



Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann



Good Practice Guide

INTO Principals' and Deputy Principals' Fora

June 2016

The following guidance has been developed by the Principals' and Deputy Principals' Fora Review Group 2016 and is intended to assist Forum officers in running their Fora effectively.

It should be read in conjunction with Rule 66 of the INTO Rules and Constitution (Appendix 1), and the Fora Guidelines (Appendix 2) and Fora Guidelines – Finance (Appendix 3)

Good Practice: Forum Structures and Communications

- ⌘ Forum meetings should provide an opportunity for principals and deputy principals to express and exchange views within the aims and objectives of the Organisation, to engage in professional development, to network and develop professional relationships with other principals/deputy principals.
- ⌘ Forum officers should consult with the local CEC and PDC representatives in advance of the meeting to agree the agenda and format of the meeting.
- ⌘ Consideration should be given to linking forum meetings to other events, e.g. branch meetings/local cluster meetings/meeting with other fora in the district.
- ⌘ Forum officers should consult the INTO Officer Extranet regularly to ensure that communications from Head Office are received.

Good Practice: Communication with Forum Members

- ⌘ Each forum secretary should establish and maintain a database of names, email addresses and mobile numbers for principals and deputy principals in their forum area.
- ⌘ In order to comply with data protection requirements, these contact details may only be used for the purposes of contacting members on official INTO business. (For example, contacting members and sending official INTO documentation e.g. reports of meetings etc).
- ⌘ Forum officers will be given access to the INTO SMS system to enable them to contact members by text.
- ⌘ Forum officers should have access to the Officer Extranet with a designated Principals' and Deputy Principals' Fora section.
- ⌘ Principals and deputy principals should receive individual notification of forum meetings in each of the forum areas at least seven days in advance of meetings.
- ⌘ The agenda and start and finish time of the meeting should be indicated on the notice, and it should include details of any guest speakers/particular topics which will be considered at the meeting. For example, the notice for the November meetings should clearly state that motions for Congress will be considered at the meeting.
- ⌘ Template letters and headed notepaper are available on the Officer Extranet and should be utilised for forum communications.

Good Practice: Participation

- ⌘ The time which best suits forum members for meetings should be identified at local level.
- ⌘ Comfortable venues, with appropriate hospitality should be used in particular, so that members are facilitated in networking/informal discussions.
- ⌘ Fora should consider having a balance between inputs/information sessions and discussions at each forum meeting. The information given should be uniform across the fora with all reasonable attempts made to reduce repetitions between CEC and PDC reports.
- ⌘ Efforts should be made to have agenda items which are relevant to principals and deputy principals, or to facilitate discussions for each group at forum meetings. Topics of interest to principals and deputy principals can be discussed and decided upon at local level utilising knowledge and information within the forum/district. Advice/information can also be sought from Head Office.
- ⌘ In nominating delegates to attend the Biennial Principals' and Deputy Principals' Consultative Conference, districts shall ensure that the delegation is balanced, where possible, with appropriate representation of each forum and between principals and deputy principals.
- ⌘ The pilot timetable (Appendix 4) for the 2016/2017 school year should be implemented by each forum with a view to a consolidated, consistent approach to fora meetings.

Good Practice: Linking within INTO Structures

- ⌘ The fora are established and funded by the district. As per Rule 66, each forum and district should promote and maintain these links through:
 - the election of a district officer as an ex-officio member of each forum;
 - the election of a delegate from each forum to the district committee;
 - a report to the district committee from each forum after each forum meeting;
 - the submission of motions for Congress from each forum to the district meeting in the first term.
- ⌘ Each forum will be financed through funds provided to the district for that purpose. Districts shall ensure that fora officers are facilitated in accessing funds from the district to enable them to run their fora effectively. Fora officers shall ensure that invoices and receipts are provided to the district treasurer in a timely manner.
- ⌘ Fora secretaries shall ensure that the names of fora officers are returned to Head Office and are notified to the relevant branch and district secretaries after the fora AGMs in November on the appropriate form (available on the Officer Extranet).
- ⌘ The PDC representative should facilitate communication between the district officers and the fora officers on an ongoing basis by being a member of district standing committee and by attending fora meetings. They shall also utilise the fora structure to enhance any body of work being done by the PDC.
- ⌘ Each district should periodically review the operation of its fora and, where appropriate, increase or decrease the number of fora, within the limits permitted by Rule 66 (a minimum of one, and maximum of five fora per district).

