

Invest for the Best



INTO Pre-Budget Submission 2020



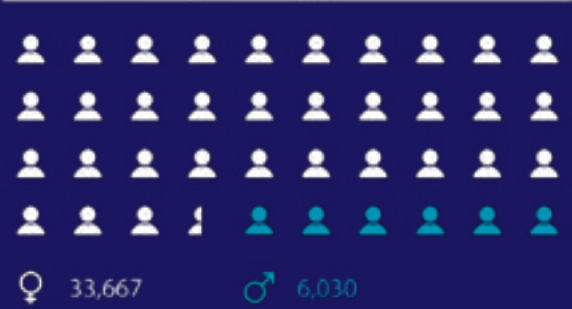
Irish Primary Education – Key Statistics

(Source: DES 2017/2018)

Number of primary school pupils: 555,251



Number of teaching staff: 39,697



Number of national schools: 3,246



Map Key

- Number of national schools
 - Number of teaching principals 2017/18
- The principals in these schools are in schools with fewer than 176 pupils. (PD July 2018)

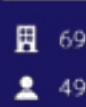
Number of mainstream primary schools: 3,111

Number of special primary schools: 135

Donegal



Sligo



Leitrim



Cavan



Monaghan



Louth



Mayo



Roscommon



Lengford



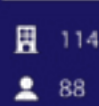
Westmeath



Meath



Clare



Galway



Offaly



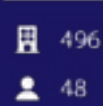
Laois



Kildare



Dublin



Limerick



Tipperary



Kilkenny



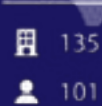
Carlow



Wicklow



Kerry



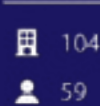
Cork



Waterford



Wexford



20/20 vision required in Budget 2020

The recent recession had a devastating impact on Irish primary education. Investment evaporated, pay was savaged and school funding for basic expenses deteriorated drastically. Over the last number of years, the INTO has campaigned for these cuts to be reversed. With the recession behind us, Budget 2020 needs to look forward, not backwards, and invest for the best.

Standards of entrants to teaching, pupils' reading levels and public satisfaction with education are high, but class sizes and funding are bottom of the league and school leaders require urgent support.

We must work to cap class sizes at 20 students, ensuring teachers and schools and, more importantly, children will never again be crowded out of Irish education. Teachers want to give students the type of individual attention and support that enables them to bloom. Smaller classes really matter, especially for younger children and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Our teaching principals deserve the support they need to be leaders within their schools. Principals and teaching principals in Irish primary schools are overworked, underpaid and struggling under never-ending administrative work emerging from the Department of Education and Skills and other state agencies. It's time to address workload issues. It's time to deliver a minimum of one leadership and management day per week for teaching principals.

To support school leadership, it is also time to restore the key middle management posts cut during the recession. Budget 2018 and 2019 failed to deliver any restoration. If we are to believe that the Minister, and the government are listening, let Budget 2020 be the year when assistant principal posts are given back to schools. And all of our principals and deputy principals have been due a pay award since the 2007 adjudication. The payment of this long overdue award must be dealt with in next year's public service pay talks. This will be key to addressing the recruitment and retention crisis within school leadership.

School funding remains shamefully low for primary education, standing at less than one euro per pupil per school day. So many teachers have become fundraisers, raising funds to cover basic school costs. It's time to restore school funding to pre-recession levels.

Our campaign to secure equal pay for equal work continues, following agreement on a statement of intent with the government at the commencement of our 2019 Congress. With the support of the membership, the INTO is engaged in a series of talks to, once and for all, confine pay inequality to the dustbin of history. It was a policy that should never have seen the light of day. INTO and our members, have led the charge to end this blight on our education system. Current talks must lead to a solution, which would be funded in the next public sector pay agreement.

If we value primary education, it's time we invest in the best. In this pre-budget submission, we set out the INTO's key priorities to government ahead of Budget 2020.



John Boyle
INTO General Secretary

INTO recommends that Budget 2020 must ...

Reduce class sizes

Smaller classes support inclusion and diversity of children, allow for more individual attention and meet the ambition of our government to establish the best education system in Europe.

