

Kildare and Wicklow ETB

Annual Report

2024



“A brighter future of learning with KWETB”



BORD OIDEACHAIS AGUS OILIÚNA
CHILL DARA AGUS CHILL MHANTÁIN
KILDARE AND WICKLOW
EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Chairperson and Chief Executive Foreword.....	2
Overview Kildare and Wicklow ETB	3
Map of KWETB Locations and Services	5
Overview of Services	6
Organisation Support and Development ('OSD').....	8
Schools	9
Further Education & Training ('FET').....	10
Statement of Strategy 2020-2024.....	12
The Year that was - KWETB in 2024	15
Governance Report	21
Protected Disclosures Report 2024	23
Receipt of Gifts	23
Composition of Board (2019 – 2024) and meeting attendance 2024	23
Composition of the new KWETB Board (2024 – 2029) and meeting attendance from July 2024 .	25
Committees of KWETB	26
Key achievements of KWETB in 2024	31
Glossary of Terms and Acronyms	39

Chairperson and Chief Executive Foreword

It is with great pride that we jointly present the work of Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (“KWETB”) in our Annual Report for 2024.

The report represents the work of the organisation for the 2024 period across our schools, further education and training services, youth services, music generation as well our work within organisational support and development services.

This annual report attests to the successful achievement of many of our goals under our Statement of Strategy and also indicates our continued commitment to the improvement of teaching and learning standards as well as developing our staff, learning environments and systems. 2024 was a period of significant growth for KWETB with increasing numbers accessing all of our services; our commitment has been to our learners first and foremost.

Our schools continue to grow; we have overseen an extensive building programme in 2024 to ensure that there are sufficient school places for all prospective students within our catchment areas. We also experienced a significant increase in demand for places in our diverse range of further education and training programmes. We were proud to officially announce the opening of Craddockstown Special School, welcoming 24 students who are pursuing their educational journey with us.

We would like to thank all our local education partners and other patron bodies for their help, guidance and support in that regard. As part of our Public Sector Duty KWETB remains committed to ensure equality of opportunity and access to all our learners.

The achievements of KWETB in 2024 as demonstrated in this report were reached while maintaining good governance and internal controls as closely monitored by the Board of KWETB together with the Audit and Risk committee and the Finance Committee.

We would like to sincerely thank our KWETB Board, Boards of Management of all our schools, advisory groups and sub-committees as well as all of our staff who work so hard to ensure the highest standards of delivery across our range of services. To all of our learners, employers and other partners who have put their faith in KWETB and who will continue to access our education and training provision into 2024 and beyond, we wish you the very best in your educational journeys.

Cllr. Paul O’Brien
Chairperson KWETB

Dr Deirdre Keyes
Chief Executive

Overview Kildare and Wicklow ETB

Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board was established on 1st July 2013 under the Education and Training Boards Act, 2013. KWETB under its remit has responsibility for the delivery of education and training throughout the counties of Kildare and Wicklow. It has a corporate structure made up of a democratically appointed committee i.e. 'the Board' and a management team ('The Executive').

Kildare and Wicklow ETB serve a population of circa 403,625 people (2022 census), representing an increase of approximately 10% from the 2016 Census. KWETB's catchment area equates to about 8% of the national population. Over the past ten years the population in the region has grown by 16.3%, which is significantly faster than the State average. Kildare has one of the fastest growing populations per head of population among counties in Ireland.

The long-term growth pattern (since 1981) shows KWETB growing at twice the national average. The counties of Kildare and Wicklow are both seeing high natural and migration growth. In population terms it is the second fastest growing ETB, and is the fourth largest after CDETB, DDLETB and CETB. Kildare and Wicklow have relatively young populations - younger than the State average – highlighting a growing need for services into the future. 34% of the population of KWETB is under 25, and 27% are under 18. The average age profile in County Kildare is 36.9 years of age, making it one of the counties with the youngest average age in Ireland.



The area served by KWETB stretches from Carnew in South County Wicklow to Maynooth in North County Kildare, encompassing the imposing natural landscape of the Wicklow mountains and the plains of County Kildare in between. Alongside large urban towns, both counties have large rural hinterlands with low population density. Both Kildare and Wicklow also have some of the fastest growing populations in the northern parts of the counties, located on the 'commuter belt' into Dublin City. This requires a complex delivery of services across both counties.

KWETB is unique in that its land area is divided into three spatial regions: the Dublin Metropolitan Area (DMA), the Core Region and the Gateway Region. The highly urbanised, densely populated towns of Maynooth, Leixlip, Celbridge, Bray and Greystones form part of the DMA and absorb some of the growth of Dublin. Much of the remaining area of both Counties are in the Core Region. Key towns identified in Spatial Strategy as having an active

socio-economic role and the potential to act as growth drivers include Maynooth, Bray, Naas, Wicklow and Rathnew. Additionally, Bray, Celbridge, Naas and Newbridge have been identified as large towns in the Town Centre First Strategy.

KWETB provide education and training services throughout the region. However, there are important regional variances within KWETB that will inform strategic planning. The southern parts of the region, which are less densely populated, tend to have higher unemployment rates, higher rates of disability, and lower levels of education. There are areas of disadvantage in both counties. The Electoral Districts of Carnew, Rathmichael, Kilpatrick, Kilberry and Athy West are designated as disadvantaged in the Pobal HP Index.

KWETB, in line with its public sector duty obligations, has given due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and protect the human rights of staff, learners and all groups to whom we provide services.



KWETB adheres to all the legislative requirements of the ETB Act 2013, the Education Act 1998, the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004, the Admissions to Schools Bill 2020, the Further Education and Training Act 2013, the Disability Act 2005, the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 and the Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015, giving due regard to compliance with the human rights and equality obligations contained therein.

Map of KWETB Locations and Services

KWETB Map of Education and Training Services

Provision Key

- ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
- COMMUNITY NATIONAL SCHOOL
- POST PRIMARY SCHOOL
- COMMUNITY SCHOOL
- CENTRE OF FURTHER EDUCATION & TRAINING
- OUTDOOR EDUCATION
- MUSIC GENERATION
- PRISON EDUCATION
- YOUTH SERVICES
- ADULT GUIDANCE





Overview of Services

Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board is a state-funded authority responsible for providing high quality, inclusive, and lifelong learning opportunities across Kildare and Wicklow. KWETB, supports and co-ordinates education, training and youth services. We specifically provide primary, post primary, post leaving certificate, apprenticeships, traineeships, youth services, music, community, outdoor and adult further education and training. We deliver excellent services that provide for the needs of all learners in our community.



KWETB operates through four directorates—Schools, Further Education and Training (FET), and two directorates within Organisation Support and Development (OSD)—working together to ensure that learners receive the best possible education, training, and supports.





As a publicly accountable provider, we are committed to delivering equality-based, inclusive, and learner-centred education and training that supports all KWETB students and learners in reaching their full potential. Our schools and FET services provide progression pathways that ensure access to learning for all.

