



The Future of Education Conference, Florence June 29-30th 2023

‘It Takes a Village to Raise a Child’: Exploring school leaders’ experiences of implementing a systematic and schoolwide approach to inclusive special education in Irish post-primary schools.

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Contents

1. Context for Provision Mapping

- Provision Mapping Overview
- Rationale for Provision Mapping
- Policy Context for Inclusive and Special Education in Ireland
- Provision Mapping Aims
- Partnership

2. Research Design

- Research Questions
- Data Collection

3. Preliminary Survey Results

4. Next Steps



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1. Context for Provision Mapping

Overview: What is Provision Mapping?

PROCESS

It provides a basis to strategically plan provision, build systems promoting SSE, allocate resources and identify professional learning needs of staff.

PRODUCT

A summary document of provisions & interventions currently available in school to support the needs of ALL learners across the Continuum of Support

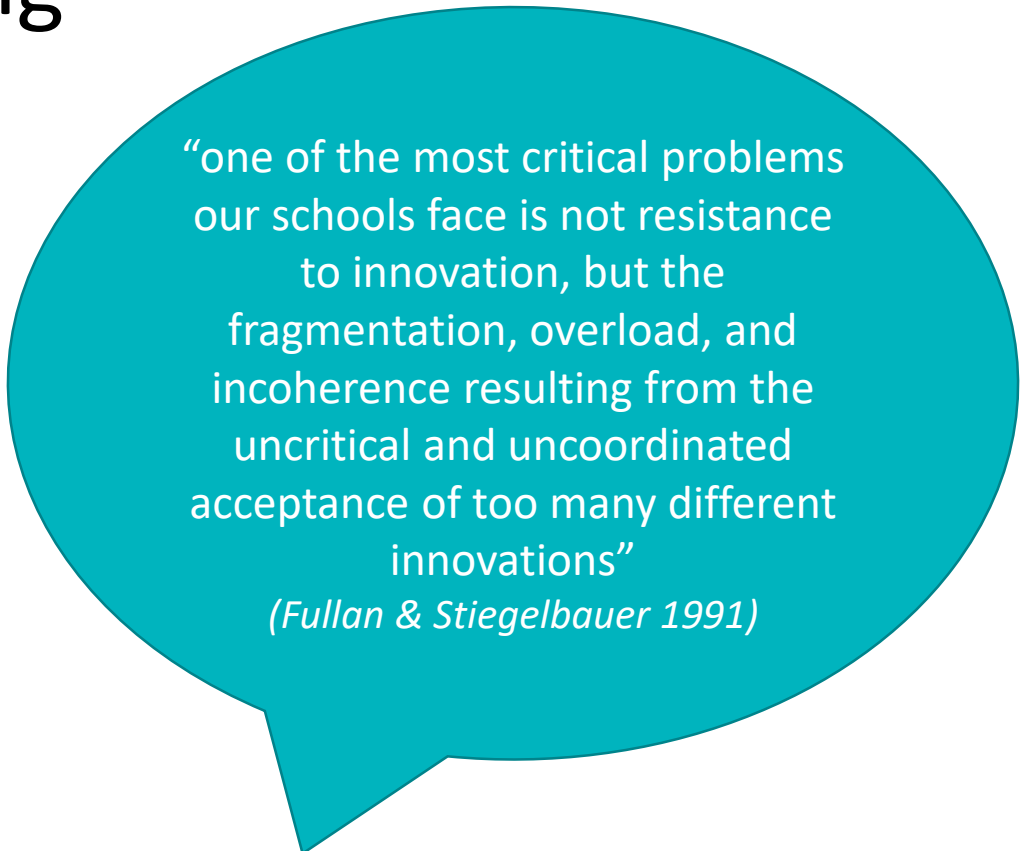
STRENGTHS-BASED & EVIDENCE-BASED

It affirms existing EBP, provides a helpful overview and allows the school to identify, monitor and evaluate areas of real strength and areas for development.

Rationale for Provision Mapping

System level coherence

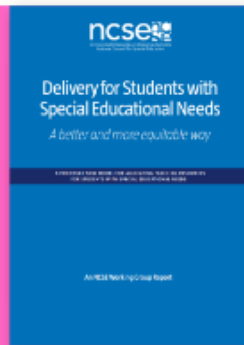
- Duality in the system persists (*Florian 2019*).
- Provision for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can be discrete leading to isolation and burgeoning workload for SENCOS (*Fitzgerald and Radford 2020*).



“one of the most critical problems our schools face is not resistance to innovation, but the fragmentation, overload, and incoherence resulting from the uncritical and uncoordinated acceptance of too many different innovations”
(Fullan & Stiegelbauer 1991)

Policy Context for Inclusive and Special Education in Ireland

01



Needs-based allocation

- Paradigm shift: Moving away from categorical, deficit views of additionality and disability towards inclusive education.
- Resource allocation disentangled from professional assessments.

02



School Self-Evaluation

- Greater emphasis on school-based identification of need.
- Data informed, strategic whole-school planning.

03



Continuum of Support

- SETAM supports broader range of diverse learners.
- School Inclusion Model.
- INCO rather than SENCO?

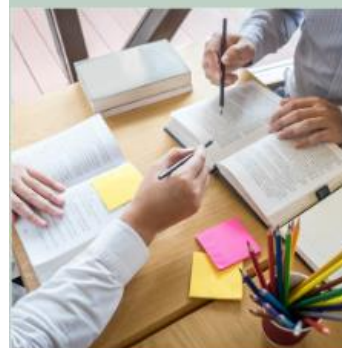
Provision Mapping Aims

Applying a strengths-based and solution-oriented approach to collaboration, provision mapping seeks to affirm and acknowledge existing good practice in the provision of inclusive special education across schools.