According to *Education at a Glance* (OECD 2018), Irish primary school teachers continue to teach larger classes than their colleagues in other countries. The average class size in Irish primary schools remains at 25, the highest in the Eurozone, compared to the EU average of 20 pupils per class.



It would cost €13.5 million in a full year to reduce class sizes by one student. It would cost €4.5 million in 2020.

Support leadership

Both Budget 2018 and Budget 2019 failed to build on restoration of middle management posts, started in Budget 2017. Over 5,000 posts were lost during the recession.

Budget 2020 must deliver for the restoration of these posts and provide for a minimum of one leadership and management day (release day) per week to enable teaching principals to focus on the vast functions of school leadership they are responsible for.



**It would cost €8 million in a full year to restore 1,300 posts, which would amount to €2.7 million in 2020.
The cost of delivering one release day per week to teaching principals is €7.5 million in a full year or €2.5 million in 2020.**

Fund our schools

School capitation grants were cut by 15% in the recession. An immediate capitation restoration is now needed for schools' basic needs.

A survey undertaken by the Catholic Primary School Management Association found that parents pay €46 million to support basic school funding each year.

The cut from €200 to €179 per pupil since 2010 has turned teachers and parents into fundraisers.



It would cost €12.5 million in a full year to increase school capitation to pre-2011 levels. It would cost €4.2 million in 2020.

Reducing class sizes

Class size must be distinguished from pupil-teacher ratio. While the latter takes account of all teachers (including administrative principals and SEN teachers), class size refers to the number of children taught by a classroom teacher.

While some previous budgets have lowered the pupil to teacher ratio in our schools, class sizes in Ireland remain well above both EU and OECD averages. With 25 students on average in an Irish primary classroom, compared to the EU average of 20 or the OECD average of 21, it's clear Irish students are losing out. Class sizes have a huge impact on children's learning with evidence showing that in smaller classes learning outcomes significantly improve.

Schools were directed to use extra resources to prioritise smaller classes for infant pupils, where smaller classes are deemed to have the most impact. Younger children benefit greatly from smaller classes – initial education lays the foundations for future learning, so smaller class sizes are especially valuable for the early years of education when children are developing literacy and numeracy skills. Evidence shows that children from disadvantaged backgrounds do better in smaller classes.

As part of the extra supports package available to schools in the DEIS Scheme (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) there is a lower pupil-teacher schedule in DEIS Band 1 schools of 20:1 in junior schools, 22:1 in vertical schools (schools with junior and senior classes) and 24:1 in senior schools. While the schedule in schools was reduced in Budgets 2016 and 2018, there was no corresponding reduction made in the pupil-teacher ratio in DEIS schools. This has further narrowed the margin between DEIS and other schools.

During the recession, class sizes were raised in school with four mainstream teachers or fewer. The appointment figures for teachers in these small schools must be restored to pre-recession levels.

The reduction in class size must be passed on to DEIS schools in order to provide supports for our most vulnerable children so that they may have the opportunity they deserve to achieve their educational potential.

The complexity of the contemporary classroom is such that, with larger class sizes, teachers are finding it challenging to meet the broad spectrum of needs of children. When class numbers are of a more reasonable size, modern teaching methods work, and teachers are able to spend the time needed with children.



The cost of lowering primary school class sizes by one student is €4.5 million in 2020 and over the course of a full year amounts to €13.5 million. (Source: Dail Q&A no.170, 16 April 2019)

Supporting school leaders

The two critical areas where schools urgently need support for leadership relate to principal teachers, especially teaching principals, need for time to carry out administrative duties and to the further restoration of promoted posts (posts of responsibility or middle management posts).

Posts of Responsibility

During the recessionary period a moratorium on promotion in schools was imposed. Over 5,000 'posts of responsibility' (PORs) were lost, meaning an inability at school level to meet the growing challenges in curricular and regulatory change and less opportunity for career progression for teachers within our education system. These middle management posts were positive steps on the career ladder for teachers. Such posts, now categorised as 'assistant principals', involved a teacher taking on particular responsibility for activities or a curricular, pastoral or organisational areas (for example choir/music, sport and physical education, science, special education, wellbeing, library etc.) in return for a responsibility allowance (€3,769 or €8,520). As a result of the ban, no assistant principal posts in schools could be filled.

