

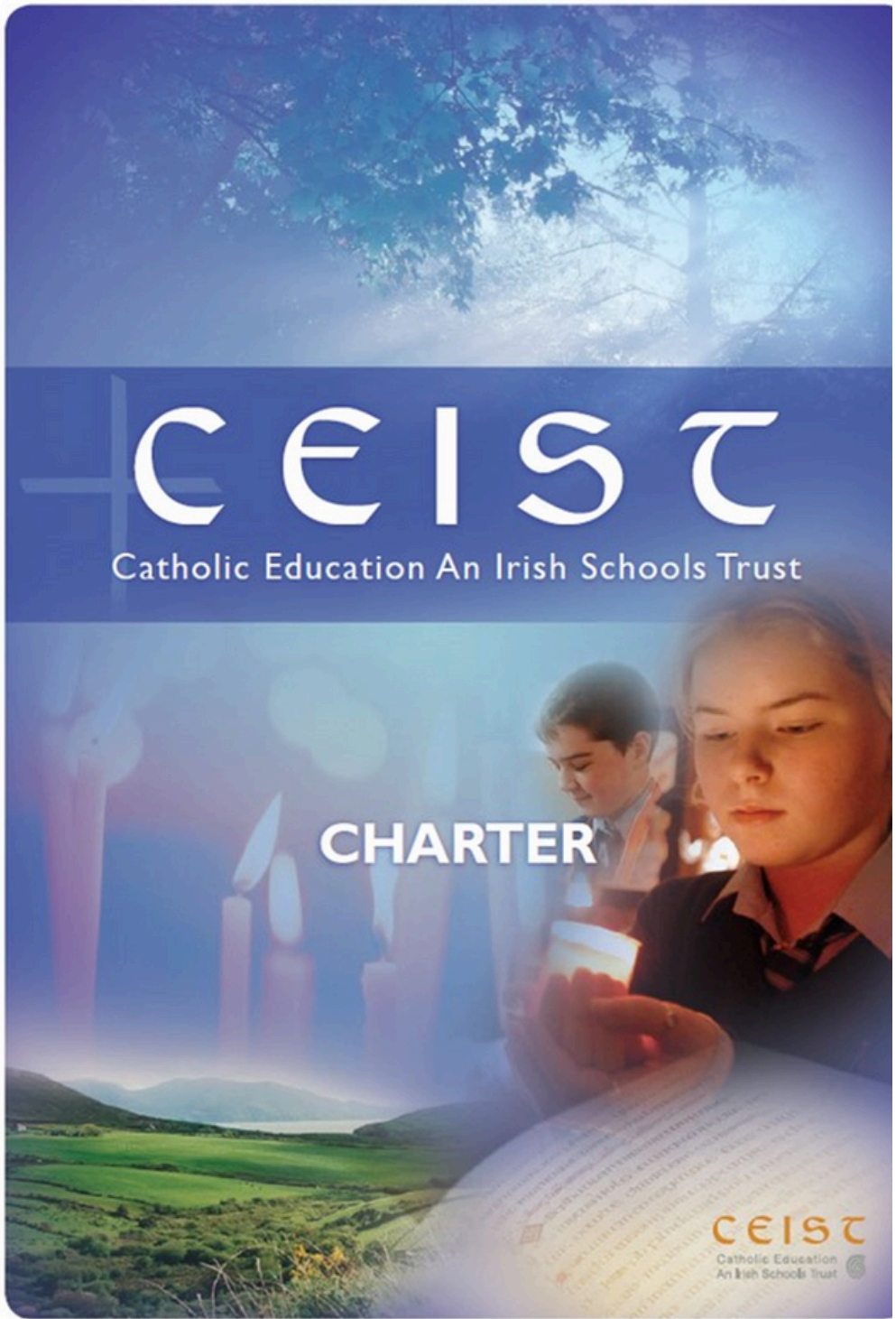
CEIS T

Catholic Education  
An Irish Schools Trust



Annual  
Report

2023



## CEIST Charter Values

- Promoting Spiritual & Human Development
- Achieving Quality in Teaching & Learning
- Showing Respect for Every Person
- Creating Community
- Being Just and Responsible

## Vision

A compassionate and just society inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

## Mission

To provide a holistic education in the Catholic tradition.



# Table of Contents

Message from the Chairperson	Page 4
CEO Address	Page 6
Promoting Spiritual and Human Development	Page 9
Achieving Quality In Teaching And Learning	Page 13
Showing Respect for Every Person	Page 16
Creating Community	Page 20
Being Just and Responsible	Page 26
CEIST Financial Statements	Page 34
Governance and Management Including Audit and Risk	Page 36

## Message from the Chairperson

As Chairperson of the Board of CEIST it is my privilege to present the Annual Report for 2023 and to thank you for taking the time to engage with it. An Annual Report provides a snapshot in time of the work of the organisation, highlights what we are most proud of in the past year, gives an account of our financial health and hints at future plans. Most importantly it offers CEIST an opportunity to outline the way in which it honours our ongoing commitment, through our Executive - to encouraging and challenging our school communities to live our values as outlined in the Charter; to robust governance; to striving to give excellent support to our stakeholders and to the prudent and efficient use of our financial resources, managed so faithfully by our sister company EDUCENA. As you read through this 2023 Annual Report, I hope that our Members and stakeholders will also see how important your support and dedication to the work of CEIST is and how much it is valued.



CEIST never loses sight of its founding intention and mission, *'to provide a holistic education in the Catholic tradition.'* We are very conscious that the ever shifting landscape of education in Ireland means that our Catholic schools must be supported and encouraged to constantly re-engage, redefine and recommit to how *'holistic education in the Catholic tradition'* is understood and lived on a daily basis. We are continuing to look to, and plan for, a future that will ensure that Catholic education at post-primary level remains a viable option for those parents who seek it for their children. The *'conversations about the future of Catholic education'* have continued throughout 2023 and are bearing much fruit in many different parts of the country. These conversations are not without their challenges and key among these is the struggle to secure appropriate accommodation, in a timely fashion, for the reconfiguration that is often needed after the consultation process has concluded. We have developed a strong working relationship with the Planning and Building Unit of the Department of Education. Our learnings over the past year will certainly shape the many conversations already in the pipeline for next year and beyond.

