



**Press Release 09 April, 2019**

## **Schools invited to work together on creative projects – Minister McHugh**

**Minister McHugh invites applications from schools for second year of Creative Clusters initiative as part of the Creative Ireland programme**

### **Participating schools will help students learn through a lens of creativity**

The Minister for Education and Skills Joe McHugh T.D. today invited applications for Creative Clusters, an initiative taking place as part of Creative Ireland and under the Schools Excellence Fund.

Each school will enjoy access to a specialist facilitator, artist or creative expertise in whatever their own chosen area of interest or theme might be. These resources will help the schools build a programme of learning and activities tailor-made for their students. In addition, clusters will receive up to €7,500 funding to help bring their plans and ideas to fruition.

Making the announcement, Minister McHugh said: “This is another fantastic opportunity for schools to work together on a project of their choice. Schools are given complete freedom to design and develop their own project, with support from a local facilitator and their local education centre.

“I hope that this initiative will help schools enhance creativity in their classrooms. It is important that our children are allowed to express themselves and learn to adapt and collaborate. Opportunities such as Creative Clusters are perfect to give students the opportunity to develop these skills.”

The first year of the Creative Clusters initiative has seen schools around the country work together to develop creative projects and collaborate on new ideas based on their local experience and unique perspective. In Kilkenny, St John’s Senior School, St John’s Junior School and Loreto Secondary School are working together using coding to develop innovative projects and support the transition from primary to post-primary school. This project involves students learning a variety of different coding methods and working on coding projects to develop their problem-solving and logical-thinking skills.

St Michael's Post Primary and St Joseph's Secondary School in North County Kerry are also collaborating on an interesting project exploring “the hidden history of North Kerry” using modern technology. This project tasks students with investigating and researching the main tourist sites of the North Kerry region. The students will use modern technology including drones to gather footage which will then be used in a documentary regarding the history of North Kerry. Students will be trained in the appropriate use of technology in the classroom

and will also be able to learn valuable skills in the making of the documentary including directing, photography, narrating and producing.

The Schools Excellence Fund is an initiative in the Action Plan for Education. It sets out to encourage and recognize excellence and innovation in our schools. This initiative will help deliver on the Creative Youth pillar of Creative Ireland, which sets out a commitment that every child in Ireland has practical access to tuition, experience and participation in music, drama, arts and coding by 2022.

Applications are available from the Department's website at the following link:

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/creative-youth.html>

The closing date for applications is May 10<sup>th</sup> 2019.

## **Notes for Editors**

### **Creative Clusters – Schools Excellence Fund**

Creative Clusters is a pilot initiative of the Department of Education and Skills, led by and in partnership with the Association of Teacher Education Centres Ireland (ATECI). Creative Clusters provide schools with access to creative people, skills and resources that will support them to draw on their own skills and experiences and those within their wider communities. Creative Clusters is an initiative under Creative Youth – A Plan to Enable the Creative Potential of Every Child and Young Person, which was published in December 2017 as part of the Creative Ireland Programme.

### **The Creative Ireland Programme**

The Creative Ireland Programme is a five-year all-of-government, culture-based initiative that emphasises the importance of human creativity for individual, community and national wellbeing. It is led by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The programme is grounded in the belief that every person has creative capacities, the development of which contributes to their personal wellbeing as well as to the general wellbeing of our communities.

The Programme consists of five Pillars:

1. Our Young People
2. Our Communities
3. Our Cultural and Creative Infrastructure
4. Our Creative Industries
5. Our Global Reputation

### **Creative Youth – the plan for Pillar 1**

In December 2017, *Creative Youth – a Plan to Enable the Creativity of Every Child and Young Person* was launched. The ultimate aim is to deliver the Government's commitment to ensuring that every child in Ireland has practical access to tuition, experience and participation in music, drama, arts and coding by 2022. The Creative Youth plan sets out a range of initiatives which will be piloted and implemented in the coming years, including Local Creative Youth Partnerships. The Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Arts Council are key partners in delivering *Creative Youth*.

### **Schools Excellence Fund**

The School Excellence Fund is an initiative in the Programme for Government to encourage and recognize excellence and innovation in our schools. The Schools Excellence Fund is operating in a range of areas. These are:

SEF – Creative  
SEF – DEIS  
SEF – Digital  
SEF – Gaeltacht  
SEF – STEM  
SEF – Step Up

- End -