

No bang no buck for Primary Education in Budget 2019!

The Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN) has today voiced utter disappointment at the measures introduced for primary education in Budget 2019.

Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton has recently stated that investing in school leadership is 'the best bang for our buck', yet the measures announced in Budget 2019 are dramatically lacking to support this teasing statement.

One additional leadership and management day for teaching principals to focus on their leadership and management responsibilities will do little to alleviate their huge workload. We acknowledge the additional four release days for those leading schools with special classes but teaching principals who take on a special class should automatically become an administrative principal due to the considerable additional workload.

Principals' work overload is a well-documented issue at this stage, with numerous surveys confirming that the role is unsustainable without an appropriate middle leadership structure in place. There was no rebuilding of the middle leadership and management structure in this budget. This would have been a necessary measure if the Minister is serious about Ireland having the best education system in Europe by 2026.

While an additional 950 SNA posts and 372 teachings posts (across primary and post primary) to cater for demographics and additional special classes are welcome, these additional staff members have to be led and managed by school leaders. An increase in resources results in an increase in workload for school leaders and needs to be taken into consideration.

A clear definition of the threshold for an administrative deputy principal in a special school has finally been introduced. This will undoubtedly make a difference in the 23 or so special schools in which it will be implemented. IPPN strongly advocates for the 18 teaching principals in special schools to be automatically designated as administrative principals due to the extreme complexities and additional demands of their role.

Even the small amount allocated to increased capitation will not be paid for another year. The capitation increase should be introduced for the 2018/19 school year and the full restoration to pre-austerity levels made by the next budget. A 5 per cent increase does not begin to cover the cuts that were made and primary schools urgently need this funding restored. David Ruddy, President of IPPN stated 'the delay in implementing this urgently-needed funding in primary schools, means that many school principals will have to continue fundraising for another year just to make ends meet, using valuable time and energy that could have been used in making our education system the 'best in Europe'.

ENDS

Additional Information:

The below table shows the minute increase just one additional leadership and management will have on the ground.

	Before Budget		After Budget	
	Release Days from Teaching Duties	% Time Allocated to School Leadership & Management by DES	Release Days from Teaching Duties	% Time Allocated to School Leadership & Management by DES
Principal +0/1/2 Teachers	17	9.3 %	18	9.8%
Principal +3/4 Teachers	23	12.6%	24	13.11%
Principal +5/6 Teachers	29	15.8%	30	16.3%

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