

I.T. School Administration Development and the Leaving Certificate Applied

The last year has seen progressive developments in the use of I.T. Technology to submit Credit Returns to the Department. Similar advancements are occurring in local school administration systems with the advent of the new e-Portal System to many schools. This package has many useful features that present an incisive and comprehensive means of collating the administrative and organisational workload of the Leaving Certificate Coordinator.

Such features include;

Pupil Attendance

School Notice-board

School Calendar

Class Timetables

Individual Student Profiles that present instant access to Student address and contact details

Student attendance records

Student examination records

Student Individual Timetable

The functionality of the e-Portal System is extended even further by networking this system throughout the school and provides an enterprising opportunity to Leaving Certificate Applied Subject Teachers of recording student attendance for each class.

Yet there is more that can be achieved with this package!, and NALCAC is currently consulting with CCM, the system suppliers, to produce a customised Examination Entry Template that will accommodate the various intricacies of the Leaving Certificate Applied Curriculum Framework.

Resources for Coordinators – worth checking out!

A system is being used very successfully in a Dublin school to in touch with parents through text messages. A school can set up this system by contacting Iflow at 01 2873077. The Iflow's text system will help your school improve the way it communicates with parents. All you need is a computer with internet connection. Costs start at 10 cent per message and go down to 4 cent per message depending on your usage. A coordinator using this system has found that Iflow's SMS text alert system has greatly reduced absenteeism and lateness rates.

Check out the Iflow website at www.iflow.ie. A coordinator using this system reports a definite improvement in school attendance.

An excellent resource for Contemporary Issues has recently been published by the Health Service Executive. The Youth Edition –Health in Ireland – an unequal state – By young people for young people is available from:

Children and Young People's Team,
Population Health, Third Floor, Bridgewater House,
Rockwood Parade,
Sligo. Ph: 0719174780

'The Golden Key' a workbook for Leaving Certificate Applied Year 1 is produced by Jane Landy and published by Golden Key.

For further information :
Telephone 84905908.
Website: goldenkey.ie

Check out the LCA policy template on www.lca-association.com. This template will assist any coordinator preparing for Whole School Evaluation.

Thank You

Thank you to all the coordinators who joined our Association this year. A special thanks to those coordinators who joined the National Executive and who give freely of their time to further the work of the Association. We are also extremely grateful to the staff of Dublin West Education Centre who carry out the administration work of the Association. Thanks also to the National Coordinator, Sheila O'Driscoll and to the staff at Shannon for their cooperation and work on the National Conference. Finally we would like to thank the TPN who generously funded the work of the Association during the past year.

For Your Information

To contact the Association: Tel: 0862358638 or email: info@lca-association.com
Web: www.lca-association.com

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LEAVING CERTIFICATE APPLIED COORDINATORS

April 2007

Issue No 2

NEWS BULLETIN

LCA National Conference a huge success

The first ever National Conference on the Leaving Certificate Applied was a huge success. This conference was jointly organised by the council of the Association and the Leaving Certificate Applied Support Service. Over 210 delegates attended the conference which was addressed by the Minister for Education, Mary Hanafin, T.D., Brian Kerr, Anne Looney, NCCA. Workshops were presented by Nora O'Connor, National Coordinator of SESS, Anne Tuohy, Regional Coordinator School Development Planning Initiative, Fr. Peter Mc Veery, S.J. Geraldine Walton and Anne Turley, Scoil Mhuire Portarlinton and John Kearney, principal, Breifne College, Cavan.



Liam Deaton, Chairman NALCA with Mary Hanafin, TD Minister of Education and Sheila O'Driscoll, National Coordinator, Leaving Certificate Applied

John Kearney, on behalf of the Association and the delegates present praised the commitment and dedication of the National Coordinator, Sheila O'Driscoll to the programme during this ten year period.

