



A meeting of Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board was held on Tuesday 27 February 2024 at the Information Hub, Lyster Square, Portlaoise, Co Laois, R32 D268.

Present

Evelyn Dunne (Chairperson)
Cllr Barry Walsh
Cllr Willie Aird
Ms Molly Buckley
Cllr John Carroll
Mr Jim Cashen
Mr Dave Cullen
Ms Orla Doyle
Cllr Neil Feighery
Cllr Catherine Fitzgerald
Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick
Cllr Pdraig Fleming
Cllr John King
Cllr Robert Mc Dermott
Mr Niall Tully

In Attendance

Mr Joe Cunningham, Chief Executive
Ms Marie Bracken, Director of OSD
Ms Josie Lalor, Corporate Services

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Caroline Dwane-Stanley, Mr Frank Smith, Mr Shane Flesk

2. Minutes of Board Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting, which took place on 23 January 2024, were circulated to members. Members approved the minutes, and they were signed by the Chairperson.

Proposed: Molly Buckley

Seconded: Neil Feighery

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.



4. Governance

Update from Critical Systems Oversight Committee:

Corporate Risk Register:

Marie Bracken informed the members that the Critical Systems Oversight Committee last met in November 2023. There are currently 19 risks identified on the Risk Register. In addition, the committee made two alterations, removed 1 risk, and added two new risks to the Risk Register. Ms Bracken also informed the members that the Corporate Risk Register had been uploaded to the Board SharePoint for information purposes.

Declaration of Interest

As per Schedule 3, Paragraph 10, Section 3 of the (ETB) Act 2013 and the Agenda Notice, no conflicts of interest were declared.



5. Service Plan 2024

The draft Service Plan was prepared following receipt of the Letter of Determination from the Department of Education and SOLAS funding 2024. The Draft Service Plan was reviewed by the Finance Committee at an earlier meeting on 27 February 2024. The Finance Committee recommended the draft Service Plan to the Board for approval.

The CE took members through the document and explained the format of the Service Plan. Under the terms of the Performance Delivery Agreement between the Department of Education and LOETB, goals and priorities were identified along with performance indicators for the targets to be achieved. The CE informed members that the Service Plan also incorporates the strategic goals and priorities as outlined in LOETB's Statement of Strategy 2023-2027.

Marie Bracken, Director of OSD discussed the projected income and expenditure figures in detail.

A Board member requested an update on the planning permission for Dunamase College. Marie Bracken confirmed that the Design Team were working on preparing an addendum to the Stage 2(A) report and this will be submitted to DoE as soon as possible.

Members were satisfied with the figures presented and recommended approval of same.

Proposed: Robert McDermott

Seconded: Molly Buckley



6. Correspondence

Item No.	Correspondence From	Date / Ref No.	Details	Comments
1.	Department of Education	CL0003.2024	The Special Education Teacher (SET) allocation model and the calculation of the SET allocation for each school from the 2024/25 school year until further notice.	Noted by Members
2.	Department of Education	CL0007.2024	Leave Entitlements for School Secretaries employed in Recognised Primary and Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools	Noted by Members
3.	Department of Education	CL0008.2024	Staffing Arrangements in Voluntary Secondary Schools for the 2024/2025 school year	Noted by Members
4.	Department of Education	CL0009.2024	Staffing Arrangements in Community and Comprehensive Schools for the 2024/2025 school year	Noted by Members
5.	Department of Education	CL010.2024	Staffing Arrangements in Education and Training Boards for the 2024/2025 school year	Noted by Members
6.	Department of Education	CL013.2024	Sick Leave Scheme for Registered Teachers Employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools	Noted by Members
7.	Department of Education	CL0014.2024	Sick Leave Scheme for Special Needs Assistants Employed	Noted by Members



			in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools	
8.	Department of Education	CL0015.2024	Domestic Violence Leave for School Secretaries covered by the terms of the 2022 Workplace Relation Commission (WRC) Agreement, employed in Recognised Primary and Voluntary Secondary Schools and Community and Comprehensive Schools	Noted by Members
9.	Department of Education	CL0016.2024	Unpaid Leave for Medical Care Purposes for School Secretaries covered by the terms of the 2022 Workplace Relation Commission (WRC) Agreement, employed in Recognised Primary and Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools	Noted by Members
10.	Department of Education		National Parents Council	Noted by Members

7. Minutes of Committees of the Board

The following minutes were circulated to members prior to the meeting for noting.