As you will see, the CEIST Values provide the framework for the writing of this Annual Report. It is a great tribute to the work of our Executive that our greatest challenge was to decide which of the many initiatives and events designed to support our school communities could be omitted. We are indeed fortunate to have such a committed and experienced Executive working to ensure that all CEIST school communities give living witness to our values on a daily basis. I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the leadership and vision of our CEO, Gerry McGuill, who has, during the past year, overseen the restructuring of the Executive. The creation of an Executive Leadership Team to include the CEO, Director of Education and Director of Finance has, I believe, placed CEIST in a much stronger position for our future endeavours.



As Chairperson of CEIST I am very conscious that none of the work that we do could be undertaken without the outstanding commitment and expertise of members of the Board of Directors. During 2023 we continued to place a strong emphasis on good governance, developing a more robust Risk Register, beginning work on a Business Continuity Plan, engaging in reflection on how we work as a board and working closely with EDUCENA, our sister company, to ensure that we are making the best possible use of our financial resources. It is appropriate at this time to thank Jim Corbett, Chairperson of EDUCENA, and CEO John Darcy for their ongoing support and unfailing willingness to work with us as we negotiated the restructuring of the office over the past year and as we continue to plan for the provision of Catholic post-primary education into the future.

Finally, a word of thanks to all our CEIST School communities, the members of our Boards of Management, our leaderships teams, staff and most importantly our students. You are the reason that CEIST exists, and it is your enthusiastic and gracious response to the many different initiatives and events outlined in this Annual Report that enables CEIST to continue to grow and strengthen in its mission. Blessed Basil Moreau writes of Catholic education as the *'art of helping young people to completeness.'* The Gospel of St John reminds us that Jesus came so that *'you might have life and have it more abundantly.'* May we who accompany one another on the journey to a life lived more completely and abundantly, be filled with the many graces and blessings that only our God can bestow.



Maeve Mahon, Chairperson



## CEO ADDRESS

A Chairde,

As we reflect on the achievements and milestones of the past year, I am honoured to present the highlights of our journey in the 2023 Annual Report. This year has been marked by significant appointments, events, and initiatives that have strengthened our commitment to Catholic education and the well-being of our students.

**Appointments and Governance:** We are pleased to announce the appointment of 18 Principals and 33 Deputy Principals, along with the establishment of 34 Boards of Management. These key appointments are instrumental in ensuring effective leadership and governance within our schools.



### Among the Highlights were:

- **Ceiliúradh CEIST:** We celebrated the spirit of CEIST through the many Ceiliúradh Day observances, fostering a sense of community and shared values.
- **Our first In-person Student Leadership Conference since COVID:** Bringing students together for leadership development and empowerment.
- **Leadership of a CEIST School Symposium:** The commencement of a journey supporting our School Leaders as “Leaders of Faith Schools”.
- **Annual Conference in September:** An essential gathering that facilitates collaboration and idea exchange among our community.
- **Conversations on Future Format of Catholic Education:** Engaging discussions on adapting to the evolving landscape of education.

**Collaboration and Adaptation:** Our commitment to collaboration was evident through active participation with the Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools (APTCS), where both the Chairperson and I engaged with relevant partners. There was also active engagement with the Department of Education, Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (AMCSS) and the Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS) and other Patrons. In an ever-changing educational landscape, CEIST continues to adapt to better support our schools and leaders.



## Key Initiatives:

- **CEIST Certification of Junior Cycle Religious Education:** A milestone in ensuring recognition and affirmation for students and teachers.
- **Induction Modules for Staff, Students, and Boards:** Facilitating smooth transitions and effective onboarding processes.
- **Restructuring of Executive:** Enhancing our organisational structure to better serve our mission.
- **Online Annual Report to Trustees:** A forward-looking approach to gathering and disseminating valuable information efficiently.

We are proud to sustain various initiatives in 2023, including the induction of Principals and Deputy Principals, Student Leadership Training, RE Teacher CPD, the Spiral Programme, and Leadership Programmes to name but a few. These efforts are crucial in maintaining the excellence and positive impact of our educational programmes.

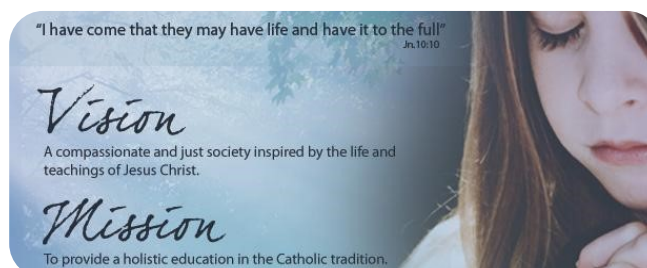
I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the CEIST Board for their tireless voluntary work and Chairperson Maeve Mahon for her exceptional leadership and support. A special thanks to all CEIST Board members for their dedicated service to our schools and communities. To our Principals, Deputy Principals, teachers and non-teaching staffs — your positivity, commitment to excellence, and kindness do not go unnoticed. Serving CEIST students has been a privilege, and their well-being remains at the core of our mission. Lastly, I want to acknowledge the hardworking and dedicated CEIST Executive team for their invaluable contributions.

As we look to the future, let us continue to work together in shaping the path of Catholic education and ensuring the success and well-being of our students.

Le gach dea-ghuí,



Gerry McGuill, Chief Executive





## CEIST Executive 2023



## CEIST Board of Directors

Back Left to Right: Gerry McGuill (CEO), Paul McEvoy, Anne McDonnell, Sr Margret Farrell, Dónal Cronin, Andrew O'Leary

Front Left to Right: Sally Anne Sherry, Maeve Mahon (Chairperson) , Sr Marie Wall, Anne McDonagh

Missing from the photograph Rev. Dr Tomás Surlis, Monsignor Gearóid Dullea, Maria O'Rourke



# Promoting Spiritual and Human Development

***“We believe a knowledge of and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ give meaning and purpose to our lives.”***

The importance of CEIST supporting and upholding the ethos and characteristic spirit in our schools cannot be overestimated and is rooted in the founding intentions of the five Congregations and the mission and identity of our schools. CEIST, as Patron, plays a significant role in reinforcing the values, beliefs, and principles that define the Catholic school community. Here are some key ways we carry out our mission:

Celebration of Founders’ Days:

Each of the five days was marked on the CEIST Calendar and where appropriate, resources were distributed to the relevant schools.