The Minister emphasised the success of the programme and congratulated the principals and coordinators present for their bravery in taking on this new programme in their schools. She stated that she would like more schools to offer the programme. Minister Hanafin said the success of the LCA is evidenced by the continuing substantial increase in the level of participation in the programme. The Minister said she looks forward to receiving the results of the research that the NCCA has commissioned into participation in and progression from the LCA as part of their overall reform of the curriculum. The Minister

commented on the lack of profile the programme received in the media. 'Where we are failing is in the lack of notice that wider society gives this alternative Leaving Certificate', she commented.

The keynote address was delivered by Brian Kerr who has enormous experience in motivating young people and in team building.

The Lord Mayor of Dublin, Councillor Vincent Jackson closed the conference and spoke about the importance of the Leaving Certificate Applied in opening up pathways in education for young people, particularly in the area of youth work. The Lord Mayor had first hand experience of the value of this programme from his work as Director of the Clondalkin Youth Service.

The AGM of the Association took place during the conference. It was the biggest attendance ever recorded at an AGM. Council membership has now expanded to thirteen members and more regions in the country are now represented on the central council

Time was short on the day. Delegates present asked for the workshops to be repeated on a regional basis and for the papers from the workshop to be available on our website.

There is no doubt that this was a hugely important conference in terms of establishing and confirming an important profile for the Leaving Certificate Applied.



NALAC National Council with the Minister for Education
Left to right: John Kearney (Cavan), Liam Deaton (Dublin), Mary Farrell (Dublin), Mary Hanafin, T.D. Claire Timmons (Dublin), John Linehan (Cork), Janet Hinchion (Mayo)

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LCA National Conference a huge success



Geraldine Walton and Anne Turley, Scoil Mhuire Portarlinton with Mary Hanafin, Minister for Education



Brian Kerr, Tony Collison, Mary Hanafin, TD, Sheila O'Driscoll and Liam Deaton



Delegates at the National Conference



Janet Hinchion, Clarie Timmons, Councillor Vincent Jackson, Lord Mayor of Dublin and Sheila O'Driscoll



Delegates at the National Conference



Presentation to the Minister of a clock made by Robert Mills, LCA Student, Greenhills College

AN UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP

Membership of NALCAC has increased significantly over the past year. Members are dispersed widely around the country with most counties being represented. It is very important that we get as many members as possible because this gives us a more representative view of the needs of coordinators in schools and centres. On joining each member is given a membership card, number and receipt of payment. The fee for joining NALCAC remains the same for the coming year (20 euro for one coordinator, 30 euro per school where there is more than one coordinator). If any member has not received a receipt or card please contact me immediately. Membership is valid from Sept. 1st to August 31st each year. Existing members will be reminded of renewal of membership in May. The Council of NALCAC would like to invite members to become actively involved in the Association whether at Council level or at regional level through the regional meetings. If anyone is interested please contact us. Any correspondence with regard to membership can be made through Dublin West Education Centre or to me directly John Linehan (022) 42290 or email jlinehan@yahoo.com. On behalf of the Association best wishes for the rest of the schoolyear.

AGM 2006

This was a short AGM as it was held during the conference and there was only forty minutes available. Liam Deaton, chairman, welcomed all the delegates to the meeting. The minutes of the AGM held in November 2005 were read. Liam addressed the delegates, outlining the history of the Association, the success of the first conference, the launch of the website and the funding received from the TPN. A financial report was issued to the delegates and the funding from TPN was explained. J. Linehan distributed the draft constitution. As there was no time to consider the constitution it was agreed to post the draft constitution on the web and members would be invited to post any amendments on or before February 1st 2007. The constitution would then be adopted at the next AGM.

Membership: Members ask that the position re membership be clarified and that a list of members be circulated to all and put on the web. It was pointed out that membership of a professional organisation is important during whole school evaluation. Members praised the council for all the work undertaken organising the conference. It was suggested that papers from the workshops be made available on the web and that the workshops be repeated at a regional level. The election of officers then followed. Liam thanked all delegates. The AGM ended.

