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Association of Community
and Comprehensive Schools

*Cumann na Scoileanna Pobail
agus Cuimsitheacha*

**Opening Statement to the Joint Committee on Education and Skills on the topic of
whether the School Building Programme delivers a sufficient number of school places
to facilitate children attending local schools**

Respondent Details:

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Date:	22/08/2018

Opening Remarks to the Oireachtas Education Committee

The Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools, ACCS, is the management body representing 96 Community and Comprehensive Schools nationally. The ACCS's Vision is to lead and support Boards of Management to enable schools to provide equal access to a comprehensive, co-educational, community-based, multi-denominational education. In doing so it aims to contribute towards a just and caring society.

ACCS acknowledges the challenges faced by the Department of Education and Skills in meeting the growing demand for school places at post primary. With approximately an additional 4,500 places needed this year and student numbers potentially growing by an additional estimated 50,000 places by 2025, the scale of the challenges ahead is evident. (Source: 'PROJECTIONS OF FULL-TIME ENROLMENT, Primary and Second Level, 2017 – 2035'). ACCS acknowledges the in-dept analysis carried out in the Future Planning section of the Department of Education and Skills informing decisions on future accommodation needs.

From our submission you will see that 17 Community and Comprehensive Schools have been involved in projects providing additional accommodation in schools over the last three years. These projects relate specifically to additional accommodation applied for using the ADA application form (post primary). This additional accommodation can be divided into two main categories;

1. increased enrolment
2. provision of special needs units

Increased enrolment accounted for 11 of the projects, one of which also included a special needs unit, with 6 projects dedicated to the provision of special needs units. The preference in all cases is for permanent accommodation as opposed to temporary prefab rental. In 4 of the 17 projects the additional accommodation is being provided through the provision of prefabs.

In future planning 10 Community and Comprehensive Schools are listed for major works with an additional 2 in active discussions with the Department and having had site visits from Department officials.

In addition to the applications for additional accommodation there are also a significant number of major projects which have either been completed or are in progress not captured in the initial submission. These include:

Recent completed major extensions/projects:

Name of School	Completion
Ashton Comprehensive School, Cork	2013
Newpark Comprehensive School, Blackrock, Co. Dublin	2014
Carrigaline Community School, Co. Cork	2014
Tullow Community School, Co. Carlow	2015
Boyne Community School, Trim, Co. Meath	2015
Hartstown Community School, Clonsilla, Dublin 15	2017
St. Patrick's Comprehensive, Shannon, Co. Clare	2017

Ongoing major projects/extensions:

Name of School	Status
Ardee Community School, Co. Louth	On site
Kinsale Community School, Co. Cork	On site
Rathcoole Community School, Co. Dublin	Stage 2b (detailed design)

Blackwater Community School, Lismore, Co. Waterford	Stage 2b
Pobalscoil Rosmini, Drumcondra, Dublin 9	Stage 2b
Mount Temple Comprehensive, Malahide Road, Dublin 3	Stage 2a
Crescent Comprehensive, Limerick	Stage 1
Boyne Community School, Trim, Co. Meath	Stage 1
Ashbourne Community School, Co. Meath	Stage 1
Moate Community School, Co. Westmeath	Project Design Brief

Works carried out under Emergency Works and Summer Works schemes are not captured in this submission.

A small number of applications for additional accommodation have been unsuccessful on the basis that there was adequate accommodation in surrounding schools and schools were advised to review their enrolment policies as demand for places exceeded available places.

An area of significant concern for ACCS is the maintenance of schools. During the economic downturn a moratorium on recruitment of caretaking, cleaning and secretarial support in Community and Comprehensive Schools was introduced. Despite a recovering economy this moratorium remains in place and is posing significant challenges for school management maintaining school buildings and sites. Currently the number of caretakers is capped at 1 per school with an allocation of an equivalent number of hours for cleaning. This allocation is totally inadequate to meet the maintenance requirements of schools and is simply creating problems for the future. ACCS, in a pre-budget submission, has asked that these moratoriums be addressed as a matter of urgency to afford schools the opportunity to meet their obligations in maintaining schools and providing facilities to students and the communities they serve.