Mercy Day (24th September)

Sisters of Christian Retreat (19th November)

Presentation Day Nano Nagle (November 21st)

Daughters of Charity (29th November)

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (8th January)



Liturgical resources were distributed to schools for:

- Start of School Year
- November Remembrance
- Graduation.
- Christmas
- Lent
- Easter

Faith Leadership and Governance Coordinators visited each newly appointed Principal at least once in the weeks/months following appointment. Ethos, Characteristic Spirit and the Senior Leader’s responsibilities in this area form a major part of these conversations.

CPD covering Ethos, Characteristic Spirit and CEIST Charter Values was provided for all key stakeholders including:

- Chairpersons
- Finance Subcommittees
- RE Teachers

Ongoing CPD was provided to the CEIST Executive on:

- Ethos
- Finance
- Technology



## Leaders in CEIST Schools Programme

During 2023 we were delighted to have **eighty teachers** complete the Leadership in CEIST Schools Programme. The course was held on one evening midweek and on two Saturdays.

In order to preserve and nurture the qualities that make our schools distinctively Catholic, CEIST believes that each generation of teachers need to rediscover the vision of our schools, and give that vision new life.



**Participants in Leadership Programme 2023**

CEIST schools have two pillars which support and guide the way we work. The first is that schools are exemplary places of learning where every student experiences excellence in teaching and learning. The second is that schools are nurturing places of spiritual life and Catholic faith where every student comes to know and experience the loving presence of Jesus in their lives. These two pillars provide the foundation of all we do.

Our **Leaders in CEIST Schools** Programme (LCS) offers practical strategies for forming leaders who can sustain and develop this inspiring vision. Our approach in the LCS programme is to nurture a community of teacher leaders who genuinely identify with our core values and who appreciate the distinctive richness of their role as 'Teacher Leaders' in a CEIST School.

It is recognised that the challenges for Catholic schools will continue and change, but their overall goals and ethos will remain and will be incorporated into a new vision which is more appropriate to the multicultural, pluralistic faith dimensions of modern society.



**Participants in Leadership Programme 2023**

## Religious Education

### CEIST Certification of Junior Cycle Religious Education

Religious Education is an integral part of the curriculum in every CEIST school. CEIST along with Boards of Management and Senior Leadership and Management Teams are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that every student receives a full, informative, uplifting, and real experience of Religious Education.

The Irish Episcopal Conference directs that all Catholic schools timetable two hours of Religious Education for all students each week. The content is, to a large extent, at the discretion of individual schools.

Since Religious Education is central to the life of our schools, CEIST now offers certification to students who do not take Religious Education as a Junior Cycle examination subject. By so doing, learning in RE is certified by the Patron, as part of each student's Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) under 'Other Areas of Learning.'

CEIST Certification began in 2023 when 878 students received certificates. We asked RE teachers to authenticate that the necessary criteria were met, and the Principal signed off on this.

Following this the CEIST Executive reviewed the programme, and two changes will be introduced for 2024 certification; Personalised Certificates will be issued to schools and each school will receive a Perpetual Award which will be presented for outstanding project work in each school.



**Presentation of RE Certificates at St Mary's High School, Midleton**

## Start of Year Gathering for RE Teachers.

CEIST hosted an online “Welcome Gathering” for RE Teachers in early September.



## Student Leadership Training

CEIST offered our ongoing Student Leadership Training to schools which requested it. This training focused on the ethos based elements of student leadership.

## Spiral Programme:

The Spiral is an online programme which ran over 7 evenings in March and April. It provided Senior Leaders with an opportunity to dive deeply into their own spirituality. It was also an opportunity to explore how this spirituality influences their work and how they lead their school.





# ACHIEVING QUALITY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

***“We are committed to excellence and to continually improving the quality of teaching and learning.”***

## Recruitment of Senior Leaders

The CEIST recruitment process seeks to ensure that those appointed to Senior Leadership positions in our schools are fully committed to the values CEIST espouses. These values are central, not only to the preservation and protection of Ethos and Characteristic Spirit but also to guaranteeing *Quality Teaching and Learning*. CEIST has two nominees on all Senior Leadership Selection Committees. The CEO sat on all Principal selection committees in 2023. There was a robust selection process encompassing six competencies including “Leadership of a Faith School” and “Leading Teaching and Learning.” During 2023 twelve Principals, six Acting Principals, twenty one Deputy Principals and eleven Acting Deputy Principals were appointed.

## Induction of Senior Leaders

CEIST has drawn up a Handover Manual for all new Principal appointments. Where appropriate, the CEIST Faith Leadership and Governance Coordinator met with the incoming and outgoing Principals in 2023 and went through the CEIST Handover Manual. Each newly appointed Principal was visited by the CEIST Faith Leadership and Governance Coordinator at least twice following appointment. A three-day induction programme for all newly appointed Principals commenced in October 2023 and will continue in February and June 2024. This programme covers Faith Leadership, Leading Learning & Teaching, Role of the Patron, Secretary to Board of Management, Finances, Child Protection, Managing Teams and Relationships.

There was an Induction Day for newly appointed Deputy Principals in August covering the same areas outlined above.



## Induction of new Boards of Management

All newly appointed Boards are visited by the CEIST Faith Leadership and Governance Coordinator, where the Board's responsibilities in relation to ensuring *Quality in Teaching & Learning* are emphasised. These responsibilities are also highlighted at all meetings with Chairpersons.



## Induction of new Staff and Students

The CEIST Executive has developed an online interactive induction module and a PowerPoint Presentation for both new students and new staff. Schools are requested to incorporate one or both of these induction platforms into their own induction programmes. Both presentations cover the origins, contributions and legacies of the five founding congregations as well as the formation of CEIST and its role in the lives of our schools. CEIST's commitment to *Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning* is the focus of these presentations.



