




ippn · 

Leading and Learning

IPPN Submission Budget 2025

 DUINE

 BEIRT

 TRIUIR

 CEATHRAR

 CUIGEAR

 SEISEAR

 SEACHTAR

 OCHTAR

 NAONÚR

 DEICHIÚR

Monday
AN LUAN

Tuesday
AN MHAIRT

Wednesday
AN CHEADAOIN

Thursday
AN DEARDAOIN

Friday
AN AOINE

Saturday
AN SATHARN

Sunday
AN DOMHNACH

CÉN FÁTH?
CÉN FÁTH?
WHY IS IT TWO WORDS?

CÉ MHEAD?
CÉ MHEAD?
HOW MUCH?

CAD?
WHAT IS CAD?
CAD IS A FISH.

CÉN T-AM É?
CÉN T-AM É?
WHAT TIME CAN WE PLAY?

CÉ?
WHO IS CÉ?
CÉ IS MY MUM!

CÁ?
CÁ, CÁ,
WHERE IS THE CROW?

CATHAIN?
CATHAIN AND WHEN
BOTH END IN N

CONAS?
CONAS ATÁ TÚ?
HOW ARE YOU?

January
EANAIR

February
FEABHRA

March
MARTA

April
AIBREÁN

May
BEALTAINÉ

June
MEITHEAMH

July
IUIL

August
LÚNASA

September
MEÁN FOMHAIR

October
FÉILE NA SAMHNAID

MO BHUIDÉAL
VISCE A LÍONADH
TO FILL MY
WATER
BOTTLE

RINNE MÉ
DEARMAD AR MO.
I FORGOT
MY.

CAD É AN
FREAGAR LE
HAGHAIDH
UIMHIR A..?
WHAT'S THE
ANSWER FOR
NUMBER..?

CONAS A
DEIR TÚ..?
HOW DO YOU
SAY..?

NÍ
THUIGIM
I DON'T
UNDERSTAND

AN BHFUIL
CEAD AGAM.
AM I
ALLOWED.

DUL GO
DTÍ AN.
TO GO
TO THE.

GABH MO
LEITHSCÉAL
EXCUSE
ME

CONAS A
LITRIONN TU..?
HOW DO YOU

CÉN
LEATHANACH?
WHAT

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Introduction

The Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN) is the professional body for over 6,000 Principals and Deputy Principals who lead 3,200+ primary schools, and is recognised by the Minister for Education as an official Education Partner. IPPN works with the Department of Education (DE), management bodies, unions, education agencies and other key stakeholders to advance primary education.

The focus of our budget submission is on the sustainability of school leadership and those elements of funding that will **have the greatest impact on primary schools and school leaders' capacity to fully discharge their leadership and management accountabilities.**

We present **four key priorities** for Budget 2025, and expand on these in the sections below.

1. Making leadership 'doable', through role clarity, increased time and capacity for leadership and enhanced governance structures

2. Resourcing Special Education Needs provision
3. Supporting DEIS schools through the implementation of a DEIS+ band at primary school level
4. Increasing grant funding

We look forward to an opportunity to discuss this submission in further detail with you.

Making School Leadership Doable

RATIONALE

The importance of school leadership as an influence on, and key determinant of, pupil learning has been clearly established. The equation is simple – effective school leadership leads to school effectiveness, which in turn leads to better outcomes for children. It is, therefore, a priority that school leaders should be empowered and supported to deliver that effective leadership in our schools, thereby maintaining their focus on what is most closely aligned with their core purpose – leading teaching and learning.

IPPN's mission is to enhance leadership capacity, effectiveness and sustainability in order to better ensure effective schools that deliver those better outcomes for children. Ensuring the existence of that leadership capacity, effectiveness and sustainability will empower existing school leaders to thrive in their roles, and will also encourage greater numbers of aspiring leaders to take up senior leadership positions in our primary schools.

SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP PROJECT

IPPN's direct engagement with school leaders highlighted the increasing levels of challenge, frustration and disillusionment experienced and articulated by school leaders in response to their

experience of the practice of leadership. The intensity of that sense of frustration and disillusionment has noticeably increased in recent years and prompted IPPN to undertake its Sustainable Leadership project.

This involved a research-informed analysis of the current reality of primary school leadership with a view to exploring the key issues and identifying solutions that will have a positive impact on leadership capacity, effectiveness and sustainability, with a consequential positive impact on school effectiveness and outcomes for children.