KWETB is the patron of:

- ❖ 26 Schools; 23 Post-Primary; 3 Community National Schools
- ❖ 6 Joint Patron Community schools
- ❖ 1 Special School for learners with ASD and complex needs
- ❖ 25 Further Education & Training Centres
- ❖ 2 Large Post leaving Certificate Colleges
- ❖ Serving a total of approximately 34,000 and learners of all age groups at various levels across the communities of Kildare & Wicklow.
- ❖ Issuing approximately 14,000 certificates in further education annually
- ❖ 2,670 staff members



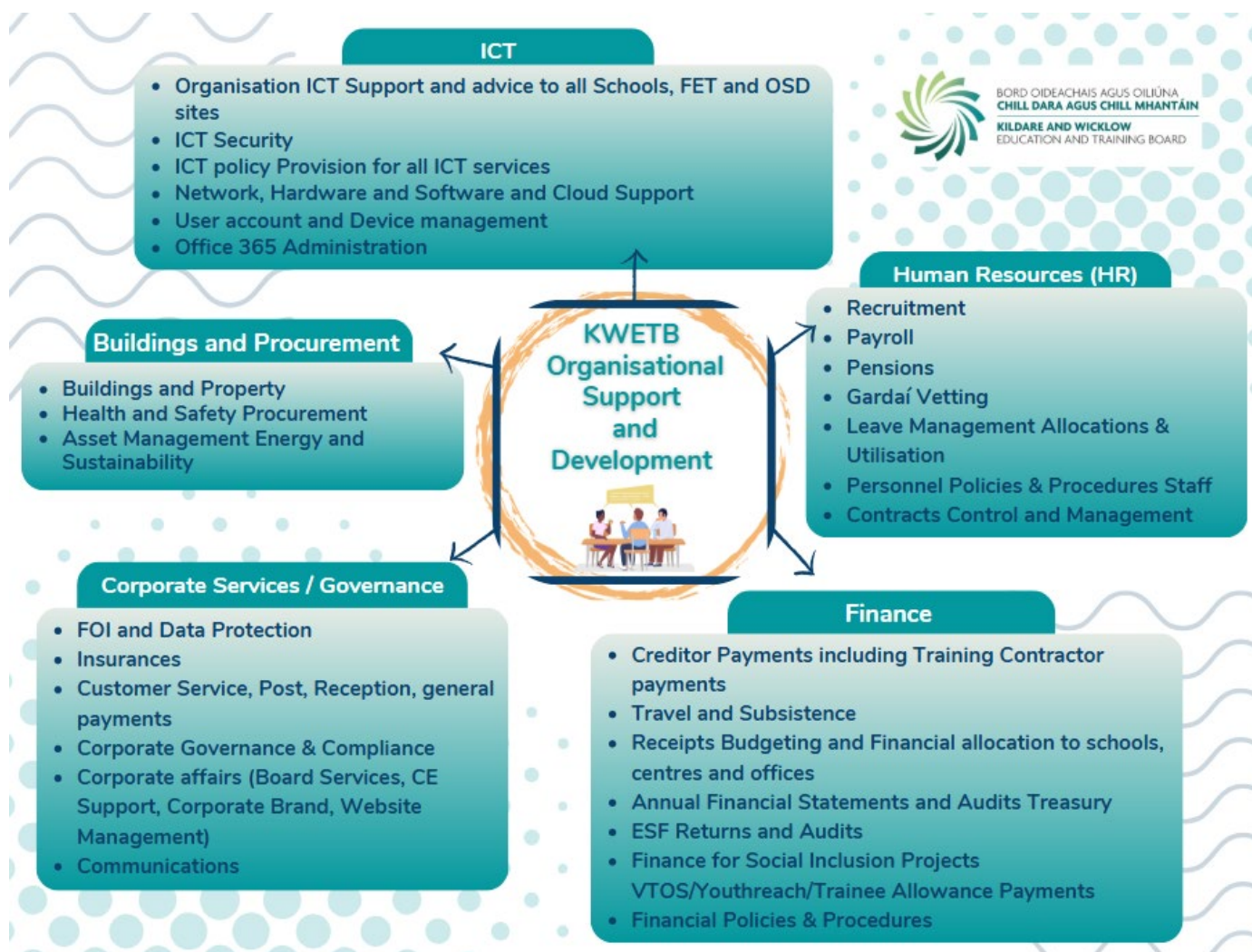


Organisation Support and Development ('OSD')

The OSD directorate, led by two directors, underpins the work of Schools and FET providing essential administrative, operational services, as well as managerial and strategic support, ensuring all functions are efficiently managed.

The goal of the KWETB OSD team 'is to deliver effective and efficient services that satisfy the needs of those we serve, and which are safeguarded by best governance practices.' OSD is responsible for key services including HR, Finance, Corporate Services/Governance, ICT, Buildings, and Procurement.

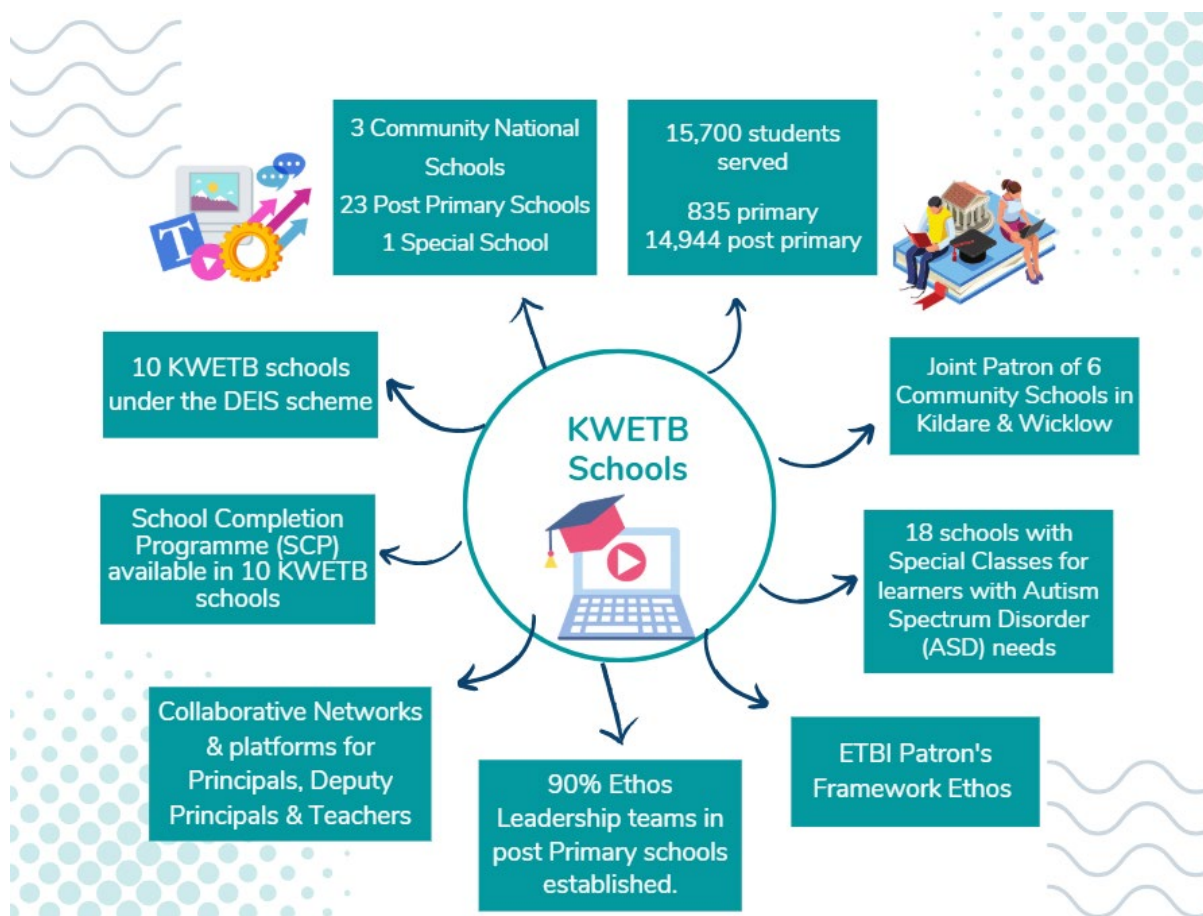
In 2024, additional senior administrative posts were sanctioned this resulted in two OSD units being established. In addition to an extra director, two new APO post were sanctioned, 1 for Finance and 1 for Corporate Services. Other posts were sanctioned at grade VII, VI and V, these posts were positioned to fulfil roles in ICT, sustainability and communications.