Systematic & Data-informed Approach

Guide schools in their implementation of school self-evaluation (DES Inspectorate 2016; DE Inspectorate 2022) to develop a school provision map, reflecting current provision for learners with additional and special educational needs across the Continuum of Support (NEPS 2007; 2010).



Capacity Building

Build systematic, collaborative and situated approaches to professional learning and capacity building within and across schools.



SENCO Leadership

Empower and enable SENCOs to co-lead the inclusive education agenda across the school through coaching, mentoring and collaborative opportunities for networking and collegial sharing and support.

Implementation Approach

The emphasis on **research and knowledge exchange** involves school personnel in co-constructing new practices in a shared collaborative space (O'Brien and Roberts 2019) and derives from the perspective that policies are not simply implemented but are enacted through processes of interpretation and translation (Skerritt et al. 2021).



Partnership Approach

- Mary Immaculate College is the largest teacher education provider in Ireland.
- Education and Training Boards of Ireland (ETBI) is a national representative body for 16 regional Education and Training Boards (ETBs).
- Represents educational settings across primary, post-primary and further education.



Implementing Provision Mapping in Schools

ETBI Strategic Priority Group for Inclusive Education
33 Post Primary schools
46 Inclusion Coaches
14 ETBs/ Directors of Schools



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2. Research Design

Research Questions

1. To what extent did the Inclusion Coach Induction programme prepare Inclusion Coaches for leading the Provision Mapping Initiative with pilot schools in their ETB?
2. What were the benefits of and challenges with participation in the initiative from the perspectives of Directors of Schools, **Principals**, Inclusion Coaches and School Champions?
3. What were the facilitators to participation in the initiative, and implementation of provision mapping in schools?
4. How could schools, and ETBs be further supported to implement provision mapping?

Data Collection

Methods & Sample

- Online surveys- Qualtrics
- Analysis: Descriptive statistics

- Semi-structured interviews:
 - Directors of Schools: $n=2$
 - School Principals: $n=2$
 - Inclusion Coaches: $n=3$
 - School Champions: $n=1$
- Analysis: Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke 2020)

Survey Respondents

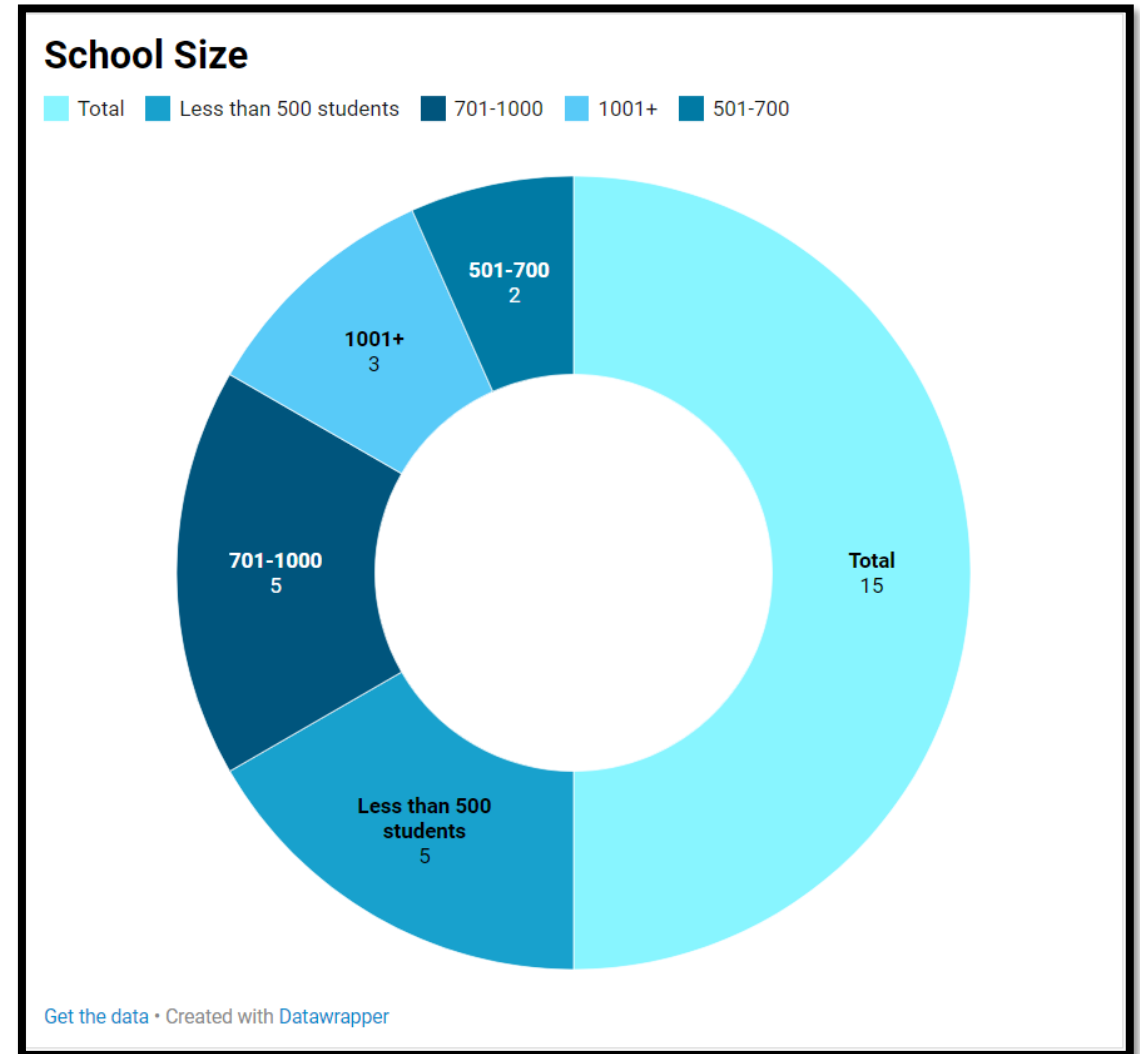
Participant Cohort	Total # distributed	Response Rate
Directors of Schools	14	9: 64%
School Principals	33	15: 45%
Inclusion Coaches	46	21: 46%
School Champions	33	14: 42%