## Engagement with Department of Education

CEIST engaged with the Department of Education in a number of ways to support *Quality in Teaching and Learning* in our schools including attendance at nine preliminary and reporting WSE/MLL meetings with Boards of Management, compiling a WSE/MLL Summary Recommendations Handbook and monitoring Subject/Programme Inspection Reports.

CEIST engaged with the Department on issues including change of status, amalgamations, capital projects and provision of facilities.

There was further interaction in relation to enrolment in pressure point areas. The Department liaised with CEIST who worked with schools to overcome deficits in school places.

The Department also contacted CEIST in relation to Special Class provision and school places for the enrolment of Ukrainian students.

## Capital Projects

The provision of *Quality Teaching and Learning* is greatly enhanced by a broad curriculum and modern fit for purpose facilities. In 2019 CEIST entered into agreement with the Department of Education to act as Project Executives for major capital projects in CEIST schools.

During 2023, CEIST engaged regularly with Design Teams, KSNPM, the Department of Education and school Boards of Management on all ten projects.

CEIST also interacts with the Department of Education in relation to provision of facilities to support *Quality in Teaching and Learning*.



**Presentation College Athenry**



## SHOWING RESPECT FOR EVERY PERSON

***“We respect the unique and intrinsic value of every person.”***

CEIST, as Patron, continued to interact and engage in a collaborative and consultative way with all our stakeholders throughout 2023.

### CEIST Members

The CEO and Chairperson met with CEIST Members on two occasions in March and November 2023. The CEIST Board met with the Members in the context of the CEIST AGM in May. At each meeting the members were updated on the work of the Trust and major developments in Catholic Education by both the CEO and Chairperson. There was an opportunity at each meeting for discussion on current issues. Time was also given to discussion on the role of a Member. The Members expressed their sincere appreciation for the work being done by the Board of Directors and Executive.

### Scoping Inquiry

In early 2023 the Minister for Education set up the *Scoping Inquiry into Historical Sexual Abuse in Schools Run By Religious Orders* with Mary O’Toole as Chairperson. On behalf of the founding congregations, CEIST coordinated the distribution of Scoping Enquiry Questionnaires to all schools. The completed questionnaires were returned to CEIST and forwarded to the respective congregations.

### The EDUCENA Foundation

There is a unique and positive relationship between CEIST and EDUCENA whose main object is *“To foster and support the religious, missionary and charitable purposes of the Congregations in Ireland and in other countries, and to further the aims and purposes of Roman Catholic education in the tradition of the combined ethos and education philosophies as the Congregations in colleges and schools and other projects.”* (Memorandum of Association for The EDUCENA Foundation). It does so by *“holding and efficiently managing the properties transferred to it by the congregations.”*

CEIST and EDUCENA share both human and physical resources. The CEIST CEO attended all meetings of the EDUCENA Board of Directors and the EDUCENA CEO attended all meetings of the CEIST Board of Directors. The two Boards met in joint session in August. There was ongoing contact between the two CEOs and regular meetings of the two Chairpersons and CEOs. There are two directors in common, Anne McDonagh and Sr Marie Wall, who serve on both boards.

## Boards of Management

Thirty-four Boards of Management were appointed in 2023 which involved selecting 272 Parent, Teacher and Trustee Nominees. All newly appointed Boards were visited by the school Faith Leadership and Governance Coordinator at the commencement of the Board's term of office. The Faith Leadership and Governance Coordinators also met, one to one, with all new Chairpersons prior to their appointment. Chairpersons were invited to all online Gatherings for School Leaders, including Christmas and Easter Gatherings. A CPD Day for Chairpersons was held in March.

## Senior Leaders



There was regular engagement with Senior Leaders through formal school visits, submission of Board of Management minutes, Finance Sub-Committee reports, revised Admissions Policies and Child Safeguarding Review notification letters. Every school was visited at least once in 2023 and there were regional meetings for Principals and Deputy Principals, where issues of mutual interest were discussed. A National Symposium on Faith Leadership was held in June. Faith Leadership and Governance Coordinators were in regular contact with school leaders by phone, e-mail and in person.

## Child Protection Support

Schools have responsibilities under Department of Education Child Protection Procedures. In this regard, schools must have robust and wholly understood procedures that enable the school to fully carry out its responsibilities for those in their care. It is also vital that the Board of Management and the entire staff are appropriately supported and safeguarded in the reporting, referring and documenting of child safety concerns.

To this end, CEISTC offered targeted support to Principals, Deputy Principals and Chairpersons of Boards of Management on a number of occasions during 2023.

## School Staffs

There were a number of Online Gatherings for school staffs during 2023 including Welcome Gatherings for newly appointed teachers in August and RE Teachers in September. In-person RE Teacher CPD was held on a regional basis in March. Faith Leadership and Governance Coordinators made presentations on the provenance and role of CEISTC to a number of staffs who requested it.

## Students

The CEIST Annual Student Leadership Conference was held in DCU on April 19. The Conference was attended by 300+ students from 95 CEIST schools.

CEIST also provided student leadership training to schools, with emphasis on ethos, on request.



**CEIST Student Leadership Conference 2023**



## Irish Episcopal Conference

The CEIST Chairperson and CEO met with Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly SMA, Bishop Tom Deenihan and Bishop Elect Paul Connell in the Columba Centre, Maynooth in May for the annual review. There was a very positive and constructive exchange of views, with the Bishops expressing wholesome appreciation for the work of the Trust and Boards of Management.

## Diocesan Advisors

There was ongoing contact with Diocesan Advisors at local level during 2023. Diocesan Advisors were invited to attend the RE Teacher CPD, Easter and Christmas Gatherings and the National Symposium on Faith Leadership in June.



## Catholic Education Partnership

CEIST has ongoing interactions with the Catholic Education Partnership through direct dialogue at Chairperson and CEO levels, both directly and through the offices of the APTCS. The Chairperson of CEP, Dr Marie Griffin, gave a very informative presentation to a joint meeting of the Boards of CEIST and EDUCENA in August.