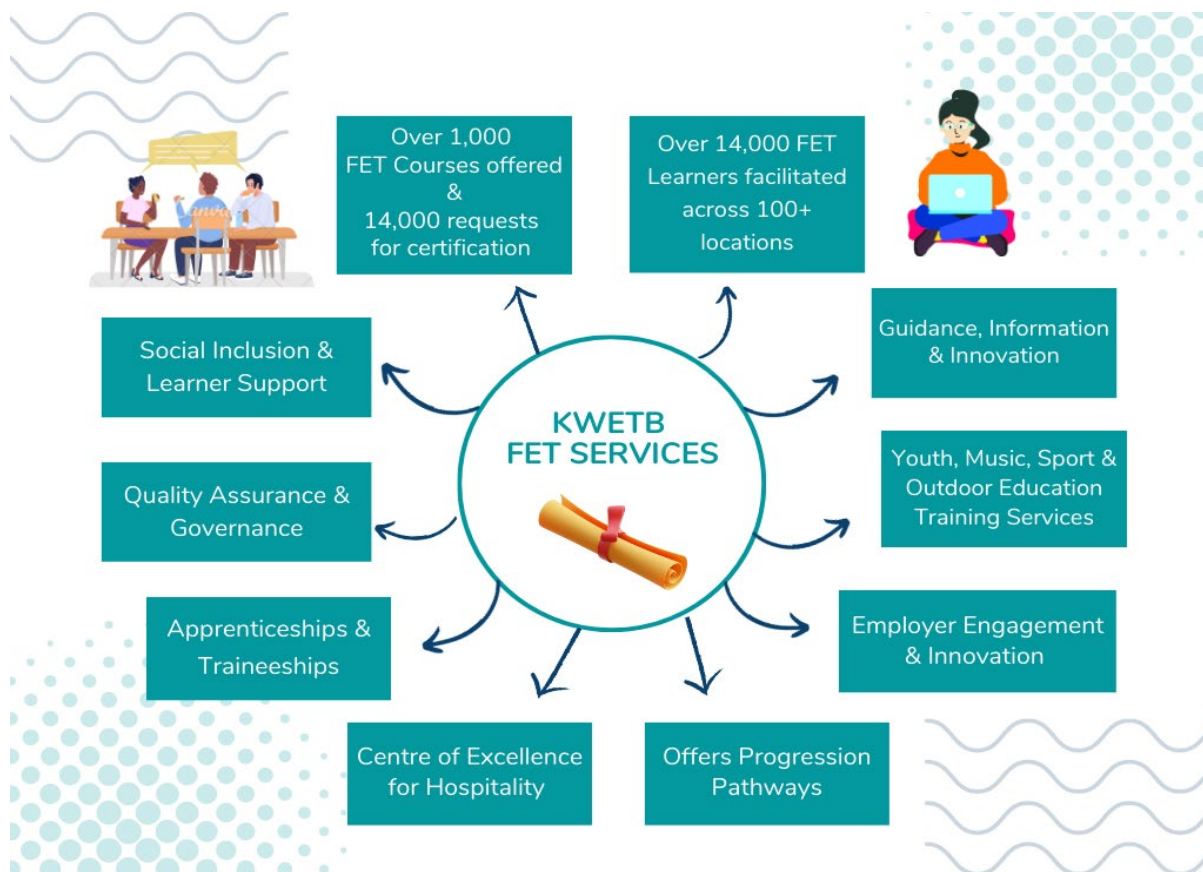
Schools

KWETB provides educational services across primary and post-primary levels throughout the counties of Kildare and Wicklow.



Further Education & Training ('FET')

SOLAS primarily funds FET with a budget of circa. €39,700,000 per year. FET offers an extensive and varying range of further education and training options, delivered in 25 FET locations throughout Kildare and Wicklow. FET provides programmes to a wide range of learners, including programmes for education progression and labour market skills. FET also offer learning programmes for social engagement, assisting people to gain the skills and knowledge needed to live and work in modern society.



The following programmes are delivered under KWETB's Further Education Service:

- **Adult Basic Education Service** – a part-time programme for adults wishing to develop their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and basic ICT
- **Adult Education Guidance Service** – a service providing education and career guidance and some personal counselling to adults
- **Advocacy Service** – a career and education guidance and counselling service for early school leavers between 16 and 21 years of age
- **Back to Education Initiative** – a part-time programme for young people and adults offering programmes at Levels 3-6 on the NFQ
- **Community Education** – a part-time programme for community groups and individuals who wish to return to or continue their education in a variety of community environments
- **Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)** – a comprehensive full-time programme of education at Level 5 and 6 of the NFQ for school leavers and returning adult learners

- **Prisoner Education** – the provision of education in partnership with the Irish Prison Service in Shelton Abbey Open Prison, Arklow
- **Vocational Training and Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)** – a programme for adults who are unemployed and in receipt of a social welfare payment who wish to retrain and/or upskill to increase their employment opportunities offered at Levels 3-6 on the NFQ
- **Youthreach** – a full-time, two-year programme for early school leavers aged between 16 and 21 years who wish to complete a qualification at Level 3 and 4 of the National Framework of Qualifications (“NFQ”)
- **Refugee Programme** – a specific programme offering Orientation and Language programme to adult residents of the Hazel Hotel Emergency Reception Orientation Centre (EROC)
- **Apprenticeship** – Administration of apprenticeship in the ETB region and direct delivery of craft and non-craft apprenticeship
- **Bridging and Foundation** – programmes for adults wishing to upskill at Level 3 and 4 of the NFQ
- **Specific Training Programme for People with Disabilities** – a contracted, full-time programme for adults with disabilities or other needs who wish to upskill/retrain
- **Specific Skills Training** – programmes aimed at training adults to fill identified specific skill gaps
- **Traineeships** – work-based learning programme for adults who wish to retrain/upskill
- **Skills to Advance** programme for employed learners from L3 to L6 of the NFQ
- Support and administration for **Youth Services and Music Generation** in Kildare and Wicklow.

FET Programme	2024 Beneficiaries
FE Part-time Inclusion	2,885
ESOL	2,548
FE Part-time	2,016
FE Full-time	649
Youthreach	453
Skills to Advance	2,435
Training incl. traineeship	2,761
Apprenticeship	622
PLC	2,599
Total 2024	16,968

Statement of Strategy 2020-2024

Our vision to deliver high-quality, inclusive, innovative education, training, youth and support services. To promote excellence in all we do and to be a leader at both community and national level, are supported by our core value statements;

In order to support the public sector Equality and Human Rights duty, KWETB acknowledges the importance of creating a culture of respect in line with its core values as set out in its Statement of Strategy.