Rule 66: INTO Rules and Constitution 2014/2015

INTO Principals' and Deputy Principals' Fora

- A. Each district shall establish and fund a minimum of one and a maximum of five principals' and deputy principals' fora which shall be constituted of all the principals and deputy principals who are members of the district.
- B. A district officer shall be an ex-officio member of each principals' and deputy principals' forum in the district and shall have a right to be invited to all meetings of the fora and to take part in their deliberations, but not to vote at its meetings unless s/he is an ordinary as well as ex-officio member.
- C. The district representative on the PDC shall be an ex-officio member of the district committee and shall have the right to be invited to all meetings of the committee and to take part in its deliberations, but not to vote at its meetings, unless s/he is a member of district committee.
- D. Each forum within the district shall elect one delegate to the district committee.
- E. Each principals' and deputy principals' forum shall hold at least two meetings per year, one of which shall be an AGM.
- F. The officers of the fora shall be the cathaoirleach, leas-chathaoirleach and secretary elected at the AGM.
- G. Each principals' and deputy principals' forum shall report to the district committee on all decisions taken and may submit motions to Congress through the district in accordance with Rule 11D.
- H. Principals' and deputy principals' fora have the right to nominate candidates to the Principals' and Deputy Principals' Committee (PDC) in accordance with Rule 53.

Appendix 2

INTO Principals' and Deputy Principals' Fora Guidelines

Forum Structures and Procedures – June 2016

1. INTO Principals' and Deputy Principals' Fora

(A) THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRINCIPALS' AND DEPUTY PRINCIPALS' FORA AT DISTRICT LEVEL

1. Each district shall establish and fund a minimum of one and a maximum of five principals' and deputy principals' fora which shall be constituted of all the principals and deputy principals who are INTO members in the district. The exact geographical boundaries of the fora shall be determined by the district committee.
2. The purpose of the forum shall be to afford principal and deputy principal teachers the opportunity to express and exchange their views, within the aims and objectives of the Organisation, on matters which will have direct relevance to their role as leaders of the school community and the operation of the school in the interest of all members of staff.
3. Each principals' and deputy principals' forum shall hold at least two meetings per year, one of which shall be an AGM. It is recommended that the meetings shall take place generally in the months of February/March and November. The November meeting will be the AGM and a co-ordinated effort shall be made in 2016/2017 calendar to partake in the Pilot calendar as per Working Group recommendations.
4. The officers of the forum shall be the cathaoirleach, leas-chathaoirleach and secretary elected at the AGM. The posts may be rotated at election time as appropriate to reflect the representation of the various branches in the forum.
5. Each principals' and deputy principals' forum may establish a standing committee to facilitate the smooth operation of each forum's business between meetings of the forum. The membership of the standing committee should include the officers and be representative of the various branches in the

catchment area of the forum. The standing committee should be appointed at the AGM of the forum.

6. The cathaoirleach and secretary of each forum shall draw up the agenda for each forum or standing committee meeting. The district committee and district representative on the CEC and PDC shall be entitled to submit items for inclusion on the agenda of each forum meeting. The agenda for fora meetings shall be notified to each member of the forum, to the secretary of the district committee, the CEC and PDC representatives and the branches represented in the principals' and deputy principals' forum.
7. A district officer, elected by the district committee, shall be an ex-officio member of each principals' and deputy principals' forum in the district and shall have a right to be invited to all meetings of the fora and to take part in their deliberations, but not to vote at its meetings unless s/he is an ordinary as well as ex-officio member.
8. The local CEC representative shall be invited to attend each forum meeting.
9. The PDC representative from the district shall be invited to attend local fora meetings. Expenses for such attendance shall be paid by the district.
10. Two representatives of the fora within the district shall be delegates to the district committee and shall be elected by the members of the fora in the district. District bye-laws should be used to specify the mechanism for selecting the representatives, and to ensure that there is fair representation of all fora on the district committee over a period of time.
11. The report of the PDC representative to district should reflect the work and meetings of the fora in the district.
12. Each forum may submit motions to Congress through the district in accordance with Rule 11 (D) (i).

Proposed forum motions for Annual Congress shall be submitted by members to forum secretaries and shall be circulated to all forum members with the agenda for the forum AGM. Where adopted by the forum, such motions shall be submitted by the forum secretary to the secretary of the district committee in time to be circulated to district committee members with the agenda and notice of the district committee meeting.