This culminated in the publication of a report in November 2022 – ***Primary School Leadership: The Case for Urgent Action - A Roadmap to Sustainability*** – which can be accessed [here](#).

IPPN published its progress report on the project in November 2023, which can be accessed [here](#). This detailed all of the actions that had been taken to that point and was shared with all members and stakeholders.

IPPN's direct engagement with school leaders highlighted the increasing levels of challenge, frustration and disillusionment experienced and articulated by school leaders in response to their experience of the practice of leadership.

Summary of evidence

- The breadth of tasks and responsibilities that are ascribed to school leaders has increased considerably over the last 8 years as each circular, each set of policy guidelines, and each new scheme or initiative is published.
- Those tasks and responsibilities demonstrate a significantly disproportionate focus on managing the organisation with a much lesser focus on the leadership of teaching, learning and school development.
- This is impacting on the sustainability of leadership roles with the mean score for all principals rating that sustainability at 3.61 out of 10 with teaching principals reporting a rating of just 3.18 out of 10.
- 97% of principals agree that the factor that most undermines the sustainability of their roles is the number of tasks & responsibilities they have to undertake that have nothing to do with their core purpose.
- The experience of the practice of leadership is having a serious and detrimental impact on the health & wellbeing of school leaders with their negative health scores being double or more than double those of the healthy working population and with 54% now falling into either the high or severe categories of burnout.
- If the job of principal became vacant in their school, 81% of deputy principals would not apply, chiefly because of the negative impact it would have on their health and their work/life balance.

WHERE IMPROVEMENT CAN BE ACHIEVED

Four areas clearly emerge which, if addressed, have the potential to have a profound impact on leadership practice in Irish primary schools –

1. achieving greater role clarity
2. ensuring increased time for leadership
3. ensuring greater capacity to share leadership
4. enhancing school governance structures.

IPPN has proposed specific actions in all four areas, as follows:

Achieving greater role clarity

It is imperative that we create the 'conducive conditions' that will empower the leadership agency required to deliver the most effective schools. Central to that process will be reaching consensus on what it is that we want our school leaders to be doing in their role. That role clarity needs to be shaped around the behaviours of effective school leaders, many of which are evident within the standards in the *Quality Framework for Leadership and Management* (DE Inspectorate, 2022).

IPPN believes that the Quality Framework can be used, not just as a means of evaluating leadership practice, but as a basis for establishing a shared understanding of what constitutes effective school leadership and where school leaders should be spending their time. It can also serve to ensure a more balanced practice of the twin dimensions of leadership and management, as both are required to ensure school effectiveness.

Accordingly, IPPN has developed a Leadership Effectiveness Discussion Document, based on the domains and standards of the Quality Framework, which details the tasks/actions associated with the achievement of those standards with a view to establishing who is best placed to undertake such actions. A further version of the document has been developed as a reflection tool for those involved in the leadership and management of our schools. We believe that engagement with these documents by stakeholders and practitioners will help to move towards greater role clarity and leadership effectiveness.

Proposal

That stakeholders engage with the IPPN Leadership Effectiveness Discussion Document and the reflection

tools to progress towards greater role clarity and effectiveness.

Ensuring increased time for leadership

How leadership time is currently allocated to primary schools

Given the sheer breadth of tasks and actions that derive from the domains and standards of the Quality Framework (as detailed in IPPN's Role Clarity Discussion Document), it is IPPN's contention that the leadership and management of our primary schools must be a shared responsibility. All those who have such responsibility must be given sufficient capacity, in terms of time, to be able to discharge that responsibility effectively.

The current model by which leadership time is allocated to primary schools is unnecessarily rigid and lacks nuance. The number of leadership and management (L&M) days that are allocated to primary schools is based on the number of pupils in the school, which then determines the status, teaching or administrative, of the principal and deputy principal.

Schools with fewer than 168 pupils have teaching principals who can avail of one leadership day a week. The deputy principals in such schools have no allocated leadership time. Schools that have between 169 and 572 pupils enrolled have full-time administrative principals (182 leadership days). Again, deputy principals in such schools have no allocated leadership time. Schools with 573 pupils or more have full-time administrative principals and deputy principals (364 leadership days).

