Welcome to the tenth edition of our newsletter, JCT Today. As 2017 draws to a close we reached another milestone in the junior cycle reform journey when on 12th December 2017 the Minister for Education and Skills presented the first ever Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement to students in Grange Community College in Dublin. This was a momentous day for the students, the school, teachers and parents involved. It was also, however, a momentous day for JCT as the presentation of the JCPS saw the culmination of much of our efforts to date. That said, there remains a lot of work to do and I am delighted that 2017/2018 has seen us working with every post-primary school and centre for education nationwide. I want to thank all of the teachers who have engaged so enthusiastically with our CPD to date, and of course to the entire JCT team for their boundless efforts in bringing CPD of the highest quality to school leaders and teachers. We are currently all part of something significant and I am confident that JCT is fully playing its part in helping to shape a new education system for the benefit of all current and future students.

Dr. Pádraig Kirk
Director

Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton, presents the first ever JCPS to students in Grange Community College, Donaghmede, Dublin on 12th December 2017.

Thank you to our School Cluster Hosts

JCT wishes to thank all of the schools and education centres that are hosting our Cluster CPDs events up and down the country. Your hospitality and the quality of your facilities and resources are second to none. The provision of CPD in authentic classroom settings is proving to be really popular with teachers.
On Saturday, 18th of November, JCT Science launched an exciting new elective CPD initiative – STE(A)M in Junior Cycle. The vision for this initiative is “to provide junior cycle teachers with rich STE(A)M CPD experiences in keeping with national and international best standards; this provision will allow for interdisciplinary responses to societal challenges in subject-specific and cross-curricular contexts”. JCT Science is working with elective partners in the STEM/Arts fields to deliver ten exciting workshops, across six Saturdays, between November 2017 and March 2018. Our inaugural STE(A)M partners are:

- Science Gallery Dublin
- Science Foundation Ireland/European Space Education Resource Office (ESERO)
- Amgen Biotech Experience
- Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
- British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums

Whilst this initiative has started out in the subject space of science, we intend to bring other subjects on board in the future. This interdisciplinary approach to STE(A)M CPD will bring “the scientist, engineer, entrepreneur, artist and designer into dialogue to offer the widest range of opportunity and academic and societal insight for experimentation and innovation” (Science Education for Responsible Global Citizenship, EU Commission, 2015, p.31). It will also help to support the realisation of the recent STEM Education Policy Statement, which encourages cross discipline approaches to STEM education and partnerships with the arts.

Teachers across the country have become excited about STE(A)M. Addressing areas such as sustainability, the work of scientists and scientific innovation, they have considered the interplay between science and society through rich debate about the nature of the human condition. Through this dialogue, science teachers have collaborated to develop rich ideas for student learning that engage with the learning outcomes of junior cycle science, but are also located in a broader STE(A)M agenda, allowing for opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration with other subject teachers.

STE(A)M workshops are taking place on Saturdays in education centres and in bespoke venues such as Tayto Park and Galway Atlantaquarium. After Christmas, we will continue with a mix of education centre workshops and venues such as: Fota Wildlife Park and the Science Gallery Dublin. As we come to a close for the Christmas holiday, the STE(A)M Team would like to say a huge THANK YOU to all of the science teachers who committed their time and expertise to this exciting initiative.

#ATS2020

Our ATS2020 project is now in the final year of the three-year programme, where the focus is an analysing and evaluating both the qualitative and quantitative findings of the in-school pilot. Plans are at an advanced stage for an international conference in Brussels in early 2018, where three Irish schools: Borrisokane Community College, Portlaoise College and St Wolstan’s School will showcase their experience as project schools.

JCT are also planning a national conference to be held in the Killashee House Hotel on February 6th 2018. This conference will focus on the links between the ATS2020 project and Junior Cycle reform and will explore how the findings from the project exemplify key tenets of Junior Cycle.

We are delighted to welcome international ePortfolio expert Dr Helen Barrett as a keynote speaker for the conference, which will also feature Prof Deirdre Butler, of DUCI, a leading exponent of the development of key skills in education.

An online portal hosting materials to support the development of key skills and the use of ePortfolios to support teaching, assessment and learning, will be launched on the day.