School Profiles

Participating Schools

- 15 school Principals from across 14 ETBs contributed to the research.
- 7 schools had DEIS* status.
- 11 had Inclusion Coaches who were members of staff, while 4 were supported by external Inclusion Coaches.
- 12 schools had a team leading the implementation of Provision Mapping.

*DEIS (Delivering Equality of opportunity In Schools). Schools with disproportionate numbers of students from lower SES groups.





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3. Preliminary Survey Results: School Principals ($n=15$)

Preliminary Survey Results: School Principals

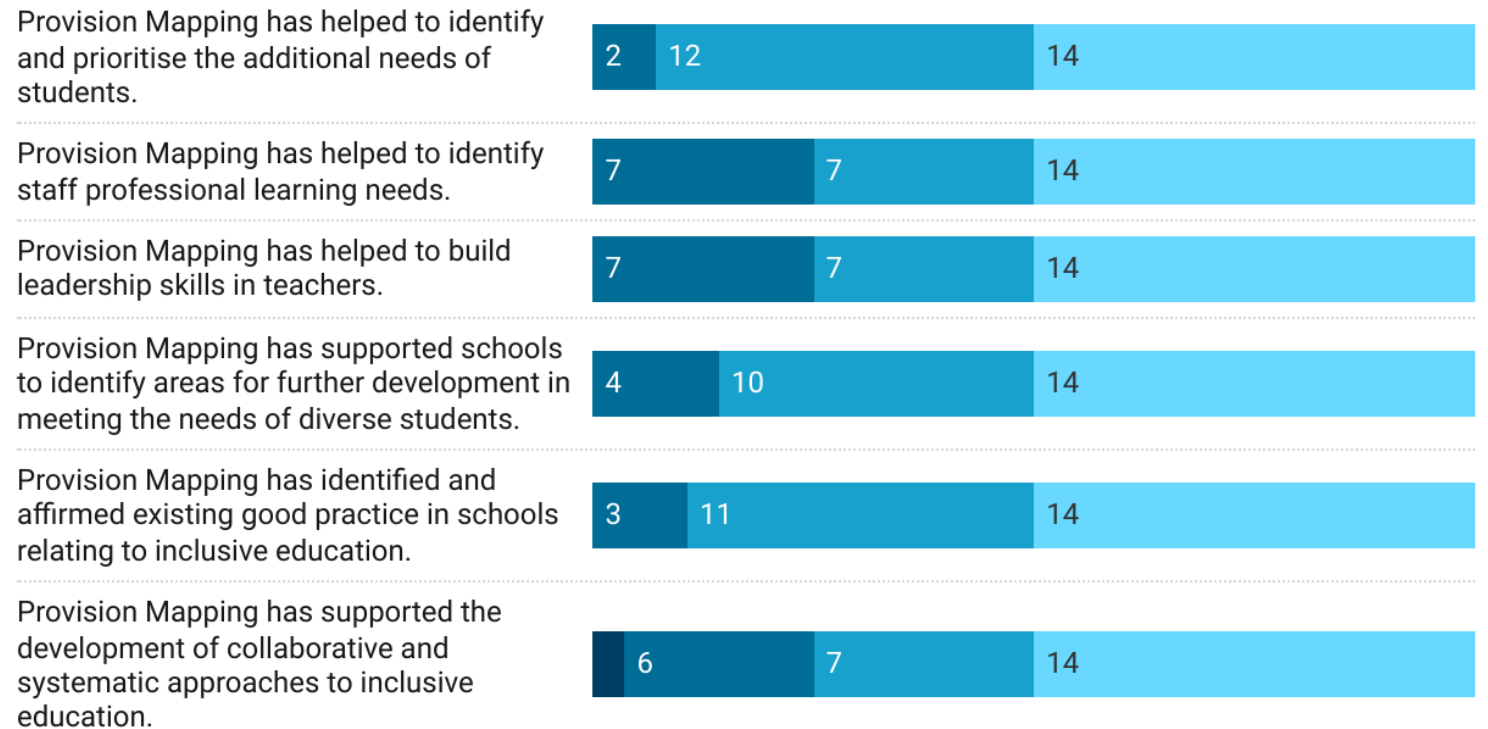
13 Principals reported that all the aims of provision mapping were either partially achieved or well underway.

One Principal indicated that Provision Mapping did not support development of collaborative approaches to inclusive education.

* One principal did not respond to this question.

'In your experience, please select the extent to which the aims of Provision Mapping are being achieved.'