- Clonaslee College 6 December 2023
- Coláiste Na Sionna 22 November 2023
- Coláiste Naomh Cormac 11 December 2023
- Portlaoise College 13 November 2023
- St Fergals College 12 December 2023

A member inquired about the availability of funding for school books to ease the financial burden on parents. The CE confirmed that the schools do work with the parents on an individual basis to tackle this issue.



8. Licence Agreement

Marie Bracken sought approval for the following Licences:

- Ulster Bank Building – 211.5 square metres approx., for LOETB Information Hub - €65,000.00 per annum.
- 6,160 square feet from 1/12/2023 for Electrical Apprenticeships at Kilcruddin - €21,650.00 per annum.
- 3,336 square feet from 1/4/2024 for Electrical Apprenticeships at Kilcruddin - €11,676.00 per annum.
- Unit 2-4 Sragh Industrial Estate, Flanagan Properties from 1/12/2023 to 30/11/2024 for FET Storage - €9,000.00 per annum

Proposed: John Carroll

Seconded: Neil Feighery

9. Board of Management Nomination

Portlaoise College:

Teacher Representative – Caitriona Walsh

Proposed: Willie Aird

Seconded: Catherine Fitzgerald

Oaklands Community College Edenderry:

Proposed: Willie Aird

Seconded: Catherine Fitzgerald

10. Chief Executive's Report

Schools Directorate



Leadership Webinar Series:

The third session of the leadership webinar series for current and aspiring middle leaders will take place on the Laois Education Centre platform on 19 March 2024. The session will focus on the role of the Year Head and will be facilitated by Harry Freeman.

Communities of Practice

SSE Co-Ordinators met on the 29 January. The focus of the session was target setting and the role of subject departments. The DEIS Co-Ordinators met on the 31 January. The focus of the session was the theme of Partnership with Parents and Others.

ETB Maths Competition

The final of the ETB Junior Maths Competition took place in Bloomfield House Hotel in Mullingar on the 16 January. This competition was a collaboration between LOETB, CMETB and LWETB. Five teams from LOETB travelled to Bloomfield house representing Tullamore College, Portlaoise College, Oaklands Community College and Clonaslee College.

Congratulations to all the finalists from LOETB and to the team from Tullamore College who came in 3rd place on the day.

STEAM Programme

The STEAM Programme, in partnership with Offaly and Laois County Councils, will soon be culminating with two key events. All nine LOETB schools are involved in the programme, with approximately 300 students getting the opportunity to develop 21st century skills through engagement with different aspects of digital technology.

The four strands of the programme (Vex Robotics, Lego League Coding, Minecraft Design and Podcasting) will be on display at two upcoming showcase events: the final of the Lego League in Tullamore Information Hub on 22 February and the overall Programme Showcase event in Portlaoise College on 11 April.



Local Creative Youth Partnerships

Local Creative Youth Partnership Coordinators are invited to deliver a presentation to Department of Education representatives on the work of the Local Creative Youth Partnerships in the Clock Tower, Department of Education on 20 February.

Consultations for Youth Voice in Participation are currently taking place across both counties to help inform Laois and Offaly Local Creative Youth Partnership Strategic Plan to be published later in the year.

Music Generation Laois

20 young musicians travelled to Borris in Co. Carlow to take part in this year's Music at Mount Leinster residential traditional music festival, presented by Music Generation Carlow. Our senior group took part from 12-15 February and junior group from 15-16 February.

Performance at ETBI Principals and Deputy Principals Conference

Music Generation Laois Malva Ukrainian Community Choir and Music Generation Laois Rock and Pop Ensemble in partnership with Portlaoise College performed at the ETBI Principals and Vice-Principals Conference in the Midlands Park Hotel on Thursday 1 February.

