At the outset, I want to say that I believe teaching is the most important of all professions - the profession whose function is to facilitate the unique talents of each young person being recognised and nurtured; so that s/he is able to reach his/her potential while also contributing to the common good.

Here, I am reminded of two quotations.

‘To me the sole hope of human salvation lies in teaching’.

George Bernard Shaw - playwright, Nobel laureate, Oscar winner, Fabian socialist and co-founder of the London School of Economics.

‘In a completely rational society, the best of us would be teachers and the rest of us would have to settle for something else.

- Lee Iacocca – US Businessman, former CEO of Chrysler and Ford

Yet many teachers are dissatisfied, many young students are dissatisfied, and many parents are dissatisfied.

Indeed, there is worldwide concern about the capacity of 21st century education to equip young people with the competences and dispositions for life and work.

There is also general acknowledgement of a serious disconnect between competences and dispositions of the jobless and the competences and dispositions required in the workplace.

And a growing realisation that many skills cannot be acquired within the classroom – that their acquisition must involve real workplace experience.

Yet, I believe that schools have never been more caring institutions and that the standard of teaching has probably never been higher.

The problem, as I see it, is that the model of schooling and teaching that may have served society well in the industrial age, has outlived its usefulness in what might be termed the post-information age.

Teaching is no longer about delivering a static curriculum to compliant students.

Many students have significant emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Furthermore, schools face other enormous challenges - in a world where social, environmental, technological, economic and political TURBULENCE threatens the fulfilment of long cherished expectations.
More than any other institution; the post-primary school is tasked with cultivating a citizenry capable of responding to these challenges – using the outdated tools, structures and processes.

We need to change from a ‘teaching-led’ model to a ‘learning-led’ model, with the emphasis moving from learners being taught what they need to retain for life - to acquiring the skills and dispositions to become willing and able lifelong learners.

With information only a mouse click away, the function of 21st century education is to provide students with the capacity to go on learning for the remainder of their lives - to interact continuously with knowledge, technology, politics, economics and social and cultural structures that are in a permanent state of flux.

21st century schooling is about learners internalising their learning and using what is learned to solve new problems in new ways, to interpret the world around them as it changes before their eyes, to inform relationship development, and so on.

The challenge is to maximise engagement between teachers and learners and between the learners and what they are learning.

And this engagement must take place in a context where teachers and learners appreciate that what is being acquired is the capacity to go on learning about the things they deem relevant to their lives (in the family, in the community and at work) - in a world where change is ubiquitous and continuous.

In the teacher-led model of teaching, teachers do most of the work in class, resulting in teachers feeling jaded and frustrated, as their efforts do not appear to be appreciated.

If students are to make the most of their talents, both from a personal and societal perspective, we must, together (management and unions) devise a new paradigm for schools and teaching that bridges the gap between teacher and learner and subject and learner, thus facilitating the emergence of a collaborative learning environment, where students take responsibility for their own learning and the role of the teacher is to support student learning rather than, as it were, to force learning on unwilling recipients.

If we achieve this kind of transformation, we can make teaching a hugely rewarding profession that is highly regarded across society.
Much current negativity towards teaching, particularly at second-level, stems from the fact that teachers have been compelled by circumstances, not of their own making, to fill a role that is no longer fits with the social context in which they operate.

We must collaboratively reimagine the role of the teacher - if want to ensure the attractiveness of teaching and if we want to ensure that the work of teachers contributes effectively to human prosperity, cohesion and fulfilment.

In reimagining the role of the teacher, ICT can be the key to transforming teaching and learning and, as it were, emancipating both the teachers and students from what has amounted to a kind of master-slave relationship that has soured teachers and students for too long.

If education is to deliver critical thinkers and lifelong self-directed learners, teachers must be empowered to contribute towards the achievement of these outcomes.

And their work must be both energising and professionally rewarding.

In reimagining the role of the teacher, we must proceed on the assumption that the future will be one of continuous change, that the competences and dispositions of teachers will need to be continuously updated; and that the teachers capacity will be as much a function of continuous professional development as his/her initial teacher education.

This reality was clearly addressed by the Irish Teaching Council’s 2011, Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education.

This policy provides a flexible framework for the reconceptualisation of teacher education across the teaching lifecycle – from initial teacher education, through induction and probation, early and continuing professional development and, indeed, late career support.

The policy explicitly rejects the notion that a teacher, once initially qualified, is equipped to teach for the whole of his/her career.

Irish teachers renew their Teaching Council registration annually. And the Council sets the requirements for the renewal of registration.

Already, all newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in Ireland have to complete an induction programme into the teaching profession before obtaining full teacher registration status.
A **new model** of induction and probation, currently being piloted, **involves** a period of post-qualification professional practice where the **NQT** is **mentored** by **experienced** teachers in the school.

Furthermore, these **NQTs** are **probated** by a **small group of senior teachers** in the school.