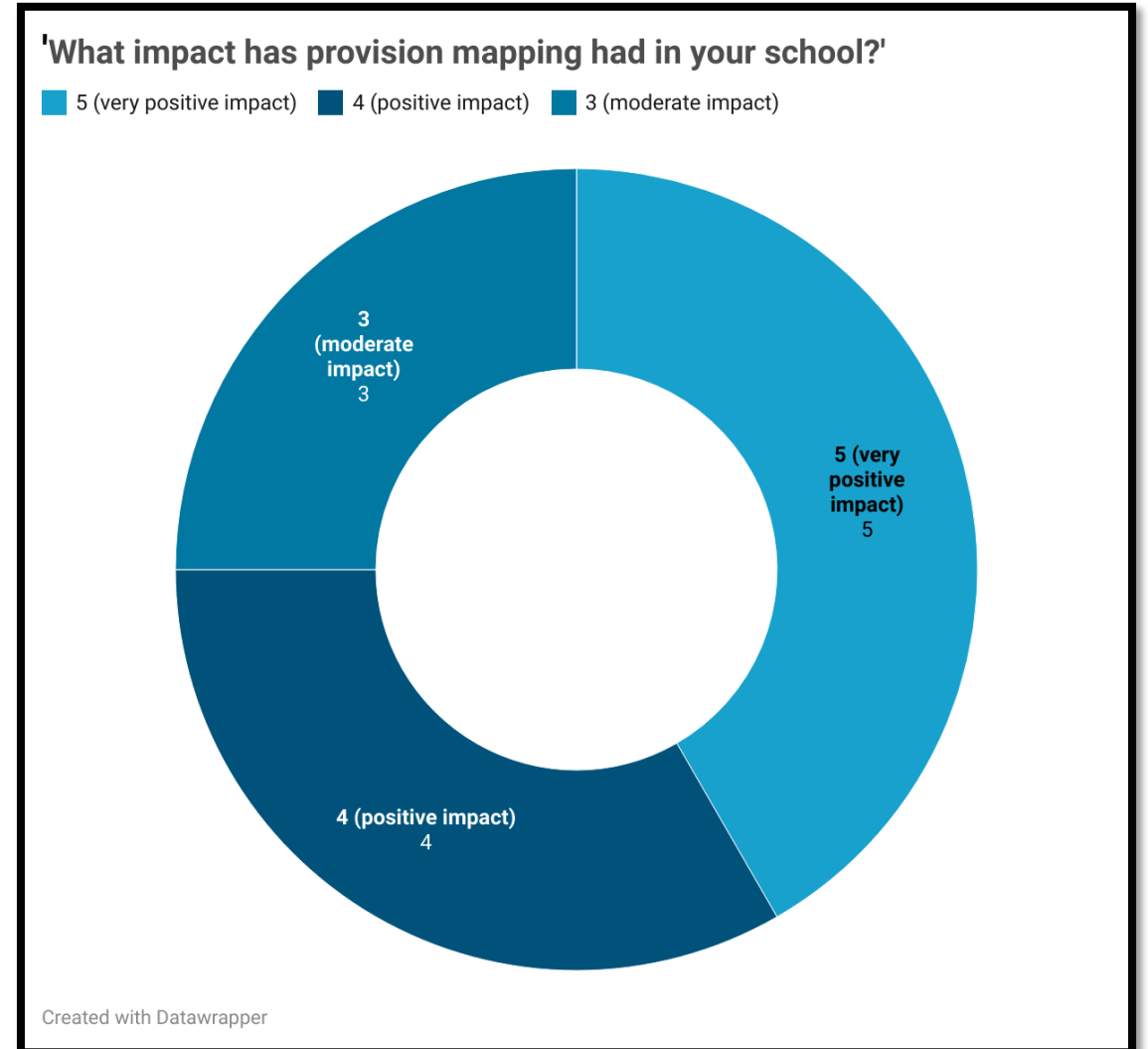
■ Not Achieved ■ Partially Achieved ■ Well Underway ■ Total