Music Generation Laois Forthcoming events

Xaverian College, Brooklyn, NYC, are visiting Laois Music Centre on Thursday 22 February. This group of 41 young musicians will be visiting Laois as part of a tour of Ireland, and will perform alongside young musicians from Music Generation Laois on 22 February in Laois Music Centre at 7pm. (Free admission)

Over 50 young musicians from Music Generation Laois are set to take part in 'We are Music Generation' – a celebratory day for young musicians from all over Ireland, on Saturday 2 March, in The Convention Centre, Dublin.



Music Generation Offaly

Music Generation Offaly is now delivering music programmes in all 5 ETB schools providing instrumental lessons, band development, choral development and, song writing. 5 members of the musician educator team are visiting schools on a weekly basis. A further 8 musician educators are delivering programmes to 17 primary schools across the county, with 5 schools currently on the waiting list to join our programmes in September 2024.

Following the publication of our statistical report for 2023, Music Generation Offaly worked with over 3,200 children and young people across 18 different programmes and events.

Youth Work Plan

The Youth Work Plan for Laois and Offaly has now been launched and presented to the Board at the January Meeting. The Plan was presented at the Offaly County Council Meeting on 19 February and will also be presented to members at the Laois County Council Meeting on 26 February.

Targeted Youth Employability Support Initiative (TYESI) 2024

The Department of Children Equality Diversity Inclusion and Youth (DCEDY) has allocated €47,000 (plus an additional allocation of up to €5,000 for non-capital, once-off set-up costs in 2024) to LOETB to administer under this initiative for 2024



FET Directorate

FET: Inaugural Review Implementation

- Three centres have completed self-evaluation so far in 2024. Thirteen more centres and services will complete the evaluation over the course of the year.
- The Integrated FET Centre Model evaluation will be conducted in March 2024.
- The second edition of FET Communications newsletter has been circulated to staff.

FET: Pathways

Development of a new FET Centre in Rathdowney.

Abbeyleix FET Centre uses the facility for their clinical skills demonstrations. From February, Literacy will use the facility every day for ESOL classes while Community Education will also commence use of the facility for local community groups.

Tullamore FET Centre will officially open their new Science Laboratory on 27 February. It will be opened by Iain Murray, a past student of the QQI Level 5 Laboratory Skills programme. Iain is now a Science Lecturer at TUS (Athlone)

A meeting was held on 8 February with all Centre and Service Managers where it was proposed to establish four Regional Clusters within Laois and Offaly. The aim of these Regional Clusters is to develop progression pathways for learners between Centres and Services.

FET: Apprenticeships

The expansion of the apprenticeship service is well under way now. The recruitment drive has been very successful with 11 new Instructors appointed. This includes 9 full-time



Electrical Instructors and 2 Cover Instructors (one Electrical and one Plumbing). The new Instructors are undergoing induction at present which includes completing a Train the Trainer course, small group classes on the Phase 2 apprenticeship curriculum and shadowing our experienced Instructors. An Instructor Network has been established where instructors can come together to share experience and offer peer support.

The partnership with the ESB has strengthened; 4 Instructors are in place now and all the classes have been scheduled. The first 2 classes of apprentices will start on 26 February and the remaining 2 classes are scheduled for late March. The Instructors assigned to the ESB include 2 experienced Instructors and 2 new Instructors.

Our new intake of plumbing apprentices commenced on 19 February. Half of this class (7 apprentices) are employed by Gas Networks Ireland and this includes our first ever female plumbing apprentice.

Three adult educators have been recruited as part of the expansion. They will join the existing adult educator and will deliver the Communications module to all the apprentices at the beginning of their Phase 2 training. They will also be assigned classes where they will liaise directly with the apprentices to support their training journey.

We are also recruiting 5 new administrative staff (2 recruited, 3 to be recruited) and a Grade 7 Senior Training Advisor. This means the apprenticeship team will have grown from 19 full time staff to 45 full time staff in a very short space of time.

FET: Skills

LOETB in collaboration with Family Carers Ireland will officially launch the national Caring with Confidence module on 29 February. The programme will support those caring for family members and offer a progression pathway to QQI Level 5 Healthcare award.