The cutting of these posts left schools without supports in a range of curricular and other areas and abolished career progression for teachers. Coupled with the issue of pay inequality for post-2011 entrants, for younger teachers this served as a factor which fuelled their interest in travelling abroad to teach overseas for a period, enabling them to avail of promotion opportunities denied in Ireland.

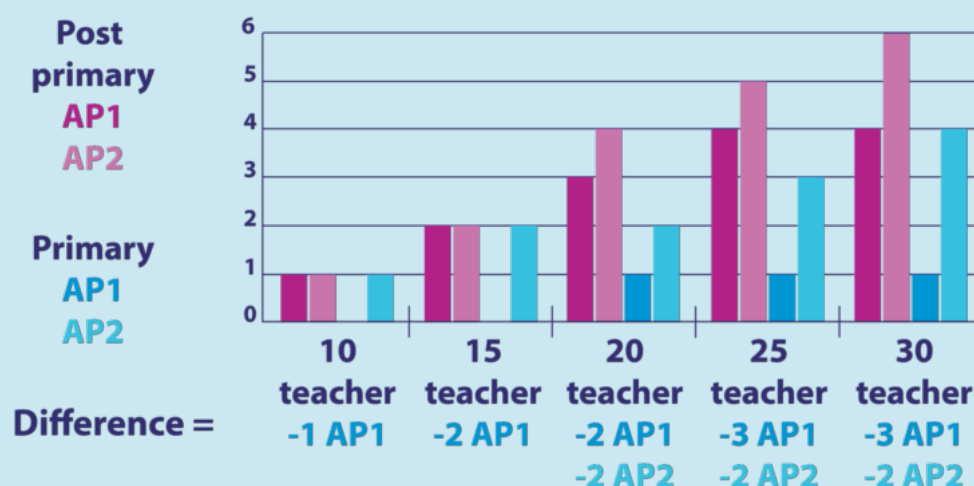
2017 saw the first, and to date the only, structured restoration of posts of responsibility to schools since the moratorium on promotion in schools was first introduced in March 2009. The INTO, though acknowledging some movement on this issue, viewed the filling of these posts as merely a start to restoration and continues to demand full restoration. While 1,300 posts were restored in 2017, there were no further restorations in Budget 2018 or Budget 2019.

As the graph shows, primary schools are well behind their post-primary counterparts in post allocations, an unjustifiable differential. (Figure 1)



It would cost €8 million in a full year to restore 1,300 posts, which would amount to €2.7 million in 2020. (Source: Dail Q&A no. 171, 16 April 2019)

Figure 1: POST OF RESPONSIBILITY ALLOCATION



Leadership and management days

The government's own Primary Education Forum has recognised the issue of workload as it relates to teaching principals in particular. INTO, alongside other key stakeholders, has participated in meetings of the forum and shared our experiences.

At the 2019 INTO Congress in Galway, school leaders called on the Department of Education and Skills to initiate a comprehensive review of their terms and conditions of employment. Primary teachers heard how teaching principals have seen their conditions of employment change considerably and workload increase exponentially in recent years. Increased paperwork, initiatives and additional child protection accountability measures have seen school leaders overwhelmed and under resourced.

The INTO is calling for one release day per week for teaching principals who are over-burdened and over-stretched with an ever-increasing administrative workload in addition to their teaching duties.

Clusters

The INTO is currently supporting a Department of Education and Skills 'cluster' model, whereby a number of schools with teaching principals may pool their release days to hire one teacher to cover all posts. This is advantageous to all parties involved, including pupils who benefit from continuity of the same teacher covering for their class teacher. The provision of one release day per week to every teaching principal would develop this scheme so that the classes and schools involved would have the same substitute every time their principal was released to do administrative work.



The cost of delivering one release day per week to teaching principals would cost €7.5 million in a full year, but only €2.5 million in 2020. (Source: Dail Q&A no. 69, 11 April 2019)

Funding our schools

Schools are struggling to meet their bills for basic costs such as heating, cleaning and insurance.

