

2011 John Marcus O'Sullivan Summer School

Press Release

The 2011 John Marcus O'Sullivan Summer School will take place at the Carlton Hotel, Tralee on June 16th and 17th next with the theme: '*Religion, Diversity and Publicly-managed Schools in Ireland*'.

Increased diversity of belief systems in our schools is a new social reality for schools throughout the country arising from the presence of significant numbers of migrant families from many parts of the world that have now become part of our communities. In addition to that, the religious beliefs of many who have always lived in Ireland, are beginning to change. This new reality makes it increasingly important that the publicly managed schools -that is the schools managed by the VEC (Vocational Education Committee) system - would review the role they play in ensuring that all of the children of the nation are equally cherished and the freedom of religious belief and expression which the Constitution guarantees to all citizens is protected. This is a responsibility that falls particularly on publicly-managed schools which are not established to serve the needs of one particular religion but to serve the needs of all the people.

The growing diversity in Ireland and in Irish schools over the last decade has raised questions about the structure, management and organisation of Irish schooling. At the same time, there has been little focus on the distinctive role of publicly managed schools in relation to notions of citizenship and belonging. This Summer School aims to address these issues by providing an opportunity for debate, discussion and learning on the distinctive contribution of publicly managed schools within an ever more diverse Ireland.

Internationally renowned U.S. educationalist, Professor Walter Feinberg, will deliver the keynote address on the evening of June 16th and will participate in a round table discussion with Summer School attendees on the morning of June 17th. Prof. Feinberg is a past president of both the American Educational Studies Association and the Philosophy of Education Society.

The Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairí Quinn, T.D. will deliver a closing address on the afternoon of Friday, June 17th. In addition, workshops on the development of school policies and the challenges facing classroom teachers around issues of religious diversity will take place.

This Summer School continues a tradition established by the VECs in Kerry in the 1970's, to commemorate the memory of John Marcus O'Sullivan, T.D. for Kerry who was Minister for Education, 1927-1932, and the Minister who steered the Vocational Education Act, 1930, into law. For the 2011 event, Kerry Education Service—the VEC in Kerry, is joined by Co. Dublin VEC, the IVEA (the representative body for VECs in Ireland) and by the University of Limerick, Department of Education and Professional Studies.

The event will be of particular relevance to the boards, parent councils and staff of VEC schools, to members of VEC committees, and to members of the public with an interest in publicly-managed education.

Registration forms are available on the Kerry Education Service website: www.cokerryed.ie
Or by contacting: gmulvihill@cokerryed.ie

Further details may be obtained from Gráinne Mulvihill, Kerry Education Service. Tel. 066-7121488



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COUNTY DUBLIN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE



Seirbhís Oideachais Chiarraí
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