LOETB is working in partnership with Cairns Homes on the provision of a mobile training unit. The rig will visit both national and secondary schools to promote careers in



construction. We are also working in collaboration with Cairns Homes, to provide learner support to new and existing apprentices.

New Beginnings Next Steps Programme is a new bespoke programme run by the LOETB for Bord Na Mona staff. This programme will support graduates of the new Beginnings programmes in their early stages of business. Recruitment has commenced for the second New Beginnings programme in Boora, Blackwater, Derrygreenagh, and Mount Dillon.

FET: Inclusion

ESOL

The Adult Literacy Service attended the Rathdowney Ukrainian Community event organised by Laois County Council on 15 January. English language classes have been established for 5 mornings per week in the new Rathdowney FET centre accommodating approximately 50 adults. This is in addition to the existing English language classes that take place weekly in evening time.

Over 60 Adults from the new modular homes in Clonminch are attending English language classes at Tullamore FET Centre.

Community Education

Expansion into New Communities

This year, we have extended our reach into new communities including Killavilla, Co. Offaly, Cullahill, and The Swan in Co. Laois. Our commitment to providing accessible education and support services has allowed us to engage with diverse demographics and address the unique needs of these areas.



Partnerships and Collaborations

We are working closely with Psychiatry for Later Life and Laois Offaly Community Mental Health, undertaking a significant body of work to support mental health initiatives across the region. Additionally, our partnership with the Laois Offaly Rehab and Recovery Unit has led to the establishment of a therapeutic choir, harnessing the power of music in rehabilitation processes.

FET: Tertiary Provision

Enrolments for 2024/25 tertiary programmes are now open.

The following courses are available:

Portlaoise Institute	Bachelor of Business Studies (Honours) – Year 1 Bachelor of Business Studies (Honours) – Year 2 (Advanced Entry) Bachelor of Science in Software Development – Year 1 Bachelor of Science in IT Management – Year 1 Bachelor of Science in Software Development – Year 2
Abbeyleix FET Centre	Bachelor of Business Studies (Honours) – Year 1

Expansion of Nursing Places available to FET learners

LOETB were recently invited to a very informative information session by TUS (Athlone). TUS have been allocated extra places for Nursing students, 50 of which have been set aside for FET learners who apply for Nursing through the QQI route.

While TUS cannot reserve places specifically for LOETB learners, our proximity to Athlone means that these extra places have the potential to create opportunities for FET students who wouldn't otherwise be able to access Nursing as a career. This is very positive news for



our FET students and will serve to be a great motivator for those that wish to pursue Nursing locally.



OSD Directorate

Recruitment:

The following posts have been filled since the last ETB meeting

Grade III posts

Grade IV posts

1 Grade V post

2 Electrical instructor post

Cover panel Electrical & Plumbing

Sub-teacher panel

FET tutor panel

Teaching posts

1 APII Clonaslee College

SNA tutor panel

2 Adult Educator

Advertised post:

- APII posts Portlaoise College
- API post Coláiste Naomh Cormac, Kilcormac
- APII post Coláiste Naomh Cormac, Kilcormac
- Electrical instructors
- Grade VII Training Services
- Centre Manager Birr FET
- APO (FE-HE Pathways)
- Adult Education Guidance Counsellor
- Resource Workers Music Generation Laois & Laois School of Music



- Resource Workers Music Generation Offaly & The Academy of Music Tullamore
- Musician Educators Music Generation Laois
- Caretaker posts/panel

Pensions Report – February 2024:

Pension Description	No.
Members Retired/Pensions issued	1
Widow/Widower Pensions issued	0
Members/ Widows to return pension forms	0
Total Pensions issued to date:	1

In 2024, we have requested service to be transferred to LOETB for 3 members.

In 2024, we received 6 requests to transfer out service.

Pensioner Increases:

NSSO have applied pension increases for 1 October 2023 to LOETB pensioners. There is one outstanding query and we are meeting with NSSO to bring this matter to a conclusion.

Pension Liability Project 2023

Work has commenced on LOETB's pension liability for 2023. Data is being updated and will be sent to ESBS to issue to the Actuary by the end of February.



Single Pension Scheme Remediation Project:

Benefit/Leaver Statements (2013 – 2022) were issued to all LOETB staff who are members of the Single Pension Scheme on 14 December 2023.

