

IPPN's Updated Reaction to Budget 2026

IPPN prioritised four key areas for primary education in Budget 2026:

SUPPORT FOR LEADERSHIP

IPPN's Ask

An increased allocation of discrete leadership time to all primary schools.

Budget Measure Announced

Funding of €3 million will be made available to provide for enhanced School Leadership with additional deputy principals in primary and post primary schools for the 2026/27 school year.

Comment

Currently, 98% of deputy principals in mainstream schools have full-time teaching duties while 54% of primary school principals teach four out of the five days in a school week. We await the detail of the allocation of funding for leadership at primary level. The ongoing failure to address the issue of discrete leadership time in a meaningful way constrains the impact of leadership - including on implementing system priorities, undermines the effectiveness of our schools and compromises outcomes for children.

RESOURCING SPECIAL EDUCATION

IPPN'S Ask

Increase the state's investment in Special Education to keep pace with the number of children presenting with additional needs in our schools in order to ensure that every child has access to an appropriate school placement and to the therapies, equipment, resources and supports they need to achieve their potential.

Budget Measure Announced

In 2026, an additional 860 special education teachers and 1,717 SNAs will be funded to support children across mainstream, special classes and special schools.

Comment

IPPN notes the increased supports for pupils with additional needs through the allocation of extra special education teachers and SNAs. Given that a significant percentage of these additional posts will be required to staff new special classes, it is clear that this will not be sufficient to address the actual level of additional need in all classrooms. The funding of Special Education must be based on up-to-date data that reflects the actual numbers presenting in schools who need support. Until this is the case, equal access to quality, inclusive education for all learners will not be achieved.

TACKLING EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGE

IPPN's Ask

Fund the initiative, announced in the Programme for Government, to create a new DEIS+ band to support the schools with children from the most deprived communities in Ireland.

Budget Measure Announced

€48m of additional annual funding has been secured in Budget 2026 to fund the implementation of a new DEIS Plan. A key action in the plan will be the creation of a DEIS Plus scheme providing additional targeted resources to schools with students most at risk of educational disadvantage, fulfilling the Programme for Government Commitment.

Comment

IPPN welcomes the budget announcement of annual funding for a new DEIS Plus scheme. IPPN has set out evidence showing why a DEIS+ category of schools needs be established and resourced to meet the needs of the children in those schools. The details of the provision will determine whether this will prove to meet this extra level of need.

SCHOOL FUNDING

IPPN's Ask

Increase capitation funding in all primary to at least €275 per pupil to meet running costs.

Budget Measure Announced

A total of €39m in full year costs is being provided for a permanent increase in mainstream capitation grant funding for schools, bringing the mainstream rate of capitation to €274 per pupil in primary schools.

Comment

IPPN acknowledges the increase to capitation funding of €50 per pupil to €274. While this increase will somewhat alleviate the significant financial pressures primary schools are experiencing, recent evidence presented by CPSMA indicates that it will be insufficient to fully fund schools' basic running costs to heat, light, clean and insure school buildings. Schools finding themselves in deficit must be supported to pay their bills.

8th October 2025