Value Statements

Integrity

Ensuring that all our activities in pursuit of the mission and vision of KWETB are supportive of our employees and learners, and demonstrate accountability, professionalism, honesty, and loyalty

Learner-centred

Recognising that the learner experience is central to our work and that each learner is an important contributor to their own learning and wellbeing

Respect

Promoting a climate of care and respect in every KWETB workplace and centre of learning

Excellence

Embracing a culture of ongoing improvement and the promotion of the highest standards. Our schools and centres strive for excellence in all their endeavours

KWETB's Statement of Strategy 2020-2024 sets high-level objectives for KWETB to achieve, underpinned by our four pillars of strategic priority;

1. Teaching and Learning
2. Working and Learning Environments
3. Staff
4. Corporate Governance

These four pillars ensure that the highest standards of teaching and learning are provided, in an inclusive and innovative manner. KWETB are committed to providing the suitable and state of the art learning and workplace facilities, whilst enabling staff to pursue excellence through the active promotion of workplace environments. Supported by a robust corporate governance system that supports accountability and transparency.

KWETB is committed to mainstreaming its Public Sector Human Rights and Equality Duty and its obligations under the Disability Act 2005 and the human rights and equality obligations therein across all the pillars of the organisation by adopting a more systematic approach in line with the recommendations of IHREC for public bodies.

KWETB will continually refine its operations to support its mandate, mission, and strategic objectives, ensuring efficiency, strong governance, clear accountability, and transparent decision-making.



OUR MISSION

To provide high quality and innovative education, training, youth and supports, which are accessible, responsive to the developing needs of learners, of the community and of society and which promote excellence, equality and social inclusion.

To deliver high-quality, inclusive, innovative education, training, youth and support services.

To promote excellence in all we do and to be a leader at both community and national level

OUR VISION



BORD OIDEACHAIS AGUS OILIÚNA
CHILL DARA AGUS CHILL MHANTÁIN
KILDARE AND WICKLOW
EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD



Bray Institute of
Further Education
identified as a FET
College of the Future.



KWETB Advanced
Manufacturing
Technician Traineeship
- Special Recognition
for European Social
Funding Initiative
Winners 2024

Craddockstown Special
School opening

KWETB Sustainability
Strategy was
completed in 2024 -
Compliance with the
national roadmap
achieved.

KWETB employees
completed training in
Equality & Human
Rights in the Public
Service



The Year that was - KWETB in 2024

For another consecutive year, KWETB continued to deliver strong and consistent support across its FET courses, education, literacy, guidance and learning supports for our communities. While overall FET activity levels remained steady, there was a notable increase of 12% in demand for PLC programmes.



Craddockstown Special School in, Naas has opened and is operational since September 2024. This development provides much needed school access for students with complex learning needs. Tánaiste Simon Harris (Taoiseach April 2024 - January 2025) and former Minister of State with responsibility for Special Education and Inclusion, Hildegard Naughton, officially

opened the new special school in January 2025.

Blessington Community College has received sanction for a 1,000-pupil extension. This increase in capacity will alleviate significant pressure on school places in the Blessington area. This work is progressing well.

Greystones Community College marked the turning of the sod for the construction of the new 1,000 pupil school building in August with former Taoiseach, Simon Harris in attendance, as pictured below. The new building will be located on an 11.5-acre site at Hawkins Wood, Greystones. It is a Department of Education led design and build project.

Schools
update



Planning permission was granted for St Farnan's Post Primary School in Properous, Co. Kildare. This school will include a four-classroom special education unit, a multi-purpose hall, a general purpose room, general classrooms, specialist classrooms, social areas, a library, and administration areas.



KWETB received approval to proceed to the next stage in developing a 'College of the Future' at Bray Institute of Further Education. The redeveloped college will eventually accommodate more than 1,500 learners on-site and cater for up to 5,000 full-time, blended, and part-time equivalent learners.

The AONTAS STAR Awards

2024 took place at Croke Park on March 8th, celebrating excellence in adult education and training sector across Ireland. As part of the event, the ESF+ proudly sponsored a Special Recognition Award to honour an exceptional ESF co-funded initiative.

Aontas
Awards 2024

Among 24 shortlisted nominees, KWETB's Level 6 Advanced Manufacturing Traineeship Programme was awarded the ESF Special Recognition Award. Launched in Celbridge in 2015, the programme supports underrepresented groups including women, early school leavers, long-term unemployed individuals, and refugees in accessing high-quality employment in the tech and pharmaceutical industries.

This initiative reflects the core values of the ESF+ - expanding access to education and employment while fostering greater social inclusion.



In November, KWETB held a celebratory capstone event in Naas, Co. Kildare for its National Hairdressing Apprenticeship graduates. The event marked the culmination of the 3-year program, showcasing the creativity and skills of final-year apprenticeships through innovative hairstyles inspired by their personal experiences. Combining practical training with academic study, the apprenticeship leads to a nationally and internationally recognised QQI Level 6 certificate. Attended by KWETB staff, mentors, and families, the event highlighted the apprentices' artistic achievements and future career potential in hairdressing and related fields.



ETB Week
11-15 March
2024

505+

The implementation of the ETBI Patrons' Framework continued in 2024. In March 2024, the sixteen ETBs from across the country came together in Thomond Park, Limerick. The day was a fantastic celebration of ethos and core values of ETBs, which have driven education standards across primary, post primary and further education in local communities across all regions. The event also introduced the International ETB webinar in 2024. Additionally, the inaugural national ETB Alumni awards were

introduced to honour exceptional former ETB learners who excelled in their field or made an outstanding contribution to their communities. The ETB Bursaries were also announced in the areas of Technology & AI, Green Innovation, Media & Communications and An Ghaeilge. Each Alumni was presented with a specially commissioned sculpture by woodturner Kathleen Walsh, made from cypress, sandstone and charcoal.

Not only did Kildare & Wicklow ETB's nominee attend his local ETB before establishing a highly successful business, but his sons have carried on the tradition! Simon Cross attended the small vocational school in Rathangan before setting up Cross engineering, which is now a thriving, innovative agricultural engineering firm in the capable hands of Simon's two sons, Jason and Gary, who also attended their local KWETB school, Ardscoil Rath Iomgháin.



In the Bursary Awards, the runner up prize went to a talented stop motion animator with a passion for Lego who aspires to enter the film industry as a director or screenwriter. From St Farnan's Post Primary School in Kildare & Wicklow ETB, congratulations Corey Talbot.

Kildare and Wicklow ETB continued to play an important role in the provision of education for Ukrainian children and families within our communities in Kildare and Wicklow. Approximately 200 learners were placed across KWETB.

KWETB continued its work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in 2024. Two senior members of staff have completed the IPA Professional Diploma in Human Rights and Equality and are sharing much of this knowledge via our EDI working group. We promoted the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) training module. KWETB hosted an EDI day event to celebrate those 40+ members of staff whom completed the IHREC training module in September 2024. This event

Equality,
Diversity &
Inclusion
(EDI)

(EDI)

created a progressive dialogue around EDI in the organization, sharing with our staff the work the EDI group is focusing on and celebrating Continued Professional Development in the area of Public Sector Duty.



To improve upon the KWETB's website accessibility we engaged with the National Disability Authority (NDA) and participated in an in-depth review by NDA on our website for which we have featured in their 2024 annual report noted as an example of good practice for others in the sector to follow. Our website accessibility had a 40% increase in accessibility score as a result of this action. This experience was shared with the ETBI forums to spread awareness in conjunction with the NDA.

