



# Naas Community College

**Coláiste Pobail Nás na  
Ríogh**

Bóthar an Chradógaigh,  
Nás na Ríogh, Co. Chill  
Dara

**Naas Community  
College**

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Ciarán Keegan  
*Principal*

Sarah Buckley  
*Deputy Principal*

09/02/2018

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I wish to contact you to keep you up to date with the current situation in relation to our new school build. I am aware that there has been a lot of talk about the project and I would like to take this opportunity to give you the most accurate and up to date information.

As I have communicated to you before, there are 5 stages to a building project of this magnitude. They are:

Stage 1: Pre Planning

Stage 2: Application for Planning Permission

Stage 2B: Submission of plans to Department of Education and Skills (DES) for approval

Stage 3: Tender Process

Stage 4: Construction

Stage 5: Completion and Client Hand Over

Stages 1 and 2 have been completed since the end of April 2017. The Stage 2B report was not submitted to the DES until the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2017. There were a number of reasons for the period of time between the grant of planning permission in April and the submission of the report; principally to ensure that power lines on the site were re-routed so that they will not transverse the school building. There was also a request for a detailed flood risk report to be completed on the site. Both of these measures added time to the process at 2B stage, but it was both prudent and reasonable to address them before the submission of the report as their absence could have resulted in further delay if the DES sought further information.

I had hoped that the DES would have given us the sanction to proceed to Stage 3 in July 2017, but these reasons outlined above mean that we have yet to receive sanction to proceed to the next stage, despite having submitted the report over two months ago.

The Tender Process is split into two stages; prequalification which takes three months and Tender which can take up to seven months.

We need to get permission to move to Stage 3 as soon as possible, as construction cannot start until that stage is completed. At this point in time, were we to get sanction to begin the Tender Process today, the earliest time we would be able to commence construction would be January 2019.

The project managers have recently confirmed to me that the most accurate estimate for the duration of the Construction stage is 18 months. Previously, it had been communicated to us as seven months but you may remember that we flagged that figure and said that we thought that it seemed highly unlikely. I indicated that we should plan for at least a year and have a contingency for an additional six months to cater for unforeseen delays. I think that we must assume that 18 months is a minimum duration for the Stage 4 Construction.

That means that, if we get immediate sanction for Stage 3, move immediately to Stage 4 thereafter and that no other delays occur, we will take possession of the new school in September 2020.

There are a lot of if's and conditions in that last sentence.

Our absolute best case scenario is moving to our new school in September 2020, but we need to be prudent and have a contingency plan in place in case this project continues until September 2021.

I appreciate that this news is massively disappointing and mentions dates that are far beyond what any of us expected when we opened the doors in 2015. I am very disappointed to be contacting you with this news, but I feel it is extremely important that you be fully informed at every stage and have the best information at all times. Also, it is extremely important that I provide you with a realistic timeline, based on the best information I can gather.

We have plans made for the 2018/2019 school year and expect to be able to provide the same high quality, inclusive education as usual without significant disruption during that academic year. I do not have a plan for the subsequent year yet. When I have more information, I will communicate that.

I have taken on a much more "hands-on" role in this project than was hitherto the case, and I will be ensuring that there is a much more regular stream of updates from this point forward. For example, there has been more progress in our project over the last three weeks than there has been in the last six months.

The matter of our progression to Stage 3 has been raised in the Dail with the Minister for Education on three separate occasions and we are currently seeking a face to face audience with Minister Bruton to argue our case for immediate action.

I feel that we, as a community, need to enlist the support of all our elected representatives and make our school build a major issue on the doorsteps in the General Election that will come in the near future. We need to make the speedy completion of our school build a priority for the DES, and I look forward to your help in doing just that over the coming months.

To begin that process and to communicate further on a face to face basis, I would like to invite parents to a meeting in the school on Thursday the 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5.30pm.

At that meeting we can discuss the ramifications of the information I have sent you today as well as formulating a plan on how we can move forward to best effect.

Again, I am sorry to contact you with this disappointing news, but it is extremely important to stress that there is no impediment to our school build. There is no suggestion that it will not go ahead in the manner promised. The Planning Permission is secured, the land is secured, the political will and desire is evident and the clearly identified need of the Community is unchanged. What we need is to get over the last two hurdles, Tender and Construction, to get to the school building that our children and the Community deserves.

Yours sincerely,

Ciarán Keegan