

McCarthy, Patrick B 1999, *The Preparation and Professional Development of Newly-Appointed Second Level Principals in Ireland*.

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Reforms in Irish education in the last five years in particular have created a new awareness of the central role played by principals in the change process and the pursuit of excellence in schools. This dissertation was undertaken to ascertain if the preparation and professional development of newly-appointed second level principals in Ireland was in tune with the increasing demands made on principals by a host of other shareholders in the education system.

The changing role of the principal was discussed and the application of current management theory to schools was undertaken. Models of educational management were discussed with a view to explaining the school environment better. The preparation, training and development of aspiring and practising heads in the U.K. were examined and compared and contrasted with the provision by a host of accredited inservice providers in Ireland.

The views and perceptions of thirty-four newly-appointed principals, appointed within the last five years, were surveyed through questionnaire and the findings, together with a comprehensive review of the literature on the role of the head/principal and leadership theory, enables one to reach a number of tentative conclusions and to offer some recommendations on the preparation and professional development of principals.