Created with Datawrapper

Preliminary Survey Results: School Principals

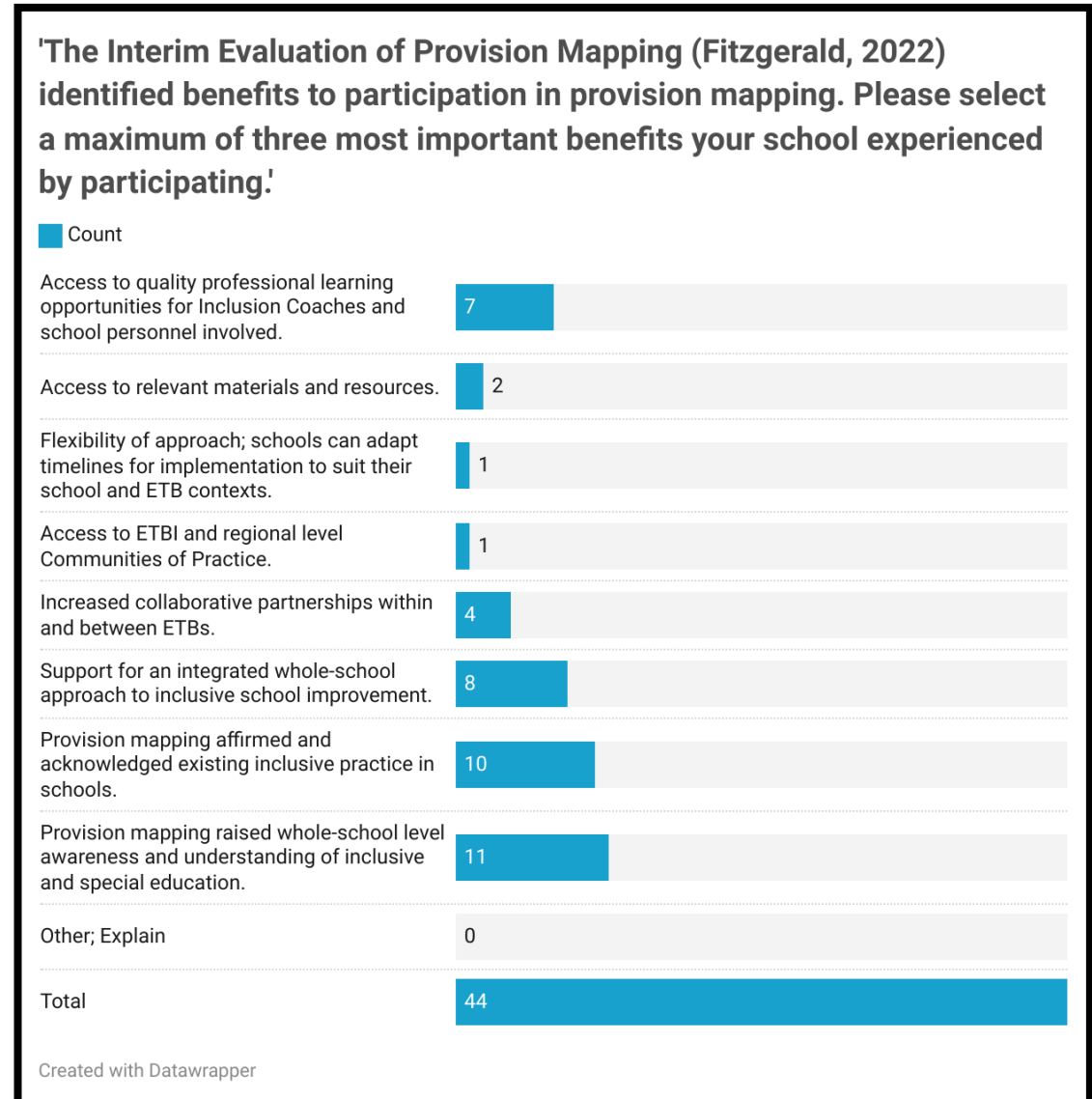
- Principals were asked to rate the impact Provision Mapping is having in their schools on a scale of 1-5; 1= no impact; 5= very positive impact, resulting in a **mean score of 4.0**.



What were the **benefits** of and challenges with participation in the initiative from the perspectives of Principals?

Raising whole-school awareness and understanding of inclusive and special education was the most beneficial aspect of provision mapping.

Affirmation and acknowledgement of existing good practice was also identified as an important benefit.



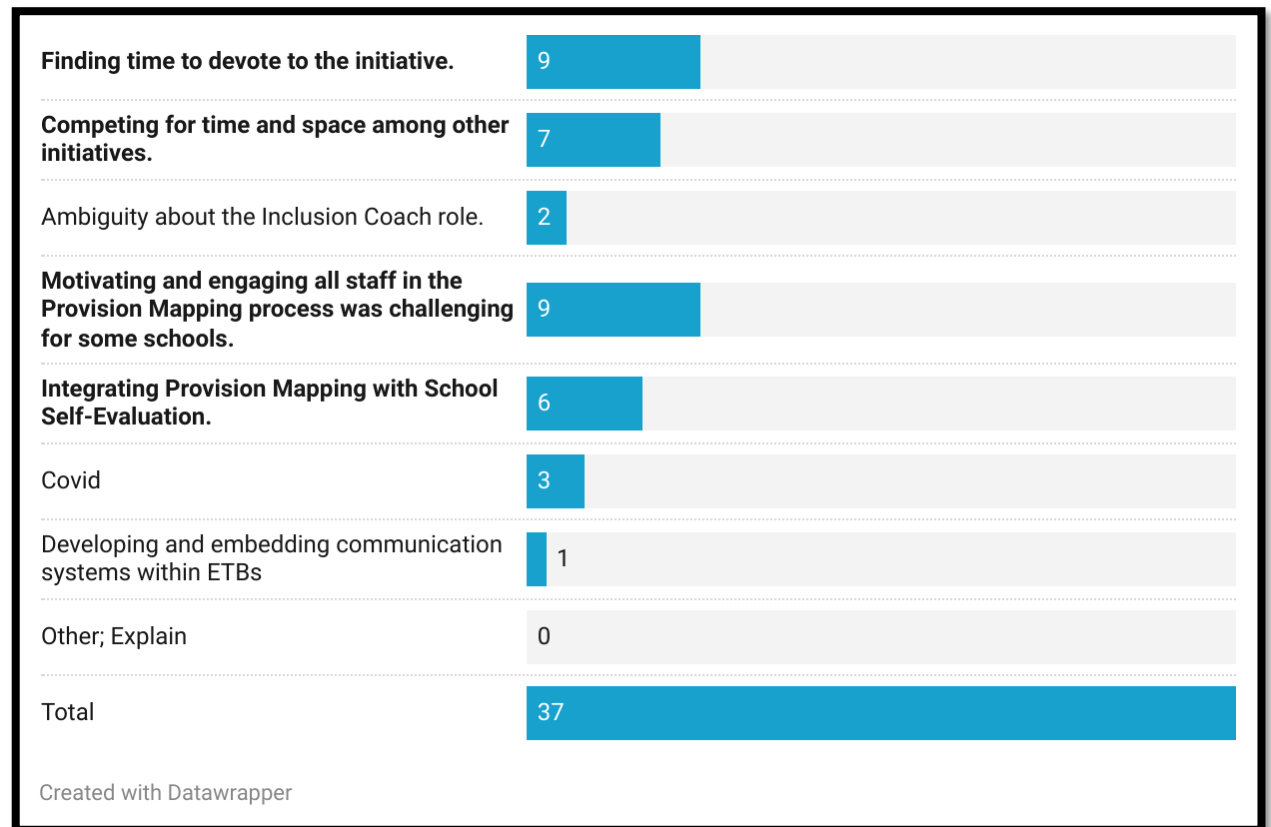
What were the benefits of and **challenges** with participation in the initiative from the perspectives of Principals?