Allocated leadership time	% of schools with that allocation of leadership time
37 days	51%
182 days	46%
364 days	3%

Observations

- If a school with 169 pupils loses **one** pupil, they go from having a full-time administrative principal to a teaching principal with a loss of 145 leadership days or 80% of their leadership capacity. Similarly, if a school with 573 pupils loses **one** pupil, they go from having a full-time administrative deputy principal to a deputy principal with no allocated leadership time and a consequential loss of 182 leadership days or 50% of the school's leadership capacity.
- The enormous disparity in leadership capacity between a school with 168 pupils and 169 pupils, as well a similarly large disparity between schools with 572 pupils and 573 pupils, highlights the need for a more nuanced and graduated approach.
- Only 26% of senior leaders in primary schools have administrative status, with 74% having either no allocated leadership time or only one leadership day a week (as detailed in the table).
- The capacity to share leadership in primary schools is significantly limited by the manner in which leadership time is allocated to schools. This is corroborated by the responses of 1,500 senior school leaders to our member surveys. 84% of deputy principals and 78% of principals cite this lack of time as the most significant impediment to the more effective sharing of leadership.

Comparisons with the Post-primary Sector

A comparison between the number of leadership and management days allocated to primary schools and post-primary schools with equivalent numbers of pupils is also instructive.

Observations

- A graduated approach is taken to increasing leadership time allocated to post-primary schools as pupil numbers increase. Increments are in 0.25 of a full-time post until such time as a full-time

administrative post for the deputy principal is achieved.

- Given that such an approach is adopted in post-primary schools, it seems reasonable to assume that an equivalent approach could and should be used in primary schools.
- A post-primary school with 150 pupils has nearly six times more leadership time allocated to it than the equivalent sized primary school.
- An over-arching question to consider is, why is greater leadership time allocated to post-primary schools?

Proposal

IPPN proposes the following model of creating more time in our primary schools for leadership, which has the capacity to have a profound impact on leadership and school effectiveness.

Parameters

- The model works back from the existing thresholds of 169 and 573 pupils for administrative principal and deputy principal status respectively

- It mirrors the approach taken to the allocation of leadership time to deputy principals in post-primary schools
- The green boxes indicate measures that already exist, the yellow boxes indicate the measures that require implementation
- The numbers of schools relate to enrolment in mainstream schools in 2023/24
- The cost of implementation is calculated by using an estimated overall employment cost per day of €210 per substitute day (excluding other employer costs)
- If it was decided to introduce the measures over two years, with the increased allocation of leadership time to teaching principals in year 1 (Bands 1 & 2) and to deputy principals in band 3 & 4 schools in year 2, it would cost
 - €20,543,880 in Year 1 and an additional
 - €20,714,820 in Year 2
- Given that this would be facilitated by clustered posts, the anticipated cost of implementation would be less than the figures presented here:

Band	Enrolment	Status of Principal	Status of Deputy Principal	Number of schools	Cost
1	1 - 84	0.4 admin (2 days a week)	Full-time teaching	1002	7,785,540
2	85 - 168	0.6 admin (3 days a week)	Full-time teaching	821	12,758,340
3	169 - 372	Fully admin	0.4 admin (2 days a week)	871	13,535,340
4	373 - 572	Fully admin	0.6 admin (3 days a week)	308	7,179,480
5	573 +	Fully admin	Fully admin	87	0
				3089	41,258,700

This proposed model details an increased allocation of leadership time to either principals or deputy principals, in accordance with the size of the school. However, it should be noted that schools would have the flexibility to use that increased allocation of leadership time to free up the most relevant person to progress what has been prioritised by the school - the principal, deputy principal, an assistant principal, or another member of the teaching staff. This would have a significant and positive impact on the sharing of leadership and the development of leadership capacity.

Developing a Culture of Shared Leadership

Moving from a hierarchical, duties-focused approach to the more inclusive culture of the shared leadership and management of our schools, where the contributions of all are valued and celebrated, is imperative. Such a culture needs to be developed first before it can be embedded. This process is at a more advanced stage within the post-primary sector than it is within the primary sector.

In the Middle Leadership Action Research project commissioned by the Centre for School Leadership, now Oide Leadership, the participating schools identified access to and structured support from a trained facilitator as the single most important contributory factor to the increased leadership capacity and more effective sharing of leadership in their schools.

It is in this context that IPPN believes that greater access to and engagement with team coaching would have a profoundly positive impact on the development of a shared leadership culture in our schools.