Essentially, the **teaching profession** is now being **given a significant role** in **supporting** and **guiding** **student teachers** and **NQTs** during their **training** and initial teaching experience; and a **significant role** in deciding whether an **NQT** should be **granted full teacher registration** status.

Previously, the teaching profession was not involved in teacher education; it was a **matter** for the **teacher training colleges**.

In **implementing** the **‘Continuum policy’**, the **Council** is involved in a **consultation** process regarding the **development** of a **national framework** for **CPD** that recognises both **formal** and **informal** forms of CPD engagement.

This will, in the **foreseeable future**, result in **teacher re-registration** being made **contingent** on teachers **demonstrating** that they have **engaged in** particular kinds of professional development.

What **might** such a **CPD framework** and **requirement** for re-registration **look like**?

Well, from **August 2014**, all **fully registered** teachers in **Scotland** are **required** to participate in a **programme** of **professional review and development** (PRD) termed **‘Professional Update’**.

This **means** that the General **Teaching Council** (GTC) of **Scotland** is requiring **teachers** to **meet** certain **CPD requirements** in **order** to re-register with the Council.

**Professional Update** was **developed** in consultation with all stakeholders, including unions, and **takes account** of the **experiences** of **comparable professions** (e.g. medicine, dentistry, accountancy, and **teaching professions** in other parts of the world) which have already introduced similar schemes.

The **key purposes** of **Professional Update** are:

- To **maintain and improve** the **quality** of **teachers** and **teaching** - in accordance with **agreed Professional Standards**.
- To **support, maintain and enhance** teachers’ **professionalism** and the **reputation** of the teaching **profession** in Scotland.
The GTC Scotland has established the following professional standards:

- **Standards for Registration** – provisional and full registration
- **Standards for Career-Long Professional Learning**
- **Standards for leadership and Management**

The **Standards for Registration** provide a *gate-keeping function* for entry into teaching in Scotland with those for full registration constituting a *baseline* professional standard for competence.

The **Standards for Career-Long Professional Learning** provide a *reference framework* for teachers as they consider how they might develop their professional knowledge and skills through on-going self-evaluation and professional learning.

**How does Professional Update Work?**

- The focus is on ‘professional learning’ - that is activities that contribute to a teacher’s personal professional development – towards ensuring that their professional knowledge and practice is always informed, up-to-date and stimulating.
- The term ‘professional learning’ is being used in place of ‘CPD’ to reflect the shift in focus towards teachers taking ownership of their own individual learning, rather than seeing continuous professional development as something which is done to them, and over which they may have little control.
- Whole process is positive and supportive of the individual teacher, yet challenges the teacher to identify practical steps that s/he can take towards improving practice and student outcomes.
- All teachers must maintain a Professional Learning Profile document to regularly record planned professional learning activities, the expected impact of those activities, and evidence of their actual impact on practice.
- Any activity undertaken by teachers which contributes to their professional learning and development, and which impacts positively on students’ learning, can be recorded on the professional learning profile. For example: professional reading, action research projects, sharing practice with colleagues, or attending a workshop or conference.
- At the beginning of each school year, each teacher prepares a professional learning plan for the year using a process of self-evaluation with reference to the **Standards for Career-Long Professional Learning**. This is recorded in the Professional Learning
Profile.

- Over the course of the year, the teacher shares and reviews the plan with colleagues and line-manager, as appropriate. Then updates amendments and reflection in Profile.

- Throughout year teacher undertakes planned professional learning activities - records evidence of their impact on practice in Profile and shares these learnings with colleagues and line manager, as appropriate. Again, the reference point for reflection and discussion is the Standards for Career-Long Professional Learning. The whole idea here is to encourage professional discussion in the context of agreed professional standards regarding what constitutes good practice.

- Annually, the teacher has a review meeting with his/her line-manager. This involves a review of the professional learning that the teacher has undertaken over the course of the year and the way in which this learning has impacted on student. The meeting also focuses on the extent to which the teacher’s professional learning over the course of the year has addressed elements of the Standards for Career-Long Professional Learning that the teacher was working to address.

Besides, the review meeting involves a discussion of the teacher’s professional learning plans for the following year. #

Indeed, the teacher must agree these and any specific supports that the teacher may need to implement these plans with his/her line manager. Such professional learning plans should balance the needs of the teacher, the needs of the school, and national priorities. All of this should be recorded in the Profile and recorded in a Review Meeting Record Form – signed by the teacher and reviewer.

- Every 5 years each teacher is required to confirm his/her engagement in Professional Update to the Teaching Council. This needs to be endorsed by the line-manager.

Agreed professional standards are, in my opinion, the key to personal professional and system improvement; though I acknowledge that there are many who sincerely hold contrary views.

They hold that teaching is not amenable to being analysed in terms of is skills or competences.

Instead (if I understand them correctly) they contend that teaching is a social practice and that it is not reasonable to conceptualise teaching exclusively in terms of its skills and
ignore the personal qualities, dispositions and values of the teacher, the purposes of teaching; and the capacity of the teacher to integrate disparate skills, knowledge and values into a coherent teaching package that enables students to learn about matters relevant to their lives and inspires them to integrate what is learned into their lives.