‘The Interim Evaluation of Provision Mapping (Fitzgerald, 2022) identified **challenges** to participation in provision mapping. Please select a maximum of three most significant challenges your school experienced by participating.’

Principals reported that

- finding time to engage with Provision Mapping; 5 indicated that they did not have sufficient time
- motivating and engaging all staff, and;
- integrating Provision Mapping with processes of School Self Evaluation

were the most significant challenges.

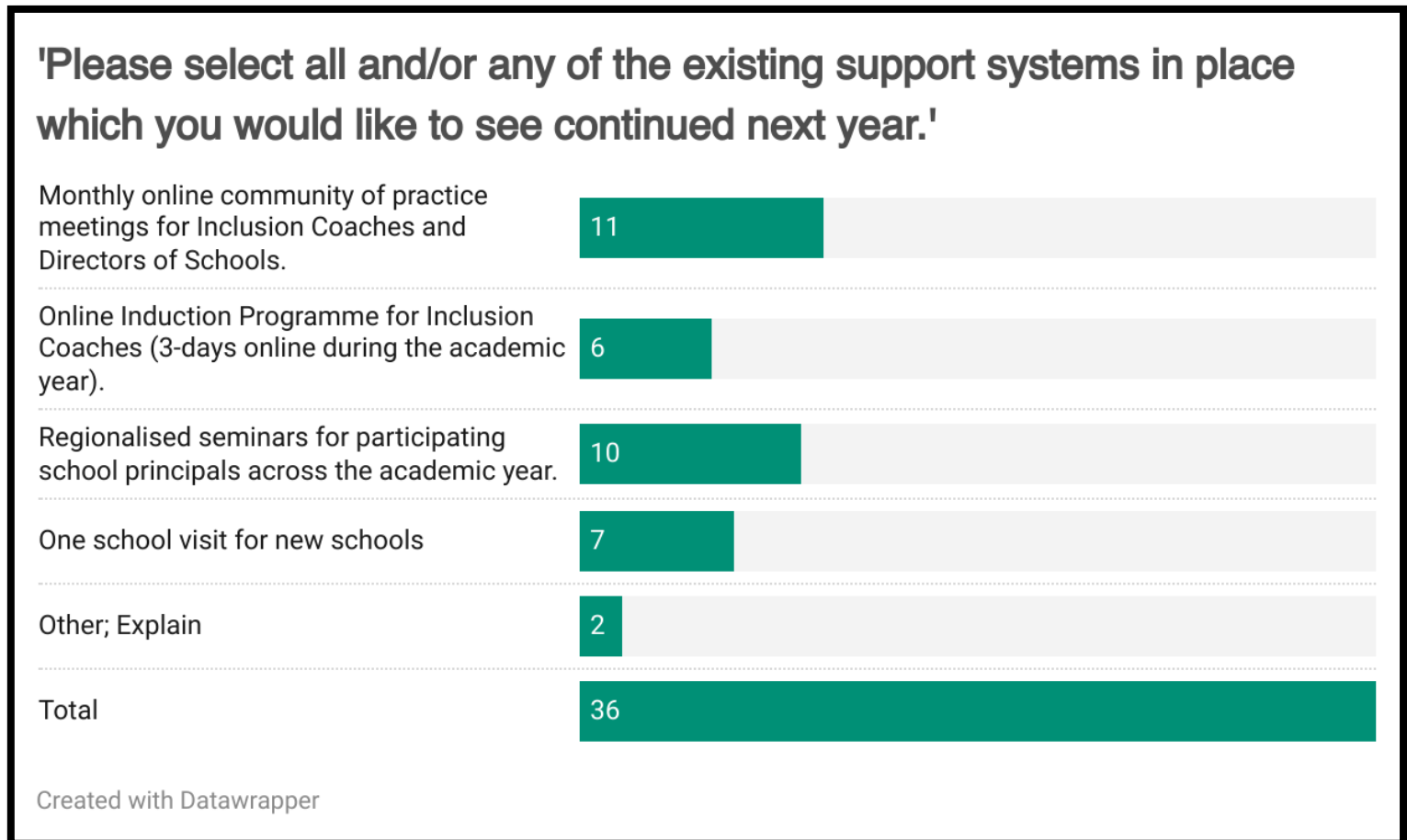


What were the facilitators to participation in the initiative, and implementation of provision mapping in schools?

The community of practice and access to regionalised seminars were the most frequently selected existing supports Principals would like to see continue next year.