Certain impediments exist to schools accessing the team coaching facility offered now through Oide Leadership. As it stands, only schools where the principal has availed of four one-to-one coaching sessions are able to apply for access to team coaching.

This disadvantages schools where the principal, for whatever reason, does not wish to engage with one-to-one coaching. The impact is clear, with fewer than 5% of schools (primary and post-primary) having completed team coaching as of the end of 2023.

Proposal

IPPN proposes that this barrier to accessing team coaching be removed, and that the following modifications be made:

- Allow **all schools to apply for access to team coaching**, regardless of whether the principal has engaged with one-to-one coaching.
- **Increase the number of team coaching sessions** from 4 to 8
- Use the first two sessions for the principal, deputy principal and coach to **establish an understanding of the needs of the school** and what they wish to achieve
- **Allow all members of the leadership and management team to attend** (restricting it to 6 people will be exclusive and less effective in schools where there are more than 6 members of the leadership management team).

Enhancing school governance structures

Over the last 13 years, IPPN has consistently highlighted its concerns about the appropriateness of the current Board of Management governance structure in our schools. Society is indebted to the volunteers who serve, or have served, on our boards and the selfless community service they have provided over the last 50 years. However, it is unreasonable and unfair to expect volunteers to continue to discharge the increasingly complex and onerous statutory and legislative responsibilities that fall to Boards of Management.

In the absence of appropriate support and direct access to relevant expertise, the lack of capacity of Boards to adequately discharge their governance function has been identified as a significant contributory factor to the increased workload of

school leaders and the diminishing sustainability of their roles. Furthermore, standards of governance are compromised, which has significant implications for schools, their patrons, the education system and wider society, not to mention children.

It is in this context that IPPN offers the following proposals aimed at

- enhancing current governance practice and
- determining what governance structure would best meet the needs of schools into the future.

Enhancing Current Governance Practice

Mindful of the issues previously detailed with regard to the capacity of the current Board of Management structure to meet the governance demands of our schools, it is imperative that ways to enhance current governance practice are explored. IPPN proposes two ways of doing this:

1. Piloting the role of an Administrative/Compliance Officer within the confines of the Small Schools Action Research Project
2. Piloting clustered access to shared services (HR, Finance, Legal, etc.).

Piloting the role of an Administrative/Compliance Officer within the confines of the Small Schools Action Research Project

The large number of primary schools in Ireland, particularly smaller schools in rural areas, and the voluntary nature of boards, leaves many schools struggling to establish a properly-constituted Board. This has implications for any decision such a Board might make. Allied to the challenge of trying to secure sufficient numbers of Board members to ensure the Board is properly constituted, there is the additional challenge of securing Board members with specific and relevant expertise. This combination of these factors compromises the capacity of those schools to deliver good governance and undermines their effectiveness.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, the issue of Boards of Management and governance was identified as a priority area of focus by the clusters of schools involved in the Small Schools Action Research Project. In keeping with the Minister's reference to the potential of the Small Schools project to offer some insight and ideas for how Boards may be supported, it was agreed that it might be possible to use the project to explore different supports for governance, as long as they were in compliance with the provisions of the governance manual.

Proposal

Accordingly, IPPN proposes that

- a **role specification for an Administrative/Compliance Officer**, designed to support school leadership and enhance governance, would be agreed
- **each cluster** participating in the second phase of the research project would be **given the opportunity to avail of the support** of an Administrative/Compliance Officer, should they wish to do so
- **an independent evaluation** of the impact of the role be undertaken in quarter 2 of 2026.

Piloting clustered access to shared services (HR, Finance, Legal, etc.)

As previously stated, Boards of Management are operating in a complex regulatory environment where the levels of oversight and compliance demanded of them are significant. When one further considers that these Board members are volunteers with no specific, relevant expertise guaranteed and limited opportunities for induction and training, the inadequate and haphazard nature of the school governance structure becomes apparent.

The legal, financial, human resource, health & safety, and child protection compliance responsibilities of Boards are both significant and onerous. Such compliance can only be assured when specific and relevant expertise is readily available to schools. The involvement of local stakeholders in the governance

structure, who are invested in the school community, needs to be buttressed by access to professional expertise/services.

The availability of such expertise/services, provided on a clustered basis to schools, would enhance current governance practice while also protecting the autonomy of individual Boards. Such a model already exists within the post-primary sector as provided by the Association of Community & Comprehensive Schools (ACCS).

