

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) met this week with the Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) for the seventh Joint Conference at which they discussed initiatives in the development of Curriculum and Assessment both north and south.

Dr. Catherine O'Brien, Chairperson of the NCCA, stated that, "This year's conference yet again highlighted the excellent cross border relationship that we have with our CCEA colleagues. Our common values and goals to shape a world class education system throughout the island of Ireland are paramount in all of our discussions".

According to Gavin Boyd, Chief Executive of CCEA, "In Northern Ireland we've just been through a period of lengthy consultation on what should be taught and assessed in our schools. We have enjoyed sharing the lessons we've learned from that process and hearing from our NCCA counterparts on their experiences in developing Curriculum and Assessment in the south."

The conference, which concluded this afternoon, focused on three key areas. *Ensuring the Best Start – Learning 0 - 6* looked at the entire area of developing a framework for Early Childhood learning

*Strategies for Consultation and Consensus Building* looked at best Irish, UK and International practice on how to include relevant organisations, parents and students in curriculum reform and review.

The final area of discussion at this year's conference was *Reforming the Curriculum for Upper Secondary Education: Issues and Challenges*.

Ends