

New DEIS Strategy: Strengths, Weaknesses, Issues for Further Consideration

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Strengths

- School based speech and language therapists – further development of Programme for Govt commitment
- Commitment to address fragmentation for Hunger Prevention in School through new SCP strategy + 5.7 million euro extra for school meals – though little on infrastructure investment in kitchens in schools
- New Inclusion Support Service involving NBSS for Primary

Strengths cont.

- Documenting of reduced timetable to address this issue (though further needs multidisciplinary teams)
- Recognition of need for clarity on HSCL role and its relation to other services
- Extension of ABC programmes, Incredible Years, Home Visiting Outreach for early years

Strengths cont.

- Some focus on wellbeing/mental health issues
- Recognition of importance of school climate issues
- Access to higher education focus
- Interagency collaboration much stronger than original DEIS

Weaknesses

- Lack of emotional counselling services in school
- Vagueness as to financial commitment beyond next year and a half – 5 million plus 15 million euro
- Lack of strong focus on chronic need groups e.g., homelessness, children with parents experiencing addiction, in prison, mental health difficulties
- No recognition of sleep deficits

New Allocation Model

- Policy purposes of new tool ?
- Lack of clarity on legacy posts 15: 1 ratio

Report on the Review of DEIS 2017:

‘The Group noted the Programme for a Partnership Government commitment –

‘ “Smaller classes, for junior and senior infants in particular, are proven to increase pupil achievement, especially for disadvantaged children. Gains from smaller class size in early years are shown to carry forward into future years. Research shows pupils are more likely to stay in school longer and earn better results”.’

‘Having examined teacher provision in other jurisdictions it is evident that there is a wide variance in class size with little or no commonality across countries - ranging from a 13:1 to 20:1, in circumstances which are not all comparable to the Irish education system. It is difficult to draw any conclusion in terms of an optimum class size given the diversity within the structure of education provision in the countries examined.’

‘The Group agreed that further research is required to establish what is appropriate for the Irish situation. It noted the scope for resolving the current inequity of allocation between schools in DEIS Band 1 in the context of the overall resource allocation under a new DEIS Action Plan.’

- ‘Pending any change to the recommended teacher allocation for urban primary schools supporting the highest levels of pupils at risk of educational disadvantage, the current recommended class size for these schools should apply.’

- Punish schools for success - as a consequence if not intent – a double bind?
- Instability vs Stability Principle? Staff turnover, morale, permanent contracts?
- Pass the Parcel of Resources between schools?
Rotation principle based on relative, not real, need?
Fixed pie with different slices as notion of targeting need
- Fairness principle (p.19)

DEIS Plan 2017: 'The new model may reveal that some schools currently included in DEIS have a level of disadvantage within their school population much lower than that in some schools not included within DEIS. If this turns out to be the case, then we must consider whether it is fair that those schools continue receiving these additional resources, using resources that may be more fairly allocated to the schools with greater levels of disadvantage' (p 19).

Fairness principle (p.19) – Administrative fairness ???

- **Substantive fairness?**

- Taking resources from schools experiencing poverty to give to those more poor

- Taking resources from schools where children not obtaining equal opportunity already in their academic scores

- Other reference points for need to take resources from, e.g., private schools funding by State

- Is even goal of equal opportunity intact with lower targets for DEIS schools bringing lower resources for some? Implies 'satisfactory disadvantage' rather than ending inequality

Fairness principle (p.19) – Administrative fairness ???

- Potential loss of resources for schools compared with time State bankrupt or pre-Celtic Tiger
- Progressive realisation as fairness – better off compared with 5 years previously
- Certainty principle for justice – for parents as well as staff to make decisions

- HP model – inferences from 2 points on a graph
- Crime, mental health, addiction, homelessness, literacy?
- Need to fill gap regarding interpretation of tool and policy purposes
- Processes of Communication?