Proposal

Accordingly, IPPN proposes that

- **ACCS be approached** to ascertain their willingness to consider the provision of services to clusters of primary school Boards of Management on a pilot basis
- a **cohort of schools be identified** who would be willing to participate in a cluster who had access to such services on a pilot basis
- the cohort of schools identified should **include schools of varying size, context**, etc., to ensure that it is a representative sample
- **an independent evaluation** of the impact of clustered access to professional services **be undertaken** in quarter 2 of 2026.

Determining what governance structure would best meet the needs of schools into the future

IPPN maintains an open mind as to what the most appropriate governance structure for Irish schools would look like. We also anticipate that the rich learnings that would emanate from the proposals made previously, if enacted, would help to shape and inform the system's consideration of alternative governance structures.

In order to ensure that there are no misconceptions in relation to IPPN's vision for the governance of our schools, the following underlying principles are offered.

Any proposed model of school governance must

- respect and protect the ethos of schools, whatever that ethos may be

- retain the element of local stakeholder involvement
- be buttressed by ready access to relevant expertise and services
- uphold the principles of good governance and the standards of the Charities Regulator.

The function of school governance needs to be clearly defined and distinct from the day-to-day leadership and management of the school. Governance is about vision, mission, goals, strategic direction, policy, values and compliance. Effective governance supports and enables effective school leadership and management.

The Primary Education Forum has been identified by the Minister as *"a platform for discussion... as to what the future governance arrangements for schools might look like."* Given that all of the primary education partners are represented around the Forum table, it makes sense for it to be used to ensure progress on this issue.

However, as the Forum meets only three times a year, meaningful momentum and progress would be difficult to achieve.

Proposal

Accordingly, IPPN proposes that

- a **working group be established** from the membership of the Primary Education Forum
- the working group be **tasked with facilitating collaborative engagement** with a view to the development of discussion papers for the consideration of the wider membership of the Forum
- **progress reports be delivered** by the working group at each meeting of the Forum
- a **target date of June 2026** be agreed for the finalisation of proposals for governance reform.



Resourcing Special Education Needs Provision

IPPN supports the principle of ensuring effective equal access to quality inclusive education for all learners. Such inclusion must be planned for, supported and adequately resourced by all relevant services. IPPN has consistently stated that special needs are either met or they are not and, if not, there is a consequential impact not only on the child with special needs, but also on the other children in the class.

IPPN's focus has been to ensure that schools are allocated sufficient resources to better ensure that they can meet the needs of all children and that those resources are distributed fairly and equitably. Children with the greatest level of need should receive the greatest level of support.

Central to achieving this will be increased investment in SEN. If the level of resources made available within the system is dictated by budgetary constraints, rather than the level of need that presents in schools, then it cannot be claimed that special education

educational needs are fully met. It can merely be asserted that special educational need is met only to the level allowed by the budget allocated for it.

Proposal

Fully fund special educational needs, such that each child with additional needs has access to the therapies, equipment, resources and supports required to enable them to achieve their potential alongside their peers.

Supporting DEIS schools through the implementation of a DEIS+ band at primary school level

RATIONALE

The DEIS Plan 2017 set out the Department's vision for education to more fully become a proven pathway to better opportunities for children in socio-economically disadvantaged communities who experience educational disadvantage.

Since 2017, there have been major changes within Irish primary education, including the new Primary Curriculum Framework, the Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033 and the rollout of the Free Primary Schoolbooks Scheme and Hot Meals to all primary schools.

The seven years since the launch of the DEIS Plan 2017 have also seen changes outside of the Irish primary system which have had an effect on the lives of children living in disadvantaged communities including the COVID-19 pandemic, primary care waiting lists and both the housing and cost of living crises.

There has been no comprehensive evaluation of the DEIS Plan 2017 and whether or not it is meeting the needs of the children in need of support within DEIS schools.

The *Pobal HP Deprivation Index 2023* has shown that 'Disadvantage is disproportionately experienced in small pockets in Dublin city centre, north and west suburbs, on the outskirts of Cork, Waterford and Limerick and in a small number of rural towns.'

