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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **City of Dublin ETB Calls on Candidates to #SupportYourLocalETB in Advance of General Election**

City of Dublin Education and Training Board (ETB) has called on general election candidates across Dublin city to commit to supporting the ETB sector if elected to government.

City of Dublin ETB – working in partnership with the 15 other ETBs nationwide and their representative body, Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) – is highlighting five priorities for the ETB sector in the lead-up to the general election, as part of the national #SupportYourLocalETB campaign:

1. Increasing the number and profile of Community National Schools nationwide;
2. Increasing the Deputy Principal allocation in ETB post-primary schools with DEIS designation;
3. Increased funding for Further Education and Training; and
4. Restore funding for youth work to pre-austerity levels, and ensure pay parity for youth workers.

Launching the campaign in Dublin city today, Dr Christy Duffy, Chief Executive of City of Dublin ETB said: “As you may be aware, City of Dublin ETB has over 3,000 staff who provide education and training opportunities for over 33,000 people across Dublin city. We do this through running community national schools, community special schools, community hospital schools and 11 community colleges across the city. Our City of Dublin FET College operates across 4 campuses in the city providing PLC, apprenticeships, traineeships and a range of further education and training opportunities for adults. We are also responsible for SUSI, the national awarding authority for student grants in Ireland, we support the provision, coordination, administration and assessment of Youth Services in Dublin city and we are the lead partner in Music Generation Dublin City.

City of Dublin ETB – like all ETBs nationwide – offers excellent, equality-based, inclusive educational opportunities to learners of all ages. We are proud to support Ireland’s diverse population of learners

– and have a proven track record of doing so. Now, in the lead-up to the general election, we are calling on all candidates across Dublin City to commit to supporting our work, if they are elected.”

### **More Community National Schools**

Expanding on the current priorities for the ETB sector, Wesleigh O’Hagan, City of Dublin ETB Director of Schools said: “Community National Schools are the ETB model for primary education. They provide quality, multi-denominational education at a local level, and welcome all pupils and their families, regardless of their ethnicity, culture or religious beliefs. They offer a much-needed alternative to schools under the patronage of religious bodies.

“Currently, however, there are only four Community National Schools (one Community National School, one Community Special School, two Community Hospital Schools) in Dublin city. Across the country, families looking for an alternative to Catholic-run schools are being severely failed: the most recent Census showed only 69% of people now consider themselves to be Roman Catholic – but 90% of primary schools are still under Catholic patronage. So, we are asking all general election candidates to help us establish more Community National Schools nationwide. We want to ensure all families are catered for, and every child can attend a school that welcomes them and reflects their family’s background and beliefs.”

### **More Deputy Principals for DEIS Post-Primary Schools**

At post-primary level, Wesleigh O’Hagan, City of Dublin ETB Director of Schools said the focus for City of Dublin ETB is on securing more Deputy Principals for DEIS-designated schools to ensure the most vulnerable students are properly supported.

“DEIS schools are attended by the most vulnerable young people in Irish society, and these young people need and deserve adequate supports,” she said. “The Deputy Principal role within these schools is a crucial one: they are typically the staff-member available to identify challenges or risks for the student body or individual students; to provide support to students experiencing difficulties; and to liaise with other support services, such as the home school community liaison service, to ensure all students get the care and attention they need.

“In a recent survey, 92% of ETB Principals said they believe the current allocation of Deputy Principals is insufficient. They also said an increased allocation would impact positively on the quality of teaching and learning; on supports for young people with emotional and behavioural challenges; on student and staff wellbeing; and on addressing issues such as bullying and disadvantage. Again, we are calling on all general election candidates to support our call for this increased allocation.”

### **FET and Youth Work**

In relation to Further Education and Training (FET), Blake Hodkinson, City of Dublin ETB Director of FET Quality and Operations said: “In the next programme for government, we want to see the level

of funding allocated for FET reflecting the proportion of learners within the sector; the devolved capital for each ETB to be increased; and the limit of €125K incl. VAT per individual project to be increased to €350K incl. VAT. ETBI anticipates that a number of FET Colleges of the Future will commence on-site in 2028 and are seeking ring fenced funding of €600M in the estimates for ETBs to complete these projects”.

“FET is more local, accessible, flexible and affordable for many people than higher education and, as a result, it attracts more diverse learners. However, there has been a historical funding disparity between FET and higher education, which is matched by a historical disparity of esteem. A Government commitment to, and investment in, community-based inclusive FET provision is critical to ensure the sector can continue to attract school-leavers and older learners into key areas to meet skills shortages. Targeted investment in professional development, competitive remuneration, capital spending, and improved working conditions for FET staff also needs to be prioritised. We are calling on general election candidates to work within their parties to secure such a commitment.

Celene Dunne, Director of City of Dublin Youth Services said “In relation to youth work, we are calling for a restoration of funding for youth services to pre-austerity levels, as well as pay parity for youth workers. Funding for the youth work sector decreased significantly after the 2008 economic crash. In that year, funding for youth organisations and special youth projects was €90.5 million. By 2015, this had fallen by over 44%. There have been small increases since 2020, but funding is still significantly lower – than it was 16 years ago, despite a 26% increase in the youth population since 2006.

“With Ireland facing a growing range of social challenges, the need for quality and extensive youth services has never been greater. We want all general election candidates in Dublin city to support this vital area of work.”

## **ENDS**

**Contact: City of Dublin ETB Head of Communications Emma Parkin**

**Tel: 086 191 6160; Email: [pr@cdetb.ie](mailto:pr@cdetb.ie)**

### **Notes to Editors:**

City of Dublin ETB is the state education and training authority for Dublin city with over 3,000 staff and 33,000 learners. We operate 27 schools and colleges including one Community National School, one Community Special School, two Community Hospital Schools, 11 Post Primary Schools and 12 Colleges of Further Education.

City of Dublin FET College is the largest provider of QQI awards in Further Education and Training in Ireland and is made up of four campuses offering thousands of courses (PLC, apprenticeships,

traineeships, Youthreach, adult and community education) across more than 50 locations throughout the city.

We are also responsible for SUSI, the national awarding authority for student grants in Ireland. City of Dublin ETB supports the provision, coordination, administration and assessment of Youth Services in Dublin city and is the lead partner in Music Generation Dublin City.

This provision is supported by a range of services including a psychological service, a curriculum development unit, a buildings capital and maintenance unit and the Head Office administrative staff in Ballsbridge.