13. Principals' and deputy principals' fora have the right to nominate candidates to the Principals' and Deputy Principals' Committee (PDC) in accordance with Rule 53.

Candidates seeking election to the PDC in Districts III-XVI shall be nominated by at least one of the principals' fora and ratified by a branch in the relevant district. Where there is only one forum in a district, the forum may nominate up to a maximum of two candidates. However, a branch may ratify only one candidate. Where more than one candidate has been duly nominated and ratified within a district, the PDC representative shall be elected in the manner set down for the election of CEC representatives.

In Districts I and II candidates seeking election to the PDC shall be nominated by their district committees. The district committee may nominate a maximum of two candidates. Where more than one candidate has been duly nominated an election shall be held in the manner set down for returning CEC representatives.

(B) FUNCTIONS OF EACH FORUM

Each forum shall provide opportunities for principal and deputy principal teachers to express and exchange views, within the aims and objectives of the Organisation, on issues pertaining to the roles of the principal and deputy principal teacher. The forum is not an alternative structure to branch meetings. It will, however, have a complementary function, designed to enable principal and deputy principal teachers to discuss matters of common interest. In addition, members of each principals' and deputy principals' forum may submit motions to their INTO branches as per rule, for consideration for INTO Congress.

(C) OFFICERS OF EACH FORUM

The cathaoirleach, leas-chathaoirleach and secretary should be nominated for a two year term of office at the AGM of the principals' and deputy principals' forum. In the event of more than one nomination, the outgoing cathaoirleach, shall conduct the nomination and/or election process. The posts may be rotated at election time as appropriate to reflect the representation of the various branches in the forum. The forum secretary should also act as organiser.

(D) IMPROVING PARTICIPATION AND EFFECTIVENESS

Regular discussion groups should be organised at meetings of the fora to enable principal and deputy principal teachers to exchange skills and experiences. Consideration should be given to the planning and timing of meetings in order to increase participation and ensure effectiveness. In this regard a mix of styles should be considered including informal question and answer sessions, guest speakers, workshops, presentations and discussions. Every effort should be made to foster relationships between the fora and the appropriate branch and branch committees or district committee, bearing in mind that the branch or district committee has overall responsibility for the Organisation's activities in their respective catchment areas.

(E) NATIONAL CO-ORDINATION

The CEC decided that the INTO Principals' and Deputy Principals' Committee (PDC) shall have responsibility for overseeing the operation and direction of structures for principal and deputy principal teachers.

The remit of the INTO PDC is as follows:

- (a) to plan the National Conference having consulted with the local fora;
- (b) to pursue and develop, as appropriate, the issues which are highlighted at the Principals' and Deputy Principals' Consultative Conference and to ensure that such issues receive appropriate attention from the Organisation between conferences;
- (c) to provide a link between local fora, the National Conference and the Annual Congress of the Organisation;
- (d) to develop Organisation policy on school administration and the duties and responsibilities of principal and deputy principal teachers;
- (e) to respond to matters pertaining to principals and deputy principals which are raised within the Organisation.

2. Principals’ and Deputy Principals’ Committee

- (a) A special committee, to be responsible to the CEC, shall be elected and known as the Principals’ and Deputy Principals’ Committee (PDC).
- (b) The Committee shall consist of the president and vice president for the time being and one member duly elected to represent each CEC electoral district in the manner set down for returning CEC representatives. Candidates seeking election to the PDC in Districts III – XVI shall be nominated by at least one of the principals’ fora and ratified by a branch in the relevant district. Where there is only one forum in a district, the forum may nominate up to a maximum of two candidates. However, a branch may ratify only one candidate. Where more than one candidate has been duly nominated and ratified within a district, the PDC representative shall be elected in the manner set down for the election of CEC representatives. In District I and District II candidates seeking election to the PDC shall be nominated by their district committee. The district committee may nominate a maximum of two candidates. Where more than one candidate has been duly nominated an election shall be held in the manner set down for returning CEC representatives.
- (c) The Principals’ and Deputy Principals’ Committee shall advise the CEC:
 - on such matters as are remitted to it by the CEC; and
 - on such matters relevant to principal and deputy principal teachers, as the committee itself wishes to investigate.
- (d) The committee shall remain in office for three years, shall meet not less than three times a year and members shall be eligible for re-election.
- (e) The committee shall meet within six weeks from the conclusion of Congress each year. At this meeting the committee shall elect one of its members as cathaoirleach. The cathaoirleach shall hold office for one year and shall be eligible for re-election but shall not hold office for more than three years consecutively.
- (f) The committee shall submit, in private session, an annual report to Congress, after that report will have been submitted to and approved by the CEC. This report shall include an overview of the activities of the principals’ fora. All approved findings and recommendations of the committee shall be brought to the attention of the members of the Organisation generally.
- (g) All activities of the committee involving expenditure shall be subject to the approval of the CEC.
- (h) Travelling and personal expenses for attendance at PDC meetings and events at the request of Head Office shall be paid from the General Fund to members of the Principals’ and Deputy Principals’ Committee.