Since the COVID-19 school closures, principals from Ireland's most disadvantaged communities have highlighted the disproportionate level of childhood trauma and additional needs within their schools. It is now clear that there is a collection of approximately 100 DEIS Band 1 schools in areas of Dublin, Cork, Waterford and Limerick that have been identified by the Pobal HP Deprivation Index as experiencing generational deprivation. These schools need to be categorised as **DEIS+ schools** and supported and resourced in order to meet the needs of the children within those schools.

The IPPN DEIS Focus Group has identified the need for increased supports for these most disadvantaged schools as a priority concern. The focus group has also highlighted the concerns of schools around the *Refined DEIS identification model* and has called for more transparency in the calculation of a school's standardised disadvantage score.

The DEIS Plan 2017 is not delivering the resources/supports that these schools need in order to ensure that the Department's vision for communities at risk of disadvantage can be achieved.

EVIDENCE

IPPN's direct engagement with school leaders highlighted the increasing levels of challenge, frustration and disillusionment experienced and articulated by school leaders in response to their experience of the practice of leadership. The intensity of that sense of frustration and disillusionment has



noticeably increased in recent years and prompted IPPN to undertake its Sustainable Leadership project.

This involved a research-informed analysis of the current reality of primary school leadership with a view to exploring the key issues and identifying solutions that will have a positive impact on leadership capacity, effectiveness and sustainability, with a consequential positive impact on school effectiveness and outcomes for children.

This culminated in the publication of a report in November 2022 – ***Primary School Leadership: The Case for Urgent Action - A Roadmap to Sustainability*** – which can be accessed [here](#).

IPPN published its progress report on the project in November 2023, which can be accessed [here](#). This detailed all of the actions that had been taken to that point and was shared with all members and stakeholders.

April 2024 Snapshot of 17 DEIS 1 Schools in West Tallaght, Ballymun, Darndale

	Number of children below %15 in standardised literacy tests in mainstream classes?	Number of children below %15 in standardised numeracy tests in mainstream classes?	Percentage of children who have missed over 20 days of school.	Percentage that have experienced ACE/trauma?	Percentage needing SET
School 1	27.50%	43.60%	27%	50%	60%
School 2	29%	26%	33%	53%	72%
School 3	38%	48%	54%	50%	50%
School 4	22%	17%	26%	19%	100%
School 5	36.50%	37%	22%	80%	69%
School 6	26%	26%	54%	28%	28%
School 7	24%	30%	44%	44%	55%
School 8	51%	55%	34%	95%	84%
School 9	33%	32%	54%	79%	49%
School 10	22%	30%	49%	22%	25%
School 11	22%	25%	42%	32%	42%
School 12	27%	25%	21%	32%	27%
School 13	49%	38.50%	36%	44%	51%
School 14	44%	51%	45%	79%	65%
School 15	32%	35%	42%	26%	37%
School 16	33%	14%	58%	40%	55%
School 17	37%	28%	50%	37%	56%
	32.53%	33.01%	40.65%	47.65%	54.41%
	On average 32.5% of children are below the 15th percentile in standardised literacy tests	On average 33% of children are below the 15th percentile in standardised numeracy tests	On average 41% of children miss 20 days of school or more	On average 48% of children have experienced a direct ACE/trauma	On average across the schools surveyed principals believed 54% of children needed some level of support teaching

Proposal

The North East Inner City of Dublin social regeneration project (NEIC) has shown one pathway towards how resources and supports can be deployed within areas of acute disadvantage.

Multidisciplinary teams, made up of speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and educational psychologists, working one to one with children in school buildings, is guaranteeing that children are accessing the therapeutic supports they require to meet their additional needs. Running for a number of years, and soon to be backed by evidence-based research, this aspect of the NEIC project has been lauded by the principals of the 10 participating primary schools as being of immense benefit.

The number of children who have experienced trauma attending these DEIS schools shows the need for support for schools in implementing trauma-informed educational practices across the entire school community. This necessitates an allocation of additional staff, building space and professional development.

The level of administration undertaken by all school staff, including school leadership, in completing Tusla referrals, AON referrals, AON reports of educational needs, School Support Plans, EWO referrals, attendance referrals and the associated meetings around all of these requires that additional posts of responsibility are allocated to these DEIS+

schools. School attendance has been a focus for the Department of Education over the last two years and the amount of administration completed in these DEIS schools around attendance is a multiple of what is done in non-DEIS and other DEIS Band 1 schools.

Finally, the concerns of schools around the country in relation to the *Refined DEIS identification model*, and who have called for more transparency in the calculation and communication of a school's standardised disadvantage score must be addressed.