The Procurement Team invested significant effort in 2024 to reduce non-compliant procurement spend across the organisation. With the support of various stakeholders there has been an overall decrease of 30.4% in non-compliant spend in 2024 which equates to 1% of our total non-pay expenditure. For the first time, auditors have not requested any explanations or comments in the management letters in relation to procurement expenditure for the 2024 audit. This is indicative of their satisfaction with how the procurement process was deployed with transparency and fairness. Efforts to reduce non-compliant spending further will continue unabated.

KWETB completed the GL Payroll Conversion Project in 2024. The purpose of this project was to align HR-Core Payroll with the SUN coding system, the SUN system is a financial system used by the Finance Department. The interface between the two systems is a vital process to ensure accurate balancing of expenditure. This project streamlined expenditure and strengthened the internal reporting systems between both KWETB locations in Kildare and Wicklow. The project involved an intensive data cleanse for 2500+ employees, user acceptance training and

GL Payroll
Conversion
Project

streamlining of job titles to ensure the hierarchy was mapped correctly and expenditure was accurate. The project successfully went live in November 2024.

KWETB's recruitment team successfully recruited 610 individuals across various roles, including 372 Teachers, 3 Principals, 8 Deputy Principals, and 119 Posts of Responsibility. This remarkable achievement highlights the team's unwavering focus on attracting and securing top talent to support our mission of providing high-quality and innovative education, training, and youth supports. Their hard work and perseverance were crucial in meeting our staffing needs and ensuring excellence in education for our students and learners.

KWETB's recruitment team also took on the significant initiative of supporting special schools through the Department of Education's Co-operation Hours Scheme. This involved the administration of teaching hours allocated to post-primary aged students in special schools, ensuring access to teacher supply in relevant curricular areas. The team's efforts facilitated cooperation between mainstream and special schools, promoting inclusive practices and maximising the delivery of specific programs. Their dedication and hard work were instrumental in providing high-quality education and support to students with special needs, reflecting their commitment to enhancing educational opportunities for all learners.

KWETB HR,
Payroll and
Pensions

KWETB met its obligations under the Circular Letter 11/2014 to provide annual pension statements to all members of the Single Public Service ('SPS') Pension Scheme in 2024. The Pensions team had a busy year, they processed 32 retirements across two pension schemes and issued 1,237 annual benefit statements together with 249 leavers pension benefit statements to KWETB employees who paid SPS contributions and SPS referable amounts during the period 2013-2023.

KWETB also held the second annual retirement function in October 2024 for employees who had retired in 2023 and 2024 which included presentations from the CE and staff to the retirees. The retirement gift was designed and made by our colleagues in Shelton Abbey, and retirement cakes were created by our colleagues in Marine House, which added a personal touch to the event. The function was a great success and there was lots of positive feedback both on the day and afterwards. This is now a staple in the Pensions Team diary going forward.



Ten schools across KWETB engaged with SEN provision mapping in 2024. The ongoing developmental process aims to support inclusive school improvement. The initial 18-month cycle of Provision Mapping will provide participating schools with access to guidance,



resources, workshops, and professional learning to enable them to collect data from staff, students, and parents about inclusive education. This data will be analysed to inform future school improvement and the identification of resources and professional learning and support needed to continue responding to identified needs in an ongoing cycle.

KWETB was selected to participate in the pilot tertiary education project innovation launched by DFHERIS in 2023. Now in its second year, the pilot has evolved to enable collaboration between ETBs and third-level institutions across several pre-identified areas of interest with learners progressing towards a Level 7 or 8 award accredited by the relevant third-level institution. Additional projects are planned, with the expectation that the initiative will be mainstreamed in the future.

Tertiary
Education
Project

As part of the nationwide Schools Photovoltaic Programme, tender report has been submitted to the Department of Education, and we are awaiting approval to proceed to appointing the contractor. Sixteen KWETB schools are included in this project.

In line with legislation, a new 5-year Strategy Statement is required by KWETB. A holistic approach was adopted by creating a strategy team within the organisation. This strategy builds upon the 2020-2024 strategic framework of the ETB and incorporates the valuable insights gained through extensive consultation with key stakeholders and agencies involved with the work of KWETB. The team consulted with students, learners, parents, and other stakeholders, inviting them to provide feedback and contribute towards the Strategy Statement.

The new 2025-2029 Strategic Statement, which was formally adopted by the Board in March 2025 will launch in May.





Governance Report

KWETB was established under the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 and is responsible and accountable for the proper direction and control of its functions in the Kildare and Wicklow local authority areas.

KWETB complies with the Code of Practice for Governance of Education and Training Boards, Department of Education Circular 0083/2024. The purpose of the code is to ensure that the principles of good governance and management are applied by Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board.

This report presents a high-level overview of governance activities of KWETB in 2024. Good governance in all our activities is paramount; this is reflected by one of the four strategic pillars entirely dedicated to the area of governance.

The Board of KWETB has adopted and adheres to the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs 2024 and has implemented the up-to-date requirements of the Code in our governance practices and procedures across the organisation.

Functions of the Board

Decisions taken by the Board are reserved functions and are set out in Section 12 (2) of the Education and Training Board Act 2013 and in Circular 0083/2024, Code of Practice for the Governance of Education and Training Boards, with a full schedule set out in Appendix A of the Code. Decisions not specified in the Code are deemed to be Executive Functions for the Chief Executive. The Board is satisfied that the Chief Executive delegates functions where appropriate and in accordance with the Education and Training Board Act 2013.



The Board is responsible for keeping proper books of account, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Board and which enable it to ensure that the Financial Statements comply with Section 51 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013. The Board is also responsible for safeguarding its assets and for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The Board considers that the Annual Financial Statements properly present the income and expenditure of the Board and the state of affairs of the Board.

In preparing those accounts, the Board is required to:

- (a) apply the standard accounting policies for the preparation of ETB financial statements
- (b) make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- (c) disclose and explain any material departures from the standard accounting policies

Activities of the Board in 2024, included:

- Adoption of Service Plan 2024
- Adoption of Annual Report 2023
- Draft Annual Financial Statements and Statement of Internal Control 2023
- Authorised attendance of members at conferences
- Approved leases
- Reviewed Statement of Strategy progress
- Ensured accurate records were kept of meetings and decisions

The Board confirms that there has been a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and that the Statement of Internal Control (SIC), which is subject to amendment until the external audit is completed, has been included in the Annual Financial Statements (AFS) for the year ended 31st of December 2024. The AFS will be published within one month of receipt from the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General. KWETB also confirm that a Chairperson's Comprehensive Report has been submitted to the Minister, which includes the SIC as an appendix.

KWETB confirms that its annual accounts have been submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) by 1st April 2025 and are, at the time of submission of the annual report, unaudited by the C&AG. As directed by the Department of Education, KWETB will publish the audited AFS within one month of receipt from the C&AG.

The 2023 Annual Financial Statements were laid before the House of the Oireachtas and subsequently published on our website.

Financial data in relation to the following is included in the Annual Financial Statements:

- Non-Salary-related fees paid in respect of Committee members;
- Salaries and short-term employee benefits;
- Post-employment benefits;
- Termination benefits;
- Key management compensation if any;
- The number of employees whose total employee benefits were between €0 to €59,999;
- The number of employees whose total employee benefits were between €60,000 to €69,999 and within each pay band of €10,000; and
- Overall figure for employer pension contributions.

The system of internal control includes all policies, procedures, protocols, reviews, and reporting mechanisms to ensure governance and compliance in our activities.

The Board confirms that KWETB is adhering to relevant aspects of the Public Spending Code and complies with its obligations under tax law.

KWETB adheres to the Procurement Policy and procedures; a Corporate Procurement Plan has been developed and implemented.