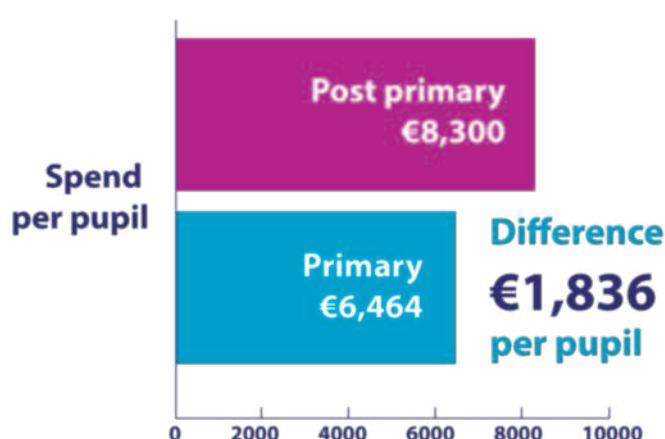
Irish primary schools receive significantly less funding than second and third level institutions. Primary schools receive 97 cent per pupil per school day to cover their running costs. Second-level schools receive almost double that amount. The standard capitation grant per pupil has dropped from €200 in 2010 to €179 at present, in contrast to the current figure of €309 at post-primary level. Figure 2 outlines spend per pupil in primary compared to post-primary.

Annual expenditure per student in Ireland is lower than the OECD average for pre-primary and primary education.

Education at a Glance 2018 shows per-pupil expenditure at primary level in Ireland is substantially below OECD and EU averages, 18th of 33 counties in spending and therefore in the bottom half of the OECD table.

Spend per pupil at primary level is 10% below the EU average. This funding disparity is grossly unfair. Department of Education and Skills' funding to primary schools for their day-to-day running costs covers only part of their bill. Parents and local communities are subsidising primary schools to the tune of €46m a year to cover basic costs such as energy and insurance costs – not sophisticated extras to enhance learning, but rather basic necessities required to effectively deliver the curriculum.

Figure 2: SCHOOL FUNDING



For further information

Please contact
David Geary,
INTO Head of
Communications
at dgeary@into.ie



The cost of restoring school funding to pre-recession levels is €12.5 million in a full year, or just €4.2 million in 2020. (Source: Dail Q&A no. 160, 16 April 2019)



Feargal Brougham, President, INTO, Teresa Murphy, Thomas Byrne TD, Meath East, Ann O'Kelly-Lynch.



Joe McKeown, Kathleen Funchion TD, Carlow-Kilkenny, Feargal Brougham, President, INTO.



Aoife Mullen, Senator Ged Nash, Louth, Feargal Brougham, President, INTO, Catherine Flanagan.



Annette Regan, Feargal Brougham, President, INTO, Sean Canny TD, Galway East, Joe Killeen.



Joe Lyons, Feargal Brougham, President, INTO, Senator Maria Byrne, Limerick, Anne Horan.



Mary Mitchell O'Connor TD, Sheila Murphy, Senator Gerry Horkan, Dublin Rathdown, Denis Everett.



Denis Everett, Feargal Brougham, President, INTO, Catherine Martin TD, Dublin Rathdown, Sheila Murphy.



Feargal Brougham, President, INTO, Minister of State Kevin 'Boxer' Moran TD, Longford-Westmeath, Carmel Browne.



Bob Allen, John Driscoll, Michéal Martin TD, Cork, Caoimhe Galvin, Feargal Brougham, President, INTO.

Aelish Collins, Fiona O'Loughlin TD, Kildare South and Chair, Joint Committee on Education and Skills.



John Boyle, Feargal Brougham, President, INTO, Aine McGinley, Charlie McConalogue TD, Donegal.





Head Office

Vere Foster House
35 Parnell Square
Dublin 1
DO1 ET35

Ard Oifig

35 Cearnóg Parnell
Baile Átha Cliath 1
DO1 ET35

Phone/Fón: 01 804 7700

Fax: 01 872 2462

Email: info@into.ie

Web: www.into.ie

