



## A message from the IDPE 2021 Annual Conference co-chairs

*'In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.'* (Albert Einstein)

The seismic events of the past 12 months need no explanation. Yet despite the severe economic and social disruption we have all endured, schools around the country have experienced outpourings of warmth and generosity from their communities, who have realised anew the value of the stability and quality their institutions provide.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced development practitioners to find new ways of working; to engage with our communities in innovative, often untested, ways; to be courageous and creative despite reduced resource and budgets. Driving progress despite uncertainty has become business as usual for us all.

The theme for the IDPE 2021 Annual Conference – 'Embracing Opportunity' – reflects this collective endeavour. With this year's conference committee, we have worked to assemble a diverse programme of content, delivered by a range of fantastic speakers from the school, higher education and third sectors. Staged entirely virtually, the conference will include webinars and roundtables appropriate for professionals working at all levels and from both smaller shops and larger offices, as well as leadership lunches and breakfast clinics to challenge, support and nurture your professional development.

The challenges our sector faces are unprecedented and ongoing, and the work of the development office will be crucial to schools' long-term recovery from the impact of the pandemic. If we are to succeed, we will need to be more resilient, more flexible and more positive than ever before. The support, encouragement and advice of colleagues across the sector has surely never been more valuable to us all. We hope you and your team will join us at the IDPE 2021 Annual Conference, and share how you too are #EmbracingOpportunity this year.

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