovative ways;

3. Utilisation of the 'reform dividend' to support service improvements; and

4. Greater openness, transparency and accountability.

Whole system reform

- International research shows that whole system reform is the most effective way to deliver meaningful change.

- The challenge is to develop a joined up and consistent approach that impacts all learners, all teachers (tutors, lecturers, instructors, practitioners), all providers (schools, colleges, institutions) and enables movement or transition from one sector/level to another.

Ireland's Education and Training Sector

Overview of Service Delivery and Reform

Department of Education and Skills

2015

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DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Extensive Reform Programme

Learning for Life

➧ We want an education and training system that provides all learners with the knowledge and skills they need to participate fully in society and the economy.

Improving Quality and Accountability

➧ We want to provide for the delivery of a high quality education and training experience for everyone and improve accountability for educational outcomes across the system.

Extensive Reform Programme Continued

Supporting Inclusion and Diversity

➡ We want an education and training system that welcomes and meaningfully includes learners with disabilities and special educational needs, learners from disadvantaged communities/backgrounds, and those with language, cultural and social differences.

Building the Right Systems and Infrastructure

➡ We want a modern, flexible education and training system which makes the best use of available resources.

Digital Strategy for Schools - Context

- Commitment in Programme for Government to integration of ICT in teaching and learning

- Last strategy "Investing Effectively in Information and Communications Technology in Schools 2008-2013

- Smart Schools: Smart Economy Report

- Building the right systems and infrastructure - Reform Agenda

Strategy Development Process

| Research | Consultation | Analysis | Actions |

New Strategy is informed by evidence gathered from

- Census of teachers and Principals
- Consultative paper 'Building towards a Learning Society: A National Digital Strategy for Schools'
- Public consultation
- Consultations with young people, teachers and parents/guardians
- Face to face meetings with key stakeholders

Some Key Findings from Census

- Principal teachers were generally positive about the perceived effects of ICT on teaching and learning. 89% in post-primary schools observed an increase in student interest and engagement arising from the use of ICT.

- Insufficient levels of technical support, age of computing devices, and insufficient time for planning and preparation were identified as being among the most serious obstacles to the effective use of ICT to support teaching and learning

- Teachers need to be supported in using ICT to teach key 21st century skills.

- There is a need to demonstrate how ICT can be incorporated into each curriculum area, and how they can serve to establish links across aspects of the curriculum.

Some Key Findings from Census - Continued

- CPD required on how ICT can enhance teaching, learning and assessment at school level and on the use of ICT to support the development of key skills (e.g., literacy, numeracy)

- Post-primary principals accorded the highest levels of priority to

  (i) high-quality broadband Internet connectivity (63%),

  (ii) teacher access to ICT equipment to support teaching and learning (62%)

  (iii) Internet safety and related issues (55%)

  (iv) high-quality school-wide wireless network (50%).

- Technical support continues to be a significant concern for schools and teachers.

OECD report Students, Computers and Learning- Making the Connection

Published 15th September 2015

Strengths

- Irish students have a high level of access to computers and to the internet at home and at school relative to the OECD average.

- Irish students show high levels of competence in browsing/navigating online.

- Irish students perform above the OECD average in digital reading.

OECD report Students, Computers and Learning- Making the Connection - continued

Areas for Development

- The use of computers in teaching and learning particularly in Mathematics is relatively low. The new mathematics syllabuses with the emphasis on the applied Maths tasks provide potential for greater use of ICT to the benefit of students' learning of Mathematics.

- Irish students perform at the OECD average in computer based Mathematics.

Digital Strategy for Schools 2015 - 2020
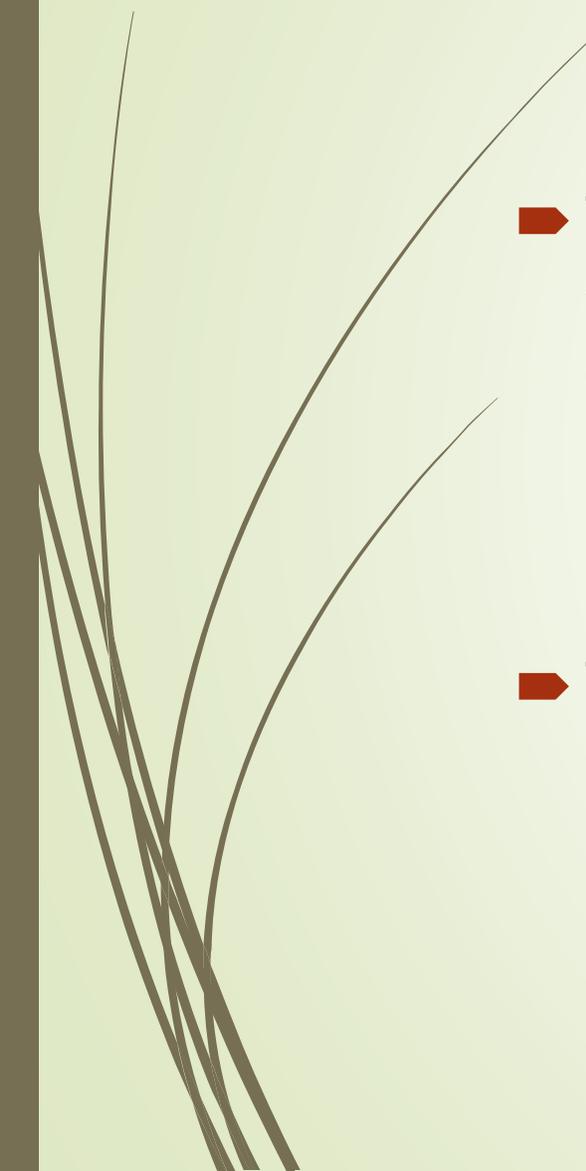
- The new Digital Strategy for Schools will set out a five year programme to maximise the use of digital technologies to enhance teaching, learning and assessment at primary and post primary level.