COUNCIL MEMBERS 2007

- Chairman:
Liam Deaton,
Killester College, Dublin
- Secretary:
Mary Farrell,
Greenhills College, Greenhills, Dublin 12
- Treasurer:
Patricia Burke,
James Street CBS
Claire Timmons: 087 272944
Jobstown Community School.
- John Kearney**,
Breifne College, Cavan.
- Janet Hinchion**,
Rice College, Westport
- John Linehan**,
Nagle Rice Secondary School,
Doneraile, Co. Cork.
- Tom Rodgers**,
Ballinodde College,
Clarion Road, Ballinodde, Sligo
- Elenor M. Hession**,
The Youthreach Centre,
18/19 Comeragh Park, The Glen, Cork.
- Deirdre Matthews**,
St. Vincent's School,
Seatown Plc., Dundalk.
- Lorna Dune**,
Deansrath Community School,
Clondalkin
- Geri Nolan**,
Colaiste Eoin, Cappagh Road,
Finglas, Dublin 1.

REPRESENTATIVES FROM NALCAC MEET WITH THE STATE EXAMINATIONS COMMISSION IN ATHLONE

Four representatives met with representatives of the state examinations commission in Athlone on February 13th 2007. This was a long and indeed a very worthwhile meeting. Both groups presented issues for discussion.

John Linehan welcomed those present to the meeting. He outlined the history of the contact between the Association and the Examinations Commission. He thanked the staff for their huge commitment and work on the Leaving Certificate Applied and outlined the benefits to both groups of the annual meeting. The key issues that were raised at the meeting included:

1. Attendance – the difficulty of verifying the 90% attendance rate was raised.
2. Orals – There was no progress in changing the times of the oral exams to coincide with the Established Leaving Certificate. However the practical exams were happening a week earlier this year. The issue of supervising the year one students taking the Irish exam was raised and it was agreed that this would be examined.
3. Tasks –The issue of the PRT task was raised and it was suggested that there is a need to have an interview for this task. The issue of the internet breaking down during the IT exam was also discussed

5 Maths- Members raised the issue of the level of Maths and the difficulties being experienced by some students pursuing PLC courses.

6. Repeat Students – The issue of repeat students was discussed. It was pointed out that students can repeat a full session in order to improve their performance in LCA. If session 4 is repeated the exams must also be repeated.

7. Irish exemptions. Members raised their concerns about the issue of the number of students exempt from Irish and highlighted the problem this is causing at school level.

INFORMATION FOR LCA COORDINATORS

The representatives from the State Examinations Commission asked that the following points be brought to the attention of all LCA Coordinators.

1. Tasks – Late tasks will only be examined for candidates who have a valid Medical Certificate. If a candidate is unavailable for any other reason during the Task Examination period, their task can be examined in their absence, without the Oral component. Schools must make themselves available for the examiners. Direct contact should be made with the examiner and not the SEC if any issues arise re interviews. Schools should not make appointments with examiners if they do not have a task to examine. Examiners have asked that tasks are not to be presented in individual plastic sheets. Ideally tasks should be in a soft binder or ring-binder.

2. On-line Entries and Modules – All schools have been notified that deadlines will not be extended for on-line keying by schools.

3. Withdrawn Candidates – It would assist the SEC if in the case of a withdrawn candidate the school would inform the SEC of where the candidates have moved to.

4. Specialisms – It is essential that candidates are entered for the correct VOC Ed Tasks (May Year 1, Feb Year 2) and that they correspond with the Specialisms to be taken in year 2.

5. LCA students can do a Leaving Cert subject as well as following their own course

6. The SEC is considering the possibility of corresponding with coordinators by means of email. We would like to hear your views on this.

WHAT'S NEXT 4 U?

This was the theme of an excellent seminar organised for LCA Year 2 students in the Dublin12 area by the KWCD Partnership and Local Employment Service (inc the Jobs Club). 52 students from 7 local schools attended the seminar which included presentations from the local PLC colleges, and representatives from John Sisk and Son and Peter Marks who spoke about apprenticeships with their organisations along with a representative from Fas. Interview skills and CV prep were addressed by representatives from KWCD LES and Employer Exchange. The feedback was very positive from the teachers, the co-ordinators, the students and the speakers.

This excellent idea could be repeated around the country – an excellent way of promoting LCA at a local level.