



**Press Release 7 March, 2022**

## **Minister Foley welcomes announcement of Leaving Cert students in Cavan and Monaghan becoming first to engage on new Blended Leaving Certificate Polish course**

The Minister for Education Norma Foley TD (Monday 7 March) welcomed the announcement that Leaving Certificate students in four schools across Cavan and Monaghan will be the first to prepare for the new Polish Leaving Certificate through a blended model of teaching and learning.

17 Leaving Certificate students in four schools will take part in this course. The schools are as follows:

- Colaiste Dun an Ri, Cavan
- St Mogue's College, Cavan
- Breifne College, Cavan
- Beech Hill College, Monaghan

Today's announcement at Cavan Monaghan ETB was attended by the Minister for Rural and Community Development and Minister for Social Protection, Heather Humphreys TD.

The provision of Polish as a Leaving Certificate subject poses a challenge for post-primary schools, due to lack of critical mass of students in one single school and the availability of suitably qualified specialist teachers. In this regard, blended learning emerges as a great opportunity to address the challenge of introducing a new subject in schools. This project is being co-ordinated by Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB) and Post-Primary Languages Ireland (PPLI), with support and advice from consultants, H2 Learning.

The course was introduced following a 6-week taster module for Transition Year (TY) students, which was implemented from March to April, 2021. Students participating in this course will sit the LC exam in 2023. The teacher is employed by PPLI and receives the support of an eMentor designated by each participating school.

Minister Foley said: "This is a very significant announcement for this cohort of students in Cavan and Monaghan who will be the first group to engage with this new blended course. I know how important it is for these students to be able to study their native language in school.

"It is our goal that this will become available to students in more schools and that this would enable significant numbers of migrant Polish speakers to maintain literacy in their home language. I would like to recognise the work of Post-Primary Languages Ireland and CMETB in bringing this programme to fruition and I look forward to seeing the benefits it brings to our students."

Languages Connect, Ireland's strategy for foreign languages in education (2017-2026) recognises "the need to diversify beyond current curricular languages and support the new Irish in maintaining and growing their own capacity to speak their own languages. As a result, the strategy recommends the piloting of a number of actions to introduce lesser taught languages into schools, including blended learning models.

ENDS