# JMB

## Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools (APTCS) and Secretariat of Secondary Schools (JMB/AMCSS)

CEIST engaged with the APTCS at Board, CEO and staff levels in relation to ethos, property and other areas of mutual interest. The CEOs of both CEIST and EDUCENA sit on a number of subcommittees of APTCS and the CEIST Chairperson sits on the Board and the CEIST Vice Chairperson chairs the APTCS Audit & Risk Committee. CEIST collaborated with trust and diocesan patrons in facilitating conversations on the future form of Catholic Education in a number of localities. There was regular contact with the Secretariat for Secondary Schools on national, local and school matters. CEIST and the JMB collaborate on Senior Leadership Recruitment, Conversations on the Future of Catholic Education, Amalgamations and Board of Management Training as well as on matters pertaining to individual schools.



## Schools of Sanctuary

CEIST hosted an online information webinar to familiarise our schools with the Schools of Sanctuary Initiative which compliments the ethos and values we deem so important in everyday life. The webinar was 30 minutes long, with a 20 minute presentation and a 10 minute contribution from Nano Nagle College, Farranree, Cork. The initiative also fits well with our student leadership engagement and can become a great focal point for a student leadership initiative within the school. Twenty two schools joined the webinar.



# Creating Community

*“Our schools are faith communities of welcome and hospitality where Gospel values are lived and where there is special care for those most in need.”*

## CEIST Annual Conference

The 2023 CEIST Annual Education Conference was held in the Hodson Bay Hotel in September where we gathered under the challenging theme, **"Empowering Minds, Nurturing Souls."** The Welcome Mass was celebrated by Paul Connell, Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise and concelebrated by CEIST Director Rev Dr Tomás Surlis.

The theme was based on the first of our CEIST Charter Values - "Promoting Spiritual and Human Development." Over the few days, we explored how these two elements intertwine to create a powerful and transformative educational experience.

We were honoured to have two outstanding keynote speakers with us for our Conference.

**Bernie McNally**, Secretary General of the Department of Education, who plays a pivotal role in shaping educational policies and initiatives.

**Barbara Couper**, Director of Scottish Catholic Education Services, brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the forefront of education.





Delegates had the opportunity to choose from a diverse array of workshops including:

- RSE & SPHE at Second Level
- Establishing a Special Class: A roadmap to delivery
- Supporting School Leaders to Maximise the Potential of the Annual Review Meeting
- Early Identification and Resolution of Hidden Bullying in Schools - Ensuring Psychological Safety and Wellbeing of Students
- Internet Safety – Social Media, Cyber Bullying, Internet and Mobile Device Safety

Each workshop was designed to enhance professional development and foster innovation in education.

The Conference proved a great success with delegates participating and interacting in a very positive manner.





## CEIST Student Leadership Conference

Our 2023 Student Leadership Conference was held in St Patrick's Campus, DCU in April.

We were delighted to have the Archbishop of Dublin, Dermot Farrell, present to welcome our audience and bless the work of the day.

Professor Daire Keogh - President Dublin City University - was our Keynote Speaker. Professor Keogh gave a very meaningful and engaging address which was appreciated by the student delegates.

This was our first in-person Student Leadership Conference since 2019. We were delighted to be back on campus again in DCU St Patrick's, where we received a marvellous welcome from our host Dr Cora O Farrell, Director of the Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education.

We had one of our biggest attendances ever with ninety schools, three hundred students and over ninety teachers in attendance. The theme chosen for the day was *Making a Difference ... CEIST Values in Action*.

Student Leadership groups from four schools each made a presentation to the conference on how they are active in their schools in promoting CEIST Values and how they are enabling the student voice to flourish. The conference listened intently as student leaders from Sancta Maria College, Ballyroan Dublin, Presentation Secondary School, Wexford, Presentation Secondary School, Milltown, Killarney and Scoil na Tríonóide Naofa, Doon Co. Limerick, each told their story.



We heard of a range of school activities rooted in values and ethos that inspired everyone present. Afterwards, in group workshops, school student leaders were encouraged to discuss what they heard in terms of what's happening in their own schools. Workshops also focused on how students might like to respond to this conference by initiating / recommencing / revising some student leadership activity in promoting CEIST Values back at their own school.

Our teachers also had a truly inspiring talk from Vivek da Silva, Assistant Professor in RE at DCU, on the importance of "Student Voice" in CEIST schools, a topic echoed by Caitlin Faye Maniti, President of the Irish Second Level Students Union when she addressed the Conference.

Everyone left with a renewed enthusiasm for the value and purpose of our CEIST schools in promoting and supporting the genuine student voice in all our schools.

## Ceiliúradh CEIST Day

Wednesday 1st February 2023 was scheduled as the day of celebration for CEIST schools throughout the country to continue the momentum and excitement created during our inaugural Ceiliúradh CEIST 2022.

Our schools really did embrace the occasion, and thanks to the engagement of our wonderful students, their dedicated teachers and senior leadership teams, a day to remember was enjoyed by all, where the best of all that we do in our schools was showcased. The CEIST flag was proudly hoisted on school flagpoles across the country to mark the occasion.

Prayers and resources were issued to all schools in advance and our CEIST team visited as many schools as possible on the day, to support and celebrate with them.

The theme for the day was '**One Good Deed**,' and the variety of good deeds, initiatives and events demonstrated the willingness of our schools to embrace the occasion. Many schools held assemblies where our lovely prayer 'The Calling' was read, while music and songs from choirs, orchestras and bands reverberated throughout the corridors. Students visited nursing homes, hospitals and homes of the elderly, while many schools welcomed visitors to their schools, including members of our founding congregations who enjoyed the hospitality of our school communities. Some Home Economics classes baked cakes for both staff and students while others made St. Brigid's Crosses and handed them out to members of the local community. Environmentalists will be delighted with the extent of tree planting countrywide on 1st February and many of these trees were planted in very prominent or significant locations at our schools, which the school community will always associate with Ceiliúradh CEIST 2023.

Schools submitted videos, photographs and reports from their schools and a compilation of all submissions was merged into one photographic compendium for all to share and enjoy.

The success of Ceiliúradh CEIST 2023 has ensured that 1st February will forever be embedded in the CEIST calendar as our day of celebration. Roll on Ceiliúradh CEIST 2024!