I agree whole heartedly with this analysis.

I simply don’t accept that teaching standards cannot accommodate the broader and more holistic dimensions of teaching.

For me, the first step towards establishing a new paradigm for teaching and school leadership/management is the establishment of agreed standards – similar to what has been done in Scotland.

Unless we explicitly set out what teaching entails, how can we make judgements about the degree to which we succeed or fail; how can we make judgements about what kind of professional development is required, and so on?

In the absence of such standards also, schools and teachers leave themselves open to unfair criticism of their performance – from the media, parents, and even students themselves.

If there is no clarity about what constitutes the real business of schools and teaching, schools and teachers will inevitably be judged on the basis of the examination results, the proportions of students transferring to 3rd level, and so on.

If, as I believe, schools and teachers are primarily about enabling young people to recognise and make the most of their talents, both from a personal and societal perspective, then performance in examinations or transfer rates to 3rd-level are entirely inappropriate criteria for assessing school or teacher performance.

In Ireland, annually, the press publish league tables of Ireland’s schools – based exclusively on the proportions of their students transferring to 3rd-level.

This results in the work of many outstanding schools and teachers being undervalued and the work of schools that suffocate their student’s individual talents in pursuit of high transfer rates to 3rd level being overvalued.

This serves students and teachers badly. It stifles teacher professionalism by compelling them to confine their work to preparing for examinations – without regard for whether the students: internalise what is learned, have the capacity to apply what is learned in their
own lives, have a acquired a love for learning and the capacity to be lifelong learners, have their unique individual aptitudes recognised and nourished, have their social and emotional needs met, and so on.

I believe this syndrome could be more effectively tackled if we had a set of explicit teaching standards.

Before concluding, I would like to turn briefly to the matter of school management and leadership – a matter that I also see central to establishing a new paradigm for teaching.

Clearly, some countries do better than others in terms of management and leadership but, as I talk to colleagues around Europe, I gain the impression that many have serious concerns about the way we lead and manage our schools.

In Ireland, we have what can be described as a crisis in school management.

I just recently surveyed school principals in Ireland and the findings are alarming.

- 67% feel that while they see their work as both important and rewarding, the inadequacy of the middle management system results in constant distraction from their core functions.
- 60% of principals believe the current middle management system in schools does not facilitate:
  - The development of future school leaders.
  - The professional development of teachers
  - Curriculum development
  - The leading of teaching and learning

And I could go on.

Why is this so?

I believe in education generally, the importance of management is under appreciated.

Management may be critical to the success of other organisations but education is different.

Teaching is such a complex practice that it is not amenable to management. Teachers are independent professionals and not amenable in any way to others intervening in their work.
Based on **25 years’** experience leading schools, I **believe** that, **unless a school** establishes a **cohesive** and **efficient** management **structures** its **capacity** to **set** and **achieve** organisational **goals** depends on a **confluence** of chance **developments**.

Besides, it is **generally acknowledged** that the **notion** of the **omnipotent**, heroic leader is **redundant** in today’s **organic and complex** organisations. **Dispersed leadership** and **management** are today deemed **critical** to **organisations** both **defining** and **achieving** their **macro** and **micro** goals.

In many **respects**, the **management** structures in **education** substantially **ignore** decades of **development** and **research** in organisational **theory** and management **science**.

If we want to **improve** student **outcomes** and the **professional satisfaction** of **teachers**, in my opinion, we must **put in place** appropriate **management** structures and **processes** in **all our schools**.

**Recently** I had an **opportunity** to look at the **management** of **schools** in **NSW** (where I worked for many years) and there **performance** standards and performance **management** are **central** to the **work** of schools.

I **fully** realise, given the way **inspectors** and others **harshly** treated **teachers** in the **past**, that there is an **understandable** aversion in **teaching**, even within **management**, to the whole idea of **performance** management.

**Teachers** see **themselves** as **highly-qualified** professionals and **fear** the imposition of ‘control systems’ that would **limit** their **capacity** for **independent professional** practice **tailored** to meet the individual **needs** of learners.

However, in the **complex** organic 21st **century school**, where the **emphasis** is not only on the **delivery** of a **permanently** evolving **curriculum** but also on the **holistic welfare** and **development** of a student **group** whose **needs** are **changing** by the day, the **need** for a **contemporary management system** is (in my opinion) **manifest** – not a **system** that **focusses**
on ‘commanding and controlling’ but a system that focuses on a decentralisation of managerial decisions, change management, capacity building, mentoring, empowerment, professional discussion, team work and the interdependence of all staff, the school as a learning organisation and the commitment and capacity of all staff to updating continuously their knowledge, skills and dispositions; and performance management for all staff, those who teach and those who manage.

In the second decade of the third millennium, effective management not only enables the school to set and achieve its goals; it can be a powerful force for empowering teachers and improving their sense of professional satisfaction at a time when the morale of teachers everywhere is being seriously undermined.