A Policy Management Framework (PMF) is in operation and policies are developed, approved, and reviewed, in line with the PMF.

Protected Disclosures Report 2024

In accordance with section 22 of the Protected Disclosure Act 2014, KWETB must report annually on Protected Disclosures received. Accordingly, no Protected Disclosures were received by KWETB in 2024.

The Official Languages Act 2003

KWETB must comply with the Official Languages Act 2003 which provides for the preparation by public bodies of a language scheme detailing the services which they will provide through the medium of Irish and English. Kildare and Wicklow ETB's 2022 -2025 Scéim Teanga is in operation and KWETB are cognisant of our obligations under the Act and are committed in complying and adherence to the Sceim Teanga. KWETB complies with reporting on Section 10A (Advertising by Public Bodies) to An Coimisinéir Teanga annually.

Emissions and Sustainability

Annually KWETB must provide a statement on compliance via the Climate Action Mandate. Based on the data shown for 2023, KWETB reported to have seen a decrease in fossil fuel output but at present are still trending above baseline trajectory for 2030 targets. For the total Co2 emissions our current gap to target is 1,300,879 Kg Co2. To achieve fossil Co2 targets we must reduce our emissions by another 48.4% and the total Co2 emissions must reduce by 56.6%. Energy audits to be carried out in 2025 on our highest thermal energy users.

Receipt of Gifts

In accordance with Section 29 of The Education and Training Boards Act, 2013 KWETB reported no gifts being received in the context of the Act during 2024.

Gifts are defined in the Act as gift of Money, Land or other property or where Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board are asked to be a trustee of any trust or charity.

Composition of Board (2019 – 2024) and meeting attendance 2024.

Throughout 2024, the Board met on 7 occasions, with details of attendance outlined in the table below.

The KWETB Board was renewed following local elections in August 2024. The below table outlines the Board of KWETB for 2019 -2024 and the second table details the changes to the Board of KWETB following the local elections.



KWETB BOARD 2019 – AUGUST 2024						
Board member	Nominating Body	2019	2020	2021	2022	No. of Board Meetings attended / held: 4
		2	2	2	2	
		3	7	6	1	
		/	/	/	/	
		0	0	0	0	
		1	2	3	5	
		/	/	/	/	
		2	2	2	2	
		0	0	0	0	
		2	2	2	2	
		4	4	4	4	
Cllr. Daragh Fitzpatrick (Chair)	Kildare County Council	x	x	x	x	4/4
Cllr. Tom Fortune (Deputy Chair)	Wicklow County Council	-	x	x	x	3/4
Cllr. Lourda Scott	Wicklow County Council	x	-	-	-	1/4
Cllr. Nuala Killeen	Kildare County Council	-	-	x	x	2/4
Cllr. Bernard Caldwell	Kildare County Council	-	-	x	x	2/4
Cllr. Anne Ferris	Wicklow County Council	x	x	-	x	3/4
Cllr. Evie Salmon	Kildare County Council	x	x	x	x	4/4
Cllr. Peter Hamilton	Kildare County Council	x	x	x	x	4/4
Cllr. Paul O'Brien	Wicklow County Council	x	x	x	x	4/4
Cllr. Patsy Glennon	Wicklow County Council	-	x	x	x	3/4
Cllr. Kevin Duffy	Kildare County Council	x	x	x	x	4/4
Cllr. Íde Cussen	Kildare County Council	x	x	x	x	4/4
Mr. Stephen Horan	Staff Representative	x	x	x	x	4/4
Ms. Aoife Ní Cheilleachair	Staff Representative	-	-	-	-	0/4
Mr. David O'Gorman	Parent Representative	x	x	x	x	4/4
Ms Caoimhe Molloy	NYCI – National Youth Council of Ireland	-	-	-	x	1/4
Mr. Noel Merrick	NAPD, ACCS and Joint Managerial Body (JMB)	-	-	x	x	2/4
Ms. Siobhain Grogan	Conradh na Gaeilge	x	x	-	x	3/4
Mr Ronan Mills	Institute of Professional Auctioneer & Valuers	-	-	-	-	0/4



Composition of the new KWETB Board (2024 – 2029) and meeting attendance from July 2024

New KWETB Board with effect from 20/08/24						
Board member	Nominating Body	2024	2025	2026	No. of Board Meetings attended / held: 3	
		07/08/24	08/09/24	01/10/24		
Cllr. Paul O'Brien - (Chair)	Wicklow County Council	-	x	x	2/3	
Cllr. Evie Salmon – (Deputy Chair)	Kildare County Council	x	x	-	2/3	
Cllr. Daragh Fitzpatrick	Kildare County Council	x	x	-	2/3	
Cllr. Tom Fortune	Wicklow County Council	x	x	x	3/3	
Cllr. Nuala Killeen	Kildare County Council	x	x	-	2/3	
Cllr. David Trost	Kildare County Council	x	x	x	3/3	
Cllr. Rupert Heather	Kildare County Council	x	x	x	3/3	
Cllr. Claire O'Rourke	Kildare County Council	x	x	x	3/3	
Cllr. Brendan Wyse	Kildare County Council	x	x	-	2/3	
Cllr. Aoife Flynn Kennedy	Wicklow County Council	x	x	x	3/3	
Cllr. Louise Fenelon Gaskin	Wicklow County Council	x	x	x	3/3	
Mr. Stephen Horan	Staff Representative	x	x	x	3/3	
Elaine Finnerty	Staff Representative	n/a	x	x	2/2	
Cllr. John Snell	Wicklow County Council	-	x	-	1/3	
Maria Barry	JMB/ACC	n/a	x	x	2/2	
Tom Russell	Down Syndrome Ireland	n/a	x	-	1/2	
Carol Nolan	Horse Racing Ireland	n/a	x	x	2/2	
Eamon O'Flaherty	IPAV	n/a	x	x	2/2	
Lisa Campbell	NPC	x	x	x	3/3	



Anne Ferris	THEA	n / a	x	-	1/2
-------------	------	-------------	---	---	-----

The Chief Executive of KWETB is Dr Deirdre Keyes.

Gender Balance in the Board membership

As at 31 December, the Board had 10 (47%) female and 11 (52%) male members, with 0 positions vacant. The Board therefore meets the Government target of a minimum of 40% representation of each gender in the membership of State Boards.

The Boards are formed every five years following local government elections. As set out above, a newly formed Board of KWETB was established in August 2024 following the most recent local elections. KWETB are cognisant of the requirements and endeavour to maintain and support gender balance on this Board.

Committees of KWETB

In accordance with the ETB Act, 2013 the Board of KWETB may establish committees to assist it with its responsibilities, particularly in relation to its oversight of financial matters and risk.

Established under Section 45 of the Education and Training Boards Act, 2013, the Audit and Risk Committee and Finance Committee are composed of Board members and independent external members appointed by the Board.

The Audit and Risk Committee has a particular role, acting independently of the management of KWETB, to ensure that the interests of Government and other stakeholders are fully protected in relation to business and financial reporting and internal control. Advising on risk is a key function of the Audit and Risk Committee.