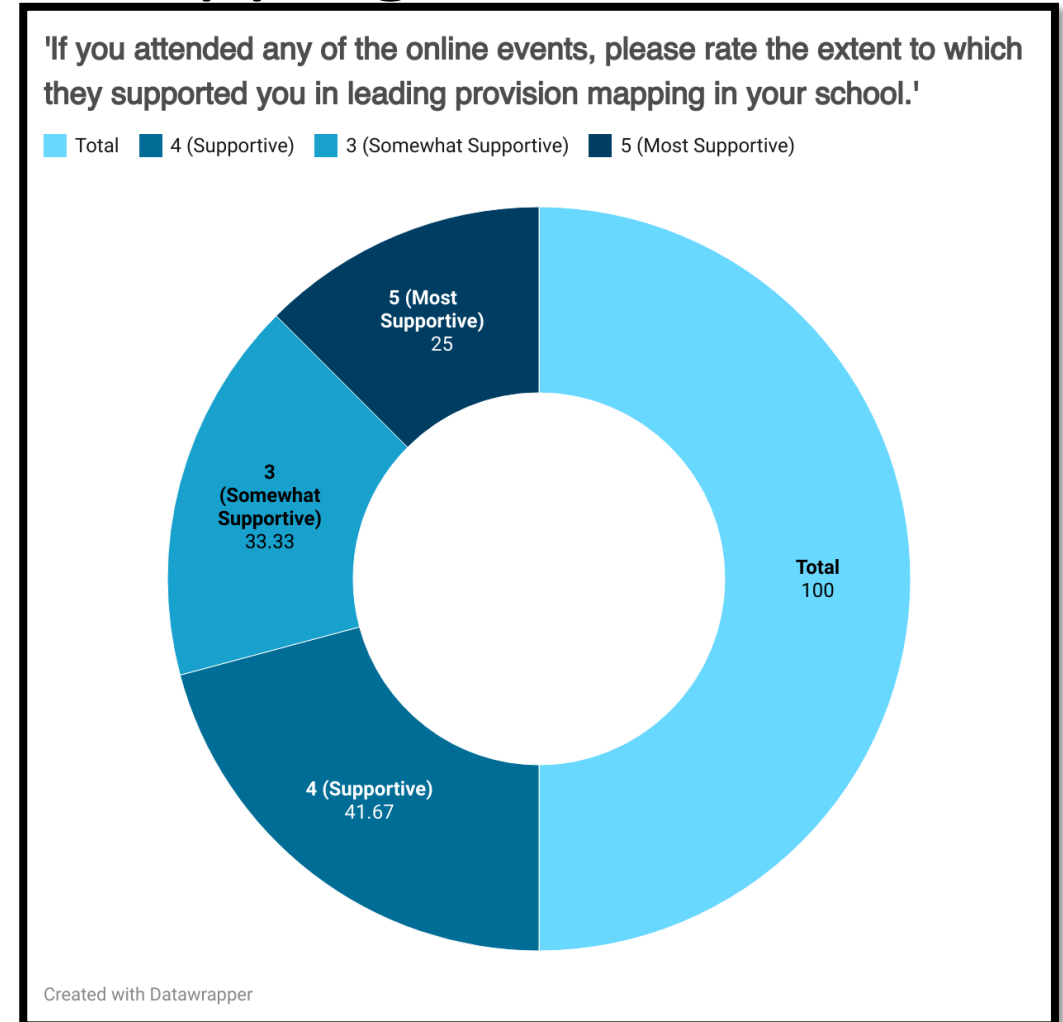
One principal suggested that 3 days of induction was too much and suggested 9 evenings.

Another suggested that principals and Inclusion coaches should attend induction together.



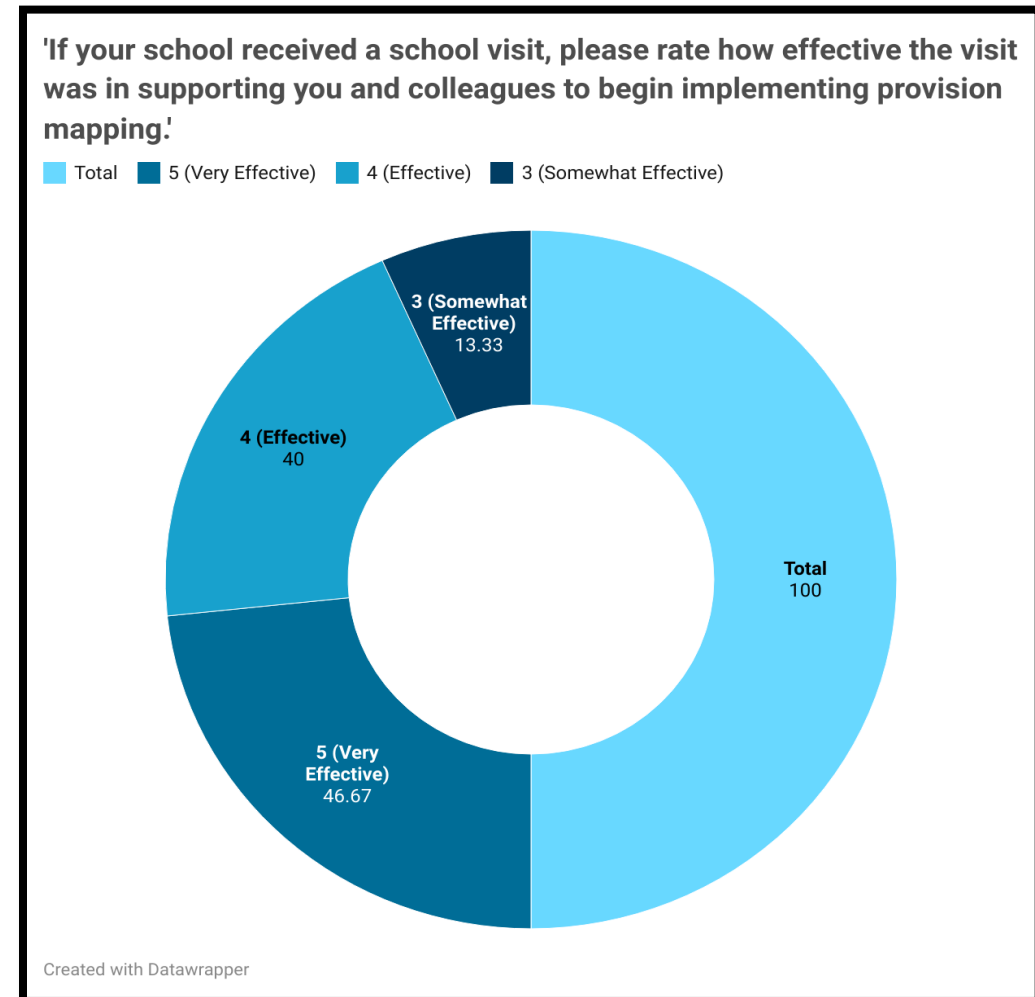
What were the facilitators to participation in the initiative, and implementation of provision mapping in schools?