## Celebrating the Contribution of Retired School Leaders

On 20th September 2023, the CEIST Team was very pleased to be joined by former and Senior Leaders (Chairpersons, Principals and Deputy Principals) for an occasion organised to mark their retirements.

This event allowed us to acknowledge the valuable contribution to education of so many and was arranged as a small token of appreciation to them.

Mass was celebrated for the group by Fr. Liam Morgan in St. Peter's Church, Two Mile House, Naas, with beautiful music provided by choir and musicians from St. Mary's College, Naas, led by Musical Director David Lanigan.



**Back Left to Right: Steve McEntegart, Rob Halford, Gerry McGuill (CEO), Fr Liam Morgan, Sharon McGrath, Mary Hoade, Colin Roddy**

**Front Left to Right: Tom Fennessy, Fionnghuala King, Gerry Watchorn, Johnny McCormack, Sandra Doyle, Sr Gemma McKeivitt, Pádraigín Uí Riordáin, Eilis Casey**

## Engagement with Schools

During 2023 every school received a visit from their designated Faith Leadership and Governance Coordinator (FLG). Many schools received more than one visit. During these visits the FLG Coordinators met with members of the school community including Senior Leaders, RE Teachers, Student Council members included other staff, students and teachers. Topics covered during these visits included ethos and faith development and the teaching of RE, finance, governance, capital projects and the relationship between CEIST and the school.

During 2023 CEIST representatives attended a number of significant events in schools including anniversary celebrations, new school and additional school accommodation openings, Masses and awards ceremonies.

In-person meetings of Principals and Deputy Principals were held on a regional basis throughout the year.



## Online Leadership Gathering

Online Gatherings were held for Principals, Deputy Principals and Chairpersons of Boards of Management to mark both Easter and Christmas. Bishop Michael Duignan delivered the Easter message and Dr Cora O'Farrell, Director of the Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education at DCU, spoke about the meaning of Christmas. CEIST Directors, Members and Diocesan Advisors were invited to join these gatherings.

## BEING JUST AND RESPONSIBLE

*“We seek to act justly and responsibly in all our relationships.”*

### Boards of Management

During 2023 the CEIST Executive sourced 136 Trustee Nominees for Boards of Management, and appointed and provided induction training for all 34 new Boards of Management in CEIST schools.

### CEIST Schools

CEIST schools were involved in many charitable and community based projects for example Pope John Paul II Awards, St. Vincent de Paul, Trocaire, The Samaritans, Schools of Sanctuary, local parish initiatives and Rainbows.

### Future of Catholic Education

As the largest Post Primary Education Trust in Ireland, CEIST takes its responsibilities in relation to protecting and safeguarding the legacies of the founding congregations and the future of Catholic Education, extremely seriously. For this reason, CEIST has embarked on two separate but interrelated journeys which will form a significant part of its work into the future.

### *Conversations at local level*

CEIST joined with other Catholic Patrons in a number of areas by carrying out a consultation process on the format that Catholic Education should take in those areas into the future.

The aims of the consultations were:

1. To gather the perspectives of Boards of Management, staff, students and parents on the future of Catholic post-primary education in their area.
2. To gather the perspectives of parents of primary school children in the catchment area on the future of Catholic post primary education in their area.
3. To capture the joys, concerns, hopes and anxieties of all, which will inform a unified vision for Catholic post-primary education in their area and which will hopefully serve the community for decades to come.

Consultations resulted in the following:

- In Tuam, amalgamation of Scoil Bhríde, Tuam and Presentation College, Currylea to form High Cross College, Tuam.
- In Ballyfermot we had the amalgamation of Caritas College Ballyfermot (CEISC), St Dominic's Secondary School and St John's College, De La Salle, ( both Le Chéile), to form St Seton's Secondary School.
- A consultation in Farranree, Cork City resulted in Presentation North Secondary School changing its name to Nano Nagle College, Farranree and going co-educational from September 2023.
- Consultations continued in Longford Town and commenced in Claremorris and Castlebar.
- A process commenced in February 2023 in Ballinasloe resulting in a decision by CEISC and the Diocese of Clonfert to apply to the Department of Education to amalgamate Ardscoil Mhuire and St Joseph's College, Garbally with effect from 1st September, 2025.
- An application from Meán Scoil Mhuire gan Smál, Roscommon to go co-educational was approved by the CEISC Board on December 13 and submitted to the Department of Education.
- At the request of a local community group Sacred Heart School, Westport carried out a consultation in relation to co-education as did Rice College (ERST). Sacred Heart School are delaying a decision pending clarity on their new school project.





## Leadership of a Faith School



As we are all aware, the Founding Congregations entrusted the responsibility for protecting and preserving the ethos and characteristic spirit of our schools to CEIST. At a local level CEIST devolves this responsibility to Boards of Management. This involves much more than iconography and liturgical celebration. Ethos should be evident and tangible within our schools. As Patron, it is our responsibility to support school leaders in their role and to provide them with the means to do so effectively. Maintaining the focus on “Faith Schools” and “Faith Leadership” is particularly important at the present time as we explore the shape that Catholic Education will take into the future. **In order to build on what is already there we organised a Symposium on Faith Leadership for all CEIST Principals and Deputy Principals on 19th June in the Tullamore Court Hotel.** This was the first time that CEIST had undertaken such a project, and it was the single most important event in 2023.

The Symposium was the start of a journey in supporting School Leaders in their Faith Leadership and will be continued over the coming years.

This was a very successful day with excellent speakers, great participation and sharing of ideas. The facilitated table discussions proved very successful and productive.

Over 300 Senior Leaders attended the Symposium representing 98% of CEIST Schools. The Symposium was also attended by CEIST Directors and Members, Diocesan Advisors and representatives of CEP and APTCS.



## Nano Nagle Student Assistance Fund

The Nano Nagle Student Assistance Fund is sponsored by the Presentation Sisters, Northeast Province. This funding was first offered in 2018 to celebrate the 300th anniversary of Nano Nagle and in the Sisters' words: *'Our hope is that this gesture will open opportunities and enable the advancement of some students who are struggling to progress educationally due to financial difficulties.'*



This Fund is designed to offset the cost of educational resources, to enhance the student's educational experience and to enable a full engagement with the curriculum. In 2022 the criteria for accessing the fund was expanded to include sourcing and providing psychological testing and counselling. They were further expanded in 2023 to further assist schools in supporting students with mental health challenges. The application and response processes are reviewed and revised annually. The Committee for oversight of this fund assessed the applications received and was delighted to approve just over €59K to be awarded amongst 29 schools.