During the year the Audit and Risk Committee met on 5 occasions, with details of attendance outlined in the table below. The programme of work of the Audit and Risk Committee for 2024 included;

- Review of audit reports and monitoring of progress on implementation of audit findings throughout the year – Audit Register;
- Risk Management;
- Review of Internal Control;
- Reports from Executive;
- External (C&AG) and internal (IAU-ETBs) auditor engagement



Composition of Audit and Risk Committee and meeting attendance 2024

Committee member	External / Internal	18/01/2024	29/01/2024	20/02/2024	15/03/2024	No. of ARC Meetings attended / held: 4
Mr. Paul McEvoy (Chair)	External	x	x	x	x	4/4
Mr. David Russell	External	-	x	x	-	2/4
Ms. Ailish Byrne	External	x	-	x	x	3/4
Ms. Kerrie Sheehan – Resigned 29.02.24	External	x	n/a	n/a	n/a	1/1
Mr. Alan Richardson	External	x	x	x	x	4/4
Cllr. Kevin Duffy	Board	x	-	x	x	3/4
Cllr. Nuala Killeen	Board	-	-	-	-	0/4
Mr. David O’Gorman	Board	x	x	x	x	4/4

Composition of New Audit and Risk Committee with effect from 17.09.24 and meeting attendance 2024

Committee member	External / Internal	19/11/2024	No. of ARC Meetings attended / held: 1
Mr. Paul McEvoy (Chair)	External	x	1/1
Mr. Alan Richardson	External	x	1/1
Ms. Ailish Byrne	External	x	1/1
Cllr. David Trost	Board	x	1/1
Cllr. Aoife Flynn Kennedy	Board	x	1/1
Maria Barry	Board	x	1/1

The Finance Committee has a particular role in assisting and reporting to the Board on financial matters. The Finance Committee have a specific function in relation to the review of the annual financial statements. The Finance Committee met four times in 2024.



As part of their work programme the Finance Committee included the following in 2024;

- Approval of and assessment of implementation of annual Service Plan;
- Review and recommendation of draft annual financial statements;
- Monthly income and expenditure accounts;
- Payments in excess of €25,000;
- Contracts register;
- Leasing/licensing proposals.

Composition of Finance Committee and meeting attendance 2024

Committee member	External / Internal	2	2	1	No. of Finance Committee Meetings attended / held: 3
		1	1	0	
		/	/	/	
		0	0	0	
		2	3	5	
		/	/	/	
		2	2	2	
		4	4	4	
Mr. Noel Merrick (Chair)	Board	x	x	x	3/3
Cllr. Patsy Glennon	Board	x	-	-	1/3
Cllr. Peter Hamilton	Board	x	x	-	2/3
Mr. JJ Power	External	x	x	x	3/3
Ms Martina Robinson	External	x	-	x	2/3

Composition of New Finance Committee with effect from 17.09.24 and meeting attendance 2024

Committee member	External / Internal	12/11/2024	No. of Finance Committee Meetings attended / held: 1
Ms. Lisa Campbell	Board	x	1/1
Cllr. Louise Fenelon Gaskin	Board	x	1/1
Cllr. David Trost	Board	x	1/1
Ms Martina Robinson	External	x	1/1
Ms. Debbie Howlett	External	x	1/1

As required by the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs, the ARC and Finance Committee's submitted detailed annual reports to the Board, timed to support the finalisation of the financial statements, detailing their activities and recommendations.

Risk Management

The Board maintains active oversight of risk management, KWETB carried out an assessment of the principle risks, associated mitigation measures and reviewed the effectiveness of these measures in 2024. KWETB manages risk through a structured risk management framework. The Board is assisted in its risk management oversight function by the Audit and Risk Committee. Risk management is a standing item on Board meeting agendas.

Individual Risk Registers have been developed and are actively managed for the Corporate, Schools, FET and OSD. The Audit and Risk Committee review the corporate risk register at meetings of the committee and a risk management report is brought to the Board as part of their standard agenda items.

KWETB continued with its approach to Risk Management in 2024 by;

- Actively identifying, recording and implementing mitigation actions on the risk register;
- Regularly reporting to the Audit and Risk Committee and Board on risk management and changes in the principal risks;
- Risk management is a standing item on the Board agenda;
- Regular reports from Audit and Risk Committee;
- Active management of Audit Register.

In addition to risk management, annually a comprehensive review of internal control is completed.

The system of internal control operated in KWETB is based on:

- Managerial and administrative procedures
- Segregation of duties
- Specific authorisations
- Internal controls
- Assurances received
- Monthly financial budget reports
- External audit reports and recommendations (Audit Register)
- Internal audit reports and recommendations (Audit Register)

KWETB's detailed Statement of Internal Control is included in the Annual Financial Statements; in addition, the Chairperson has submitted a report to the Minister as outlined by section 6.8 of the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETB's 2024.

The Four Pillars of Strategic Priority

1



Teaching and Learning

Ensuring the highest standards of teaching and learning in all our services, delivering on required standards through an inclusive, innovative and learner-centred approach. To support all KWETB learners to reach their potential and to respond to the emerging educational and training needs in our communities, in the wider economy and in society. To actively promote the Quality of Teaching and Learning and the Characteristic Spirit of KWETB schools and centres.

2



Working and Learning Environments

To systematically develop and enhance our facilities, infrastructure and equipment for staff and learners. To improve both the work and learning environments in all our schools, centres and offices in line with best standards. To be responsive to the wider national policies on supporting a sustainable environment for all.

3



Staff

Enable staff to pursue excellence through good organisational process and procedures, effective systems of communication, high quality services for staff, development of professional networks, skills training, staff development programmes and an active promotion of positive workplace environments.

4



Corporate Governance

To have a robust corporate governance culture and systems, which are accountable and transparent. To support this through effective administrative structures and systems, strong corporate identity (branding/PR), positive customer and stakeholder engagement and compliance.

Key achievements of KWETB in 2024

The below achievements of 2024 are derived from strategic objectives as set out in [KWETB Statement of Strategy \(SOS\) 2020 - 2024](#) and the KWETB 2024 Service Plan. On the implementation of the SOS, the vision going forward is to devise a detailed annual operational plan to progress the goals and actions of the 4 strategic pillars in consultation with staff. Progress made each year will be monitored quarterly and will be reported on at the end of each year in the Annual Report for the Organisation, as below.

Strategic Objective	Strategic Action	2024 Deliverables / Achievements
Strategic Priority 1: Teaching and Learning		
1. Optimise Student/Learner Experience	Meet the 2024 Service level agreement targets set by SOLAS	In 2024, KWETB made strong progress in meeting the Service Level Agreement targets set by SOLAS. While SPA reporting from SOLAS did not include all categories (e.g. Supporting Jobs, FE-HE progression), performance across the reported areas was very strong. Notably, Progression reached 131%, Lifelong Learning (LLL) 124%, Widening Participation 184%, and Active Inclusion (ALL) 101%. Transversal Skills achieved 82%. Key Skills (75%) and Skills to Complete (70%) which fell slightly below targets, largely due to demographic shifts and changes in regional demand following COVID and economic adjustments.
	Expand the student support programme to all learner categories	Work continued on the development of enhanced learner pathways and the rollout of learner and staff handbooks.