- This strategy will contain actions that will facilitate schools and teachers in adapting new methodologies for teaching and engaging with students using ICT in a seamless way in teaching, learning and assessment.

Department's vision for ICT in Schools

- Realise the potential of digital technologies to enhance teaching, learning and assessment so that Ireland's young people become engaged thinkers, active learners, knowledge constructors and global citizens to participate fully in society and the economy

Key Principles Informing the Digital Strategy for Schools

The strategy and the actions therein are underpinned by five key principles identified during the consultation and research phase

1. Constructivist Pedagogical Orientation.

2. The use of ICT in teaching, learning and assessment can enhance the learning experiences of all students.

3. The use of ICT in teaching, learning and assessment embedded in school curricula, Department policies and teacher education.

4. ICT is used in an ethical and responsible way.

5. ICT Planning is required to ensure ICT integration in teaching, learning and Assessment.

Key Themes in the Strategy

The Strategy has been developed around four key themes identified from the ICT Census in Schools

- Teaching Learning and Assessment Using ICT

- Teacher Professional Learning

- Leadership, Research and Policy

- ICT Infrastructure

Overview of Actions within the Strategy

- DES to set out clear vision and rationale for use of ICT

- Include clear statements in all future curricula clear statements in relation to ICT

- Exemplify what is meant by ICT integration

- DES will support teachers in using ICT in classroom practice (via support services)

- DES will put systems in place to evaluate ICT both at school level and Department level (support services, Inspectorate, NCCA)

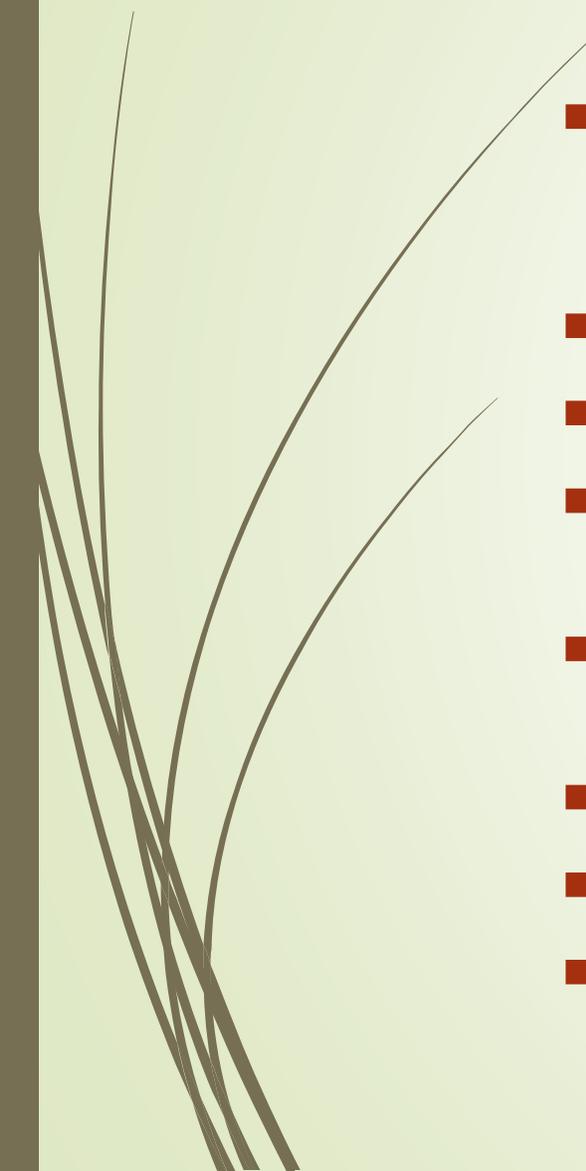- Provide teachers with examples of good teaching practice using ICT

Actions - Continued

- ICT to be part of whole school planning

- Flexible CPD (online, face to face)

- Work with Teaching Council (include ICT in the Continuum of Teacher Education, digital portfolios for teachers)

- Embed ICT in Initial Teacher Education Programmes

- Teacher CPD will promote constructivist teaching methods using ICT

- Promote communities of practice, sharing resources

- Encourage teacher as researcher (reflect & share)

Actions - Continued

- Update the 'Planning and implementing E-Learning in your School' to reflect developments since 2009 including School Self Evaluation

- Explore technical support options for schools

- improved broadband for primary schools

- Continue to provide high speed broadband to post primary schools

- Publish technical guidance documents for the provision of wireless networks

- Provide advice to schools on ICT equipment

- Provide advice to schools in relation to Procurement

- Plan for resourcing implementation

Thank you