In summary, IPPN calls for the creation of a new band, called DEIS+, to support the schools with children from the most deprived communities in Ireland which would deliver the following supports:

- Multidisciplinary Teams made up of counsellors, psychologists, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists to work on the ground in schools with children
- Teaching posts, funding and classroom space dedicated to implementing trauma-informed practices and interventions
- Additional Posts of Responsibility to be allocated to these DEIS+ schools to meet the additional administrative workload incurred by the number of children with additional needs in their schools
- Allow schools to request the calculation of their standardised disadvantaged score as part of the DEIS categorisation appeals' process.

The number of children who have experienced trauma attending these DEIS schools shows the need for support for schools in implementing trauma-informed educational practices across the entire school community.

Increasing Grant Funding

While recognising that the funding of schools is clearly an issue for the management bodies, and that IPPN's focus is on leadership effectiveness, school effectiveness and better outcomes for children, the lines inevitably get blurred. All stakeholders agree that primary schools are not adequately funded.

In its pre-budget submission for Budget 2021, the Catholic Primary School Management Association (CPSMA) cited research undertaken by Grant Thornton in 2018 which "*shows that the capitation grant which is meant to pay for the day to day running costs of schools and the provision of educational materials, on average covers just over half of school running costs.*" Inflationary pressures and significant increases in the cost of utilities mean that the situation has worsened since then.

School leaders report significant cash flow issues caused by the manner and timing of how grants are paid as well as heightened levels of stress at having to find ways of stretching and supplementing budgets. The recent Ancillary Services grant issues have added to this stress. While these are matters for Boards of Management to address, school leaders are the ones who are living dealing with it on a daily basis.

IPPN fully supports the calls by our fellow education partners for enhanced funding for capitation and

ancillary services, in line with funding provided to post-primary schools. Some progress was made in this regard in last October's budget, however, all increases to capitation funding should be placed on a permanent basis and IPPN reiterates the call for the basic capitation rate to be increased to €275 per pupil, and for sufficient ancillary funding to be provided for the payment of caretaking staff.

The allocation of funding to minor works, digital technologies and technical support also needs to be addressed so that schools have confidence in the cashflows relating to such expenditure on an annual basis. The timing of such grants also needs to be reviewed such that schools have advance payment to avoid running at a deficit.

Proposal

- Increase the capitation grant at primary level to €275 per pupil
- Provide sufficient ancillary funding to enable schools to pay for caretaking services.

School leaders report significant cash flow issues caused by the manner and timing of how grants are paid as well as heightened levels of stress at having to find ways of stretching and supplementing budgets.

Summary of Proposals

IPPN's proposed budgetary priorities for 2025 can be summarised as follows:

ENSURING INCREASED TIME FOR LEADERSHIP

1. Introduce a graduated approach to the provision of discrete leadership time for principals and deputy principals as pupil numbers increase.

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF SHARED LEADERSHIP

Funding to be provided to

1. enable all schools to access team coaching
2. increase the number of team coaching sessions to 8 per school
3. all full leadership teams to attend coaching sessions during school hours.

ENHANCING SCHOOL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

Funding to be made available as part of Phase 2 of the Small Schools Clustering Project to

1. trial the centralised provision of services to clusters of schools via ACCS
2. facilitate the recruitment of an Administrative/ Compliance Officer for each cluster of schools
3. provide for an independent evaluation of the ACO role and of the impact of clustered access to shared services to be undertaken.

RESOURCING SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS PROVISION

1. Fully fund special educational needs, such that each child with additional needs has access to the therapies, equipment, resources and supports required to enable them to achieve their potential alongside their peers.

SUPPORTING DEIS SCHOOLS THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A DEIS+ BAND AT PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL

1. Create a new band called DEIS+ to support the schools with children from the most deprived communities in Ireland which would deliver specific supports.

INCREASING GRANT FUNDING

1. Increase the capitation grant in all primary and special schools to a minimum of €275 per pupil.
2. Provide sufficient funding to enable schools to pay for caretaking work.







CONTACT US

We are keen to hear from school leaders and any other stakeholders who share our vision for primary education. You can contact us through one of the media below.

General Enquiries

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More information about IPPN and the supports and services we offer to school leaders is available on our website www.ippn.ie.

Charitable Status

IPPN is a non-profit organisation and a registered charity with CHY number 17221