1.2 Innovation in Teaching and Learning	1.2.1 Integrate new and emerging technologies to enhance teaching and learning both in-house and remotely through the KWETB ICT strategy.	<p><u>Schools</u></p> <p>Promotion of communication and staff collaboration across the organisation through an online platform including setting up supportive networks for Subject Teachers and Special Focus Groups was established.</p> <p>Collaboration on learning technology initiatives and projects such as Internet Safety and Coding delivered.</p> <p>Individual support for schools to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in ETB schools through coordinating Digital Planning across schools was achieved.</p> <p>Developing teachers' knowledge and skills in using technology including blended learning techniques and content creation through face-to-face workshops in schools.</p> <p>Share advice and promote Professional Development Opportunities and Innovative Teaching and Learning Strategies.</p> <p><u>FET</u></p> <p>A number of professional development programmes for IT integration for quality assurance continued. An internal workshop for AI in T&L practice took place with</p>

		approximately 50 participants in Q1 2024 and AI is in common use in FET for T&L practices
1.3 Supporting Diversity of Student Population and access for all Learners	1.3.1 Ensure equality of opportunity, experience and outcome for learners with additional learning needs, special education needs or disabilities, so that they can avail of the full range of education and training opportunities that KWETB offers.	KWETB delivered a safe and compliant service in 2024, with updated Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult (CPVA) policies rolled out across all service types, including TS, YR, >18s, and PLC. The organisation continued to support access for all learners and maintained adherence to obligations under Irish language and human rights legislation. Compliance was ensured particularly through the use of built-in translation functionality on web systems and appropriate advertising methods.
1.4 Networks, Collaborating and a Learning Community	1.4.1 Promote a culture of innovation and reflective practice including the further development of staff networks, sharing of best practice and learning forums.	<p><u>Schools</u></p> <p>Regular meetings were held with the Principal's Network in various locations. Typically, 6 meetings per year held in schools across Kildare and Wicklow. Principals Network Steering group develops the agenda for each meeting with the assistance of the DoS and the content of these meetings are set in advance with input from all Principals within the Network.</p> <p>Deputy principals had the opportunity to engage in a one-day CPD event, delivered by the DPs to the Network. DPs also attended the final meeting of the Principals Network in June '24</p>

		<p>The DP mentoring programme is continuing. The most recent appointments to the post of DP are availing of mentoring support from existing DP mentors within the scheme.</p> <p>As a member of ETBI's CPD committee, we have arranged a summer school for middle-leaders which has run for the past 2 years in UL. KWETB had 11 attendees at the most recent summer school in June '24.</p> <p>FET</p> <p>Although the number of collaborative projects is not quantified, efforts were made to strengthen the culture of innovation and reflective practice, supporting staff engagement and best-practice sharing.</p>
Strategic Priority 2: Work and Learning Environments		
2.1 Buildings, Maintenance and Sustainability	2.1.1 Improve the energy performance of our schools and education centres in line with best practice and guidelines	The first stage of KWETB's sustainability strategy was completed in 2024, including a baseline environmental assessment and development of sustainability policies and SOPs. Compliance with national roadmap requirements was achieved, representing a key corporate goal aligned with long-term CO ₂ reduction commitments.
	2.1.2 Develop a four-year CO ₂ reduction plan for FET	An iterative plan based on climate mandate reporting was developed

	2.1.3 Identify and procure new fit for purpose administrative offices for KWETB in Naas and Wicklow Town.	Objective will be completed by May 2025 for Kildare offices. Review is still ongoing relating to the Wicklow offices.
2.2 Information and Communications Technology – ICT	2.2.1 Carry out a risk assessment of all ICT systems and put in place an action plan in response.	Risk assessments of KWETB systems have been carried out, the first step to addressing cyber security concerns is the domain migration project which commenced in 2024 and is currently ongoing.
	2.2.2 Review KWETB Manual Processes to identify those that can be reviewed, enhanced and/or automated to ensure greater efficiency	A Digital Enterprise Performance Management (D/EPM) Reporting Project system is not active. Online Travel System on Core is now active. Payroll General Ledge (GL) codes have now been consolidated with SUN codes.
2.3 Promote a positive working environment underpinned by a culture of respect, dignity and equality	2.3.1 Actively promote KWETB Core Values, vision and mission.	This is on-going and a full consultation took place in relation to the values and they are now updated for the new Strategy Statement.
	2.3.2 Actively promote KWETB Core Values, vision and mission in schools.	Work continued on the ETB Core Values Implementation Project.

		<p>4 Professional Learning Network Meetings were held with the Ethos Leaders across KWETB schools.</p> <p>School support visits were carried out by Ethos Coordinator.</p> <p>Participation at ETB day on the 2nd March and ETB week in 2024.</p> <p>LGBTQ resources disseminated to schools.</p> <p>Schools furnished with relevant material to rollout the ETBI Core Values Implementation Project to embed Ethos.</p> <p>In terms of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, we continue to work to embed both KWETB values and values associated with our Public Sector Duty.</p>
	<p>2.3.3 Target specific developmental supports for Managers to assist them in the promotion and fostering of a positive workplace environment.</p>	<p>In June 2024, a 4-day CPD Certificate in Managing People Skills was held with APO's, GVII and GVI staff from the OSD team attending. In total 19 staff attended the course. The course was to support promotion of a positive and productive work environment. A number of new APO positions were sanctioned in 2024 – the OSD management team now includes 1 APO in Corporate Services, HR, ICT,</p>

		Buildings & Procurement and two APO's in the Finance team.
Strategic Priority 3: Value and Develop our Staff		
3.1 Provide Strong Recruitment and Retention Systems and Practices	3.1.1 Continue to review and enhance our recruitment processes and practices to ensure they are fit for purpose and serving the needs of KWETB.	FET continued to strengthen recruitment processes by progressing sanctioned posts efficiently. Of the 23 sanction requests submitted to DFHERIS, 22 were approved and moved forward, ensuring that staffing levels remained aligned with service delivery requirements and resource planning.
3.2 Develop an Internal Communication Strategy	3.2.1 Further develop internal communications and information systems in order to support the work of the organisation, to promote easy access to information and to promote a sense of shared identity within the organisation.	CRM system has been implemented and available to all sections. ICT are continuing a pilot using CRM and using it as the sole communications medium for logging ICT requests. FET Internal communications remained effective in 2024, with comprehensive records of management meetings and staff activities maintained through TEAM documentation. These efforts supported transparency and helped ensure that budget and operational decisions were well-informed and aligned with organisational priorities.

Strategic Priority 4: Corporate Governance and External Relations

4. Governance	3.2.1 Restructure the budget allocation to individual cost centres aligned with the revised SOLAS funding categories.	FET maintained robust governance frameworks, ensuring all expenditure and oversight activities met compliance standards. Despite sectoral challenges and unexpected increases in allowances and payroll costs, local spending remained well-focused. A projected overspend of approximately €500K was noted, and proactive budget management continued throughout the year. All relevant grant allocations were completed and aligned to appropriate services and projects.
----------------------	---	---

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

KWETB	Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board
PLC	Post Leaving Certificate
FET	Further Education Training
DE	Department of Education
FESS	Further Education Systems Support
ESBS	Education Shared Business Services
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
ABE	Adult Basic Education
APO	Assistant Principal Officer
AFS	Annual Financial Statements
IAU-ETBs	Internal Audit Unit- Education & Training Boards
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
NFQ	National Framework Qualification
REALT	Regional Education and Language Team
DigCap	KWETB's 6-month Professional Development programme, aligned to the European Digital Competence Framework for Educators. Offered at three levels; Pathfinder, Associate and Fellow.
ALISS	Accessible Learning Integrated Supply Service
OEC	Outdoor Education Centre
SEN	Special Educational Needs
NAPD	National Association for Principals & Deputy's
SMT	Senior Management Team
PMF	Policy Management Framework
BOM	Board of Management
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
SIC	Statement of Internal Control
SLA	Service Level Agreement

FET

Further Education and Training

OSD

Organisation Support and Development

DFHERIS

Department of Further and Higher Education,
Research, Innovation and Science