## Capital Projects

In 2019 CEIST entered into agreement with the Department of Education to act as Project Executive for major capital projects in CEIST schools. The Department of Education resources CEIST in this endeavour. CEIST has engaged KSN Project Managers as the Project Management Company to assist with the technical aspects of these projects. This is a new departure and major undertaking for CEIST, which is currently managing ten projects with a combined value in excess of €200m.

Previously the full responsibility for managing such projects lay with the school's Board of Management which was a huge burden on Boards. We in CEIST were delighted to take over this task and are building up a store of experience and expertise which will be very beneficial to our schools.

CEIST, as Project Executive, makes all decisions in relation to the project, draws down all monies and disburses funds. CEIST also tenders for Design Teams for each project and appoints the successful professionals. There can be no divergence from this as the DoE has delegated these functions to CEIST only.

During 2023, CEIST engaged regularly with Design Teams, KSNPM, the Department of Education and school Boards of Management on all ten projects.

## Restructuring of CEIST Executive.

### Rationale

In the spring of 2023, the CEO conducted an in-depth review of the Executive Branch structures, personnel, roles and responsibilities. The review took place over a six week period in February and March. It comprised of interviews with each member of the Executive, conversations with the CEIST Chairperson, examination of all aspects of the work of the Executive and research into the structures of other similar organisations.

### Context

CEIST has been in operation as a Patron/Trust Body for in excess of 100 schools for 16 years. During that time the Irish educational landscape has undergone profound change. The CEIST Organisation and Executive has adapted over time to respond to these changes, meet the challenges and embrace the opportunities that have presented. CEIST has been extremely successful in establishing itself as a major player, building a real identity and creating a relevance in the lives of our schools. The pace of change in society and education continues unabated and it is essential that the structure and resources of CEIST are equipped to respond to these changes in the years to come.

### Revised Structure

The restructuring resulted in the CEIST Executive comprising two divisions, the Education Division to be overseen by a Director of Education and the Finance and Administration Division overseen by a Director of Finance and Administration. The Directors, together with the Chief Executive, form a Senior Leadership Team to guide CEIST through the challenges and opportunities of the coming years. Bernadette McKeown was appointed to the position of Director of Finance and Administration while Rob Halford has moved into the role of Director of Education.



## Community Schools

In 2008 The Congregations of the Sisters of Mercy and Presentation Sisters engaged CCEIST to carry out the Trustee function in Community Schools and Designated Colleges under an Agency Agreement. This legal Agency Agreement commits CCEIST to carrying out the 'Active Trusteeship' of the Mercy and Presentation Sisters in the schools where they are co-Trustees. The present Agency agreement spans the years 2021-2024. The following functions are carried out by CCEIST on behalf of the Congregations:

- Ensuring the maintenance of the characteristic spirit of the schools
- Securing Trustee nominees to the Boards of Management
- Involvement in the appointment of the Boards Of Management under legislation
- Securing Trustee nominees to Selection Boards for Assistant Principal, Deputy Principal, Principal and Chaplains posts
- Keeping in touch with school life
- Acquiring Board Of Management Minutes and maintaining a relevant archive of same
- Ensuring that relevant policies are in place
- Liaison with the Provincial Leaders regarding approvals for major building projects or refurbishment
- Working in partnership with the ETB and other Catholic Trustees where relevant
- Working with ACCS and other relevant organisations

## Communication

In line with these functions our Leadership Coordinator liaised regularly with Principals and Boards of Management during the past year.

## School Visits and Characteristic Spirit

During school visits, the coordinator engaged with the Principal, the Chaplain, and members of the RE Team where possible. The ethos and characteristic spirit of the schools were reviewed, and ideas shared about the teaching of Religion, liturgies, retreats, and reflection spaces.

There is much evidence that our Community Schools in the main are very true to the founding traditions of the Congregations in a multi-denominational sphere where respect, inclusion, diversity, social justice and care are embraced and promoted.

## Recruitment and Retirements

The Congregations were represented on all interviews for Senior Leadership posts by our Coordinator and support was made available to the schools in arranging these appointments. **Three** new Principals, **nine** new Deputy Principals, and **three** new Chaplains were appointed. Induction and ongoing support were provided for new Principals.

Congratulations and appreciation to Principals and Chairpersons of Boards who retired during the year having devoted dedicated, professional, and unstinting service over many years.

## Conclusion

CEIST is grateful to the other joint Patrons, all Boards of Management, Principals and entire school communities in our family of Community Schools and Designated Community Colleges who worked closely and professionally with our Leadership Coordinator over this past year.

We also acknowledge and appreciate the service and professionalism of ACCS. We look forward to ongoing progress and development in our relationships and will endeavour to provide effective support to our schools.



## Community Schools & Designated Community Colleges Co-Patronage

- Abbey Community College, Roscommon
- Ballinrobe Community School, Mayo
- Ballyhaunis Community School, Mayo
- Beara Community School (Scoil Phobail Bhéar), Cork
- Blackwater Community School, Waterford
- Carna Community School (Scoil Phobail Mhic Dara), Galway
- Cashel Community School, Tipperary
- Causeway Comprehensive School, Kerry
- Clifden Community School, Galway
- Coláiste Chiaráin, Kildare
- Coláiste Dún Iascaigh, Tipperary
- Coláiste na Sceilige, Cahirciveen, Kerry
- Coláiste na Trócaire (Mercy Community College), Limerick
- Dunmore Community School, Galway
- Glenamaddy Community School, Galway
- Gort Community School, Galway
- Holy Family Community School, Dublin
- John the Baptist Community School, Limerick
- Kilrush Community School, Clare
- Kinsale Community School, Cork
- Lanesboro Community College, Longford
- Millstreet Community School, Cork
- Moate Community School, Westmeath
- Mohill Community College, Leitrim
- Mountmellick Community School, Laois
- Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne, Kerry
- Scoil Mhuire Community School, Kildare
- Scoil Phobail Sliabh Luachra, Kerry
- Skibbereen Community School, Cork
- St. Joseph's Community College, Clare
- St. Mark's Community School, Dublin
- St. Peter's Community School, Cork

# CEIST Financial Statements

## CEIST CLG – 2023 Financial Performance

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in the preparation of the CEIST CLG Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, is Irish Law and FRS 102.