3. National Principals' and Deputy Principals' Consultative Conference

- (a) A National Principals' and Deputy Principals' Consultative Conference, to be presided over by the INTO president and vice-president, shall be convened during the month of October on a biennial basis.
- (b) Notification of the Biennial Principals' and Deputy Principals' Conference to be sent to each forum in February/March of the year of the conference. Each forum will be circularised with a list of ten possible topics for discussion at the conference with a request to prioritise three or four topics. Selection of topics should be made at the February/March meeting and submitted to INTO Head Office no later than 31 March, in the year of the conference.
- (c) The final agenda for the Principals' and Deputy Principals' Consultative Conference shall be determined on the basis of the topics submitted by the local fora. The CEC shall also be entitled to submit topics for inclusion on the final agenda of the Principals' Consultative Conference.
- (d) Each forum will be invited to nominate delegates to the Biennial Conference at a fora meeting held in the year of the conference (possibly the February/March meetings). These delegates will be subsequently appointed at the district meeting immediately preceding the conference.
- (e) Names of delegates will be submitted in the normal manner to INTO Head Office by the district secretary no later than 30 June in the year of the conference.
- (f) All conference documentation should be sent out to delegates at least two weeks in advance of the conference.
- (g) Any report submitted to the CEC which includes policy changes will be open to amendment by the CEC prior to its approval by Congress.

Appendix 3

Forum Finance Guidelines

The ROI membership subscription was amended with effect from 1 May 2012 by increasing by €0.08 the allocation (per member per four week period) to districts. The allocations to branches and to districts was rebalanced to facilitate change in the funding of the principals' fora.

Guidelines (*Principals' Fora Guidelines – Finance*) issued on 24 April 2012 set out the recommended position for the funding of principals' fora with effect from 1 June 2012. From that date, district funds are used to cover all costs associated with fora, making use of the main district bank account.

Following the change in 2012, district committee funding now includes an annual allocation of €1.04 per member for purposes of the activities of principals' fora.

It is recommended that, in preparing budgets, district treasurers contact the appropriate officer/s in each principals' forum within the district with a view to establishing the likely costs of the total operation of fora within the district. Costs may arise in areas such as room hire, communicating with members, inviting speakers etc. It is recommended that, in broad terms, the funding earmarked for fora be divided equally between the fora in the district and that this figure be used as a 'ballpark' budget for each forum. In practice, some fora are likely to be more active than others and it is at the discretion of the district to support fora beyond the allocation on a per member subscription basis.

Attached are the guidelines issued in April 2012 which deal with the administration by the district treasurer of all payments associated with principals' fora through the district bank account, and the closure of principals' fora accounts which has now been carried out.

<http://officernet.into.ie/Finance/DistrictFinance/PrincipalsForaGuidelines.pdf>

Any queries regarding this issue may be raised with Gráinne Cleary at gcleary@into.ie (01) 804 7732 or Elaine Daly edaly@into.ie (01) 804 7759 in the Deputy General Secretary/General Treasurer's section.

Pilot Timetable of Forum Meetings 2016/2017

Pilot timetable of meetings for 2016/17 to include:

- ⌘ **SEPTEMBER** (possibly third week): Meeting/Information Awareness/Q & A for established and newly appointed principals.

This meeting should be organised at district level.
- ⌘ **OCTOBER/JANUARY:** Possible local cluster meetings connected with quarterly branch meetings at either the October or January quarterly meeting.
- ⌘ **NOVEMBER:** Forum AGM at which fora officers would be elected and motions for Congress to be discussed.
- ⌘ **FEBRUARY/MARCH:** Forum meeting. It is expected that there would be more flexibility at this meeting to include presentations, guest speakers, 'principal meet' type meeting, etc.
- ⌘ **MAY:** Forum meeting – as in February/March: topical/theme based



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