

# School-Based Support

Professional Development: provided *by* teachers, *for* teachers.

# PDST

Professional Development  
Service for Teachers

An tSeirbhís um Fhorbairt  
Ghairmiúil do Mhúinteoirí



An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Scileanna  
Department of  
Education and Skills



Dublin West Education Centre  
Ionad Oideachais Bhaile Átha Cliath Thiar

[pdst.ie](http://pdst.ie)  

# School-Based Support ▶▶

*For your school, In your school!*

*International evidence on the most effective forms of professional development for teachers continually favours the power of school-based support, where staff are facilitated within their daily work environment to identify, discuss and address real issues of priority to their school context and the needs of their pupils/students.*

DID YOU KNOW THAT FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW, THE **PDST** HAS BEEN PROVIDING CONTEXTUALISED **SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT** DURING/AFTER SCHOOL HOURS IN A RANGE OF PRIORITY AREAS?

We can provide this through:

- ✓ Working with whole staffs (2 hours minimum)
- ✓ Working with groups of teachers / subject departments
- ✓ Working with school leaders (Principals, Deputy Principals, Post Holders)
- ✓ In-class modelling of pedagogical approaches
- ✓ **Sustained School Support (more information on this leaflet)**

By applying for school-based support, a PDST advisor can visit your school during the school day or after school hours to provide customised, professional development support tailored to the specific needs of your school. On application, you will see the options listed below.

## SUPPORT OPTIONS 2019/2020

### TOPICS OF PRIMARY SUPPORT

(Maximum of three)

- ✓ Leading the SSE process (non-subject specific)
- ✓ Mathematics
- ✓ Science
- ✓ Inclusion through team teaching
- ✓ PE
- ✓ Health and Wellbeing (Please choose 2 from 5 sub-options below)
  - Teaching and Learning in SPHE (including Visual Arts)
  - Stay Safe Programme
  - RSE
  - Anti-bullying (including Internet Safety and Cyber-bullying)
  - Teacher Wellbeing
- ✓ Digital Technologies for Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- ✓ Other

**Note:**

Regarding support for the Primary Language Curriculum, school-based supports will be available from January 2020 and schools will be issued details of how to apply at that time.

### TOPICS OF POST-PRIMARY SUPPORT

(Maximum of three)

- ✓ Leading the SSE process (non-subject specific)
- ✓ DEIS Support
- ✓ Gaeilge
- ✓ Literacy across the curriculum
- ✓ Mathematics
- ✓ Numeracy across the curriculum
- ✓ Health and Wellbeing (Please choose 2 from 3 sub-options below)
  - Teaching & Learning in SPHE
  - RSE
  - Teacher Wellbeing
- ✓ PE (Teaching and Learning at Senior Cycle)
- ✓ Developing Learning and Teaching at Senior Cycle
  - Differentiation
  - Team Teaching for Inclusion
  - Formative Assessment
- ✓ Digital Technologies for Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- ✓ Senior Cycle Subject Support (please specify up to three options)
- ✓ Programme Support
  - JCSP
  - LCA
  - TY
  - LCVP
- ✓ Other



# Sustained School Support

*Empowering schools to achieve long-term change and improvement!*

*"An empowered staff comes to believe that it has within its ranks enough talent and insight to respond to school and staff development needs and create an outstanding school."*

Robert Starratt (1995: 44)

## SUSTAINED SCHOOL SUPPORT AT A GLANCE...

### What is Sustained Support?

PDST school-based support is also available on a sustained basis. Sustained School Support is a deeper form of teacher professional learning aimed at building internal school capacity, enabling schools to drive and embed change as independent communities of learners. The support is provided over a period of time, as part of a deliberately planned process, involving the school and teachers working towards clear and agreed-upon goals. In this context, our advisors support teachers to collaboratively reflect, identify strengths and needs before deciding on the best way forward for their school.

### Why Sustained Support?

Our experience of working with schools and research on teacher learning, clearly indicates that the most effective forms of professional learning for implementing and embedding change are those that are provided over time and which are tailored to the school's self-identified needs and unique contexts. It also recognises that schools, in knowing their context and their students, are in the best position to decide what needs to happen next, while harnessing the internal expertise of their staff to make that a reality!

### WHAT DOES SUSTAINED SUPPORT LOOK LIKE?

PDST Sustained School Support can take many forms and is ultimately guided by what you and your school want to achieve.

## A FEW OPTIONS

### COACHING

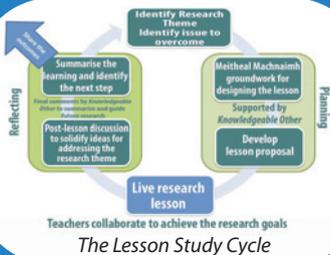
PDST advisors work with teachers using Coaching approaches, which provide time, space and encouragement to engage in dialogue around teacher practices. Using recognised frameworks for questioning, such as Sir John Whitmore's well established GROW model developed in the 1980's, the process is teacher-led, empowering them to take control of their own growth and professionalism. Coaching works well in the context of in-class modelling, which combines demonstration of classroom pedagogies and reflective discussion. The GROW framework is very compatible with discussions associated with the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) process and we often use this with teachers when supporting schools with SSE.



GROW Model



SSE Six-Step Process

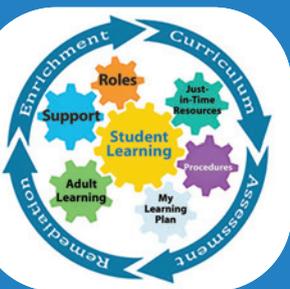
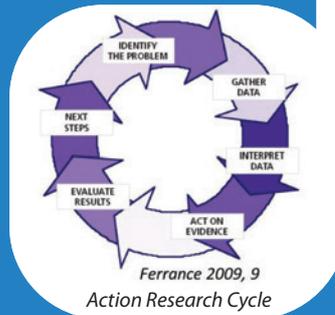


## LESSON STUDY

PDST advisors use this structured process to support teachers as they work together to formulate solutions to challenges they encounter in relation to teaching and learning. As part of the process, teachers work collaboratively over a number of visits throughout the Lesson Study Cycle. At its very heart, Lesson Study aims to improve student outcomes by developing successful approaches to teaching.

## ACTION RESEARCH

Action learning is a continuous process of learning and reflection, with the intention of getting things done. Essentially, teachers identify a problem and embark on a quest to understand their practice with a view to ultimately improving teaching and learning in their classrooms. As it involves highlighting an area of common concern through collaboration, reflection and commitment to improve practice, it aligns really well with both the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) and Digital Learning Planning processes. The PDST Leadership team make frequent use of this with Principals, Deputies and other school leaders as part of our flagship Forbairt Programme.



## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

According to Harris and Jones (2015: 15), a Professional Learning Community (PLC) is a sub group or team within a school, or across schools, that "exist to bring about some innovation and change directly related to improving learner outcomes." Members of PLCs have shared values and an openness to having honest conversations in a safe collegial setting. PDST advisors are available to guide and support school-based learning communities over a period of time as part of Sustained School Support.

The above approaches are suggestions and not exhaustive. PDST advisors will adapt support according to what you want to achieve and how you want to achieve it. After all, nobody knows your school context or the needs of its staff and pupils/students like you do!

To fully benefit from PDST Sustained School Support, here are some things to consider:

What area of priority have we identified for support and why?

How will our school facilitate and organise time for the advisor to work with teachers and staff?

When is the best time for our school to apply for sustained support?

How can space between advisor visits be used to progress and apply what has been discussed and agreed during the visits?