### Financial Summary

	2023 €'000	2022 €'000
<b><u>Income</u></b>		
EDUCENA Funding	666	590
Licence Fees	439	408
Donations/Sponsorship	10	14
Presentation Sister NE Provence Donation re Galway Schools Amalgamation	0	13
CEIST Conference Income	69	63
Miscellaneous Income	70	69
Department of Education Funded School Building Projects	<u>5,337</u>	<u>8,325</u>
	<b><u>6,591</u></b>	<b><u>9,482</u></b>
<b><u>Administrative Costs</u></b>		
Employee Costs	761	673
Depreciation	19	13
Rent	29	25
Travel and Subsistence	74	64
Website Development IT Costs	31	23
Rationalisation of Schools	48	64
School Training/CEIST Init	36	24
Ethos Development Expenditure	42	19
CEIST Conference Expenditure	69	63
Other Costs	158	165
Department of Education Funded School Building Projects	<u>5,337</u>	<u>8,325</u>
	<b><u>6,604</u></b>	<b><u>9,458</u></b>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b><u>(13)</u></b>	<b><u>24</u></b>

### **Note:**

CEIST CLG operates on a break-even basis each year, with the accounts generally indicating a deficit equal to depreciation (non-cash item). The surplus of €24k in 2022, funded a capital spend of €37k during the year. The deficit of €13k in 2023, equals depreciation less a €6k capital spend during the year.

No internal control issues arose from the audit of the CEIST Company Limited by Guarantee Financial Statements in respect of the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.



# Governance & Management

CEIST continued to promote excellent corporate governance. The Chairperson and CEO of CEIST held two informal meetings during 2023 with CEIST Members to appraise them of the ongoing work of the Trust.

In 2023 the CEIST Board of Directors held eight meetings:

- 2nd of February 2023
- 23rd of March 2023
- 4th of May 2023
- 22nd of June
- 23rd of August
- 23rd of September
- 24th of October
- 13th of December

The AGM of the Company took place on the 4th of May 2023

## Board of Directors

**Ms Maeve Mahon, Chairperson**

**Mr Dónal Cronin**

**Monsignor Gearóid Dullea**

**Sr Margaret Farrell RSM**

**Ms Anne McDonagh**

**Mrs Anne McDonnell**

**Mr Paul McEvoy**

**Mr Andrew O'Leary**

**Ms Maria O'Rourke**

**Ms Sally Ann Sherry**

**Rev Dr Tomás Surlis**

**Sr Marie Wall MW-PBVM**

2023

# Audit & Risk Committee

Mr Paul McEvoy                      Chairperson  
Mr Dónal Cronin  
Mr Andrew O'Leary

The CEIST Audit & Risk Committee held eight meetings during the year.

In order to monitor our schools with symptoms of financial stress, updated reports on current schools in financial difficulty and schools showing symptoms of potential stress, are presented regularly to the CEIST Audit Committee. These reports are reviewed and discussed in detail by the CEIST Audit Committee and the CEIST Board of Directors. Schools identified as being “at risk” are monitored closely. CEIST works with these schools to encourage an increase in income and decrease in expenditure so that they might return to financial stability.

The CEIST Executive is grateful to schools for their continued engagement, hospitality and assistance in so many ways throughout 2023. Schools submitted Annual School Budgets, Annual School Accounts and applications for approval, by CEIST, of all Capital Expenditure. Board of Management Minutes and Finance Subcommittee Reports were reviewed and monitored by the Executive.

In the 2022-2023 school year, every school received a formal school visit from the school Co-Ordinator although some remained online due to the ongoing pandemic. Trustee matters, including the school’s ethos in practice were discussed at each visit.

# 2023

# CEIST STAFF

## Chief Executive Officer

- Gerry McGuill

## Director of Finance & Administration

- Bernadette McKeown

## Director of Education

- Rob Halford

## Faith Leadership and Governance Co-Ordinators

- Rita McCabe
- Johnny McCormack
- Sharon McGrath
- Gerry Watchorn
- Colin Roddy

## Co-Ordinator for Community Schools and Designated Community Colleges

- Pádraigín Uí Riordáin

## Executive Administrator

- Helena McKenna

## Administration

- Rosemary Greene
- Lisa Newman
- David Murray

# 2023



# The Calling

**God of Love,  
 We thank You for the gift entrusted to us by our Founding Congregations.  
 We heed Your calling**

- To Serve**
- To Be Just**
- To Be Responsible**
- To seek Excellence in all we do**
- To be Curious, Compassionate, Consoling, Courageous**
- To build Community in an atmosphere of Care, Love and Joy**
- To treasure the Spiritual**
- To honour and value the Person**
- To honour and value our World**
- To include all, celebrate all and embrace all**
- To model Respect.**
- All to give glory to You.**

**May our CEIST schools be places and spaces of Hope,  
 of Kindness, of Welcome and Discovery  
 as we give witness to Your unending love for us.**

**May our CEIST communities experience and exude  
 Gratitude and Forgiveness in equal measure  
 as we give witness to Your unending love for us.**

**May our Words give witness to Your unending love for us.  
 May our Actions give witness to Your unending love for us.**

**May Christ be encountered in every Word, in every Action, in  
 every School, by every Person - every day.**

- God of Peace – Hear our Prayer**
- God of Wisdom – Hear our Prayer**
- God of Grace – Hear our Prayer**
- God of Love– Hear our Prayer**

- St. Vincent de Paul – Pray for us**
- St. Louise de Marillac - Pray for us**
- Fr. Jules Chevalier – Pray for us**
- Venerable Catherine McAuley- Pray for us**
- Venerable Nano Nagle- Pray for us**
- Fr. Anthony Receveur - Pray for us**

Include as appropriate









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