- 12 Principals indicated that they had attended the online regional seminars.
- Principals were asked to rate the extent to which these events supported them in leading provision mapping in schools on a scale of 1-5; 1= least supportive; 5= most supportive, resulting in a **mean score of 3.92**



What were the facilitators to participation in the initiative, and implementation of provision mapping in schools?

- 15 Principals indicated that they had received a school visit.
- Principals were asked to rate the extent to which these events supported them in leading provision mapping in schools on a scale of 1-5; 1= least supportive; 5= most supportive, resulting in a **mean score of 4.33**



How could schools, and ETBs be further supported to implement provision mapping?

Principals were asked: **Do you have any recommendations for developing Provision Mapping that will help you in your role as a School Principal?**

Open ended responses include:

- *'Found the resources and PowerPoints used by inclusion coaches very good when introducing Provision Mapping. Perhaps a refresher presentation for staff (in particular new staff) on our return in August.'*
- *'School Principals have many competing things going on at the same time. I would suggest that organising a face to face regional seminar would help sharpen our focus and understanding of the role provision mapping plays, give us a greater understanding of provision mapping and allow for the sharing of good practice.'*

Continued..

Open ended responses include:

- *'Clearer guidelines especially in relation to the role of the inclusion coach. More school advisory visits.'*
- *'Plan to make this part of the language of LAOS [Looking At Our School] and all school practices overall. Aim to make this process central to all educational processes.'*
- *'The biggest challenge is the acceptance of all staff that they have a very important role in the differentiation of learning. While staff are kind to kids they need to embrace and structure any delivery of learning support.'*
- *'More training for all staff.' ...'more time to be made available for staff to get a clear understanding of the concept.'*
- *'Timing of meetings should be considered e.g. at the beginning of term.'*



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4. Next Steps

Next Steps

01

Full Implementation & Sustainment

- Consolidation of existing systems and processes
- Response to identified need
- Implementation of EBPs with
- Continue outcome data collection

02

Increase Reach/ Capacity

- National Coordinator role created and funded by ETBI
- Further 92 schools participating in next phase
- Consolidation of systems- CoPs
- Develop cross-sectoral approach

03

Stakeholder Engagement

- Deepen and extend partnerships with key stakeholders
- Harness existing systemic infrastructure to maximise impact
- Influence policy through continued engagement & research

A Flavour of Provision Mapping 2023-2025...

125 post primary schools have opted in to Provision mapping for the next cycle.

Adaptation and adjustment to the process is continuous and responsive to outcome data collection.

All 16 ETBs involved next year.

Every ETB has a dedicated Inclusion Coordinator, with release time to lead Provision Mapping across the ETB.

Timeline for Implementation of Provision Mapping

Induction Day 1 for Principals, Inclusion Leads: This regional in-person full day will present an overview of provision mapping, outline what is involved for schools, and support schools to identify who should comprise the school Inclusion Team. The day will also emphasise and support the leadership development of school Inclusion Leads.

19th September 2023



Induction Day 2 for School Inclusion Leads: This regional online full day examines how Provision Mapping supports school improvement and explores integration of the School Self-Evaluation / DEIS Planning processes to develop data-informed strategic direction. This event will also be offered to members of the school Inclusion Team.

17th October 2023



ETB Community of Practice 1: This in-person afternoon workshop will bring together Inclusion Leads and members of school Inclusion Teams to prepare them to deliver a whole-staff workshop back in school, which will capture perspectives of all staff on inclusive education. **Note: Principals will need to allocate a 2 hour staff meeting between January 29th and March 16th to facilitate the school workshop.**

23rd January 2024



ETB Community of Practice 2: This in-person afternoon workshop will bring together Inclusion Leads and members of school Inclusion Teams to analyse the data gathered from school staff focus group questionnaires. A framework for analysing the data will be introduced. **Note: Inclusion Leads should bring the data collected from the staff workshop to this event.**

23rd April 2024



ETB Community of Practice 3: This online afternoon workshop will bring together Inclusion Leads and members of school Inclusion Teams to share methods of collecting feedback from parents and students.

17th September 2024



ETB Community of Practice 4: This in-person full day workshop will bring together Inclusion Leads and members of school Inclusion Teams to develop data-informed targets and an action plan for future inclusive school improvement. This will inform the School Improvement Plan/ DEIS Plan.

21st January 2025

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Thank You!

Please get in touch

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