

FOREWORD

I am delighted to provide the foreword for this special Summit edition of BellTime Magazine which is sponsored by ABP.

For students attending this year's Summit, it is a very exciting time to be considering your future after school. There are more opportunities now than ever before, to help you achieve your ambitions in life.

There are a number of pathways to further your education, whether you choose third level, a post leaving certificate course, or the apprenticeship and traineeship routes. This School Summit is a great opportunity for you to explore the different options available to you.

We aim to make Ireland's education system the best in Europe by 2026. This means many things – being the best at supporting those who come to education at a disadvantage, ensuring our education system keeps pace with technological changes, the changing world and ensuring we are equipping our students to manage their own wellbeing. It also means strengthening the pathways to education and ensuring that we are providing a range of alternative routes for those wishing to continue or start their education.

Apprenticeships are a great pathway for students to gain valuable experience in working world. We have set the target to double the number of annual apprenticeship and traineeship enrolments to 14,000 by 2020. To



meet this target, we are developing in some really exciting new areas. Already 11 new apprenticeships have been created and over 40 more in the pipeline, some in traditional sectors like horticulture and hospitality, other in new sectors like ICT, biopharma and logistics. You can find out more information on www.apprenticeship.ie

The expectations from our education and training service are changing rapidly. The challenge in the years ahead will be to invest and transform our education system so that it broadens career paths, opens its

doors to lifelong learning, builds momentum around key curricular reforms which respond to changing needs of students and continues to break down cycles of disadvantage.

The School Summit provides valuable career guidance and advice to students and I would encourage all those attending to take in as many of the numerous demonstrations, workshops and speeches as possible. Events such as this one give students an excellent opportunity to explore all aspects of our wide ranging, limitless and thriving education system.

Minister Richard Bruton