We have also issued 70 Leaver Statements for 2023.

Service Project - updating service on Core system (non-SPS schemes):

Row Labels	Count of Date Started	Completed	Awaiting Sign Off	To Be Completed
1978	3	2	0	1
1981	2	1	0	1
1983	1	1	0	0
1984	1	1	0	0
1985	2	1	0	1
1986	2	0	0	2
1987	1	0	0	1
1988	2	1	0	1
1989	1	0	0	1
1990	4	1	0	3
1991	13	1	0	12
1992	6	0	0	6
1993	4	0	0	4
1994	9	0	0	9
1995	6	1	0	5
1996	8	1	0	7
1997	6	0	1	5
1998	14	2	0	12



1999	13	1	0	12
2000	21	3	0	18
2001	23	3	0	20
2002	30	3	6	21
2003	31	8	16	7
2004	22	2	13	7
2005	15	9	5	1
2006	27	19	3	5
2007	38	25	10	3
2008	24	19	5	0
2009	16	15	1	0
2010	24	21	1	2
2011	14	11	3	0
2012	15	15	0	0
2013	6	6	0	0
2014	5	5	0	0
2015	6	6	0	0
2016	11	11	0	0
2017	6	5	0	1
2018	16	1	0	15
2019	10	10	0	0
2020	9	9	0	0
2021	21	21	0	0
2022	1	1	0	0
Grand Total	489	242	64	183



LOETB has an agreement in place with ESBS to progress this Project. The next meeting with ESBS will take place at the end of February 2024. To date, we have updated service on the Core Portal for 242 employees - 49% of the total (see table above).

Payroll:

Pay Date	€	Payee
05/01/2024	1,423,566.50	1068
19/01/2024	1,446,264.41	1092
02/02/2024	1,360,670.17	1050

Corporate Services

Capital Projects and Buildings Works (Schools)

Oaklands Community College

DAC valid, Offaly County Council seeking additional information.

Dunamase College

New school – Stage 2A is complete and planning documentation is being prepared.

St. Fergal's College, Rathdowney

Modular accommodation – ground works commenced.

Coláiste Naomh Cormac, Kilcormac

Pathfinder Programme – Site meeting with Contractors took place on 16 February

Gaelscoil na Laochra, Birr

Building handover completed in January 2024



Procurement

Extended contracts: Exam papers, light catering equipment, multi-purpose office paper, contract cleaning.

New: Bus & Coach Hire Services, Supply and delivery of training courses in Hoof Trimming, AI, and/or Animal Ultrasound Scanning.

ICT

- Continued work on Information Security Management System with the Internal Audit Unit
Review of organisation email traffic and volumes for security and management purposes
Regular maintenance, prevention, and replacement requests on an ongoing basis across schools, centres, and offices.

General

- Ongoing - staff training, website development, lean training, data access and FOI requests, Service plan, annual report, internal controls, policy & procedure reviews.

Joe Cunningham

27 February 2024



11. Votes of Sympathy

The Board extended its sympathy to the following on their recent family bereavements:

- Fiona Kelly – Portlaoise College
- Gemma Farrell – Midland Skills Centre
- Edward Mc Evoy – Tullamore College
- Emma Gilchreest – Midland Skills Centre
- Louise Wallace – Tullamore Further Education Centre
- Mary Connell – Adult Guidance Portlaoise

12. Votes of Congratulations

- Banagher College who won the Leinster Schools senior hurling 'B' championship.

13. AOB

A member of the Board raised a concern regarding the credit card limit of €2000 set for schools. He felt that this limit was inadequate for the bigger schools and asked that this figure would be increased. Marie Bracken confirmed that the Finance Department had looked at this issue and she confirmed that the credit card limit has now been increased to €4000 for schools with over 400 students.

Members noted same.

14. Date and Venue of next meeting

The next meeting of the Board will take place on Tuesday 26 March 2024 in Midland Skills Centre, Tullamore, Co Offaly.

Signed: *Evelyn Dunne*
Evelyn Dunne (Apr 3, 2024 02:28 GMT+1)

Date: Apr 3, 2024

Chairperson