

Buiséad 2025 - An Roinn Oideachais / Budget 2025 - Dept of Education - Explainer for parents

A thuismitheoirí / chaomhnóirí dhí,

Budget 2025 was released on Tuesday the 10th of Oct. Please find a summary of what this means for education below. We would also appreciate it if you could take the time to read to the end. Parents must be aware of the realities of the budget and **the impact on our schools and most importantly, on your children.**

Unfortunately, it was another very disappointing budget for primary education, and it's vital that parent voices are heard as we move towards a general election. We must ensure education is an election issue, which it currently is not. We ask all parents to read and then email their local representatives to ask what they plan to do to **put education close to the top of the national agenda.**

Key features for mainstream primary schools:

- ❖ There was a 12% increase to permanent capitation funds, which is welcome but inadequate. Alongside this, the one-off cost of living grant from the previous two years was reduced. Capitation funding is used to pay for the running costs of schools, including electricity, heat, cleaning, insurance, all classroom resources and much more. Capitation is granted on a per-pupil basis.
- ❖ 768 new SET (Special Education Teaching) posts. This is between ~4000 schools. The increase is due to increased numbers of pupils in schools and new special classes and **does not reflect at all the significant increase we are seeing in additional needs on the ground.**
- ❖ 1600 new SNA (Special Needs Assistant) posts. This is also between ~4000 schools and primarily to support new special classes. **This will not make a difference in the majority of schools.**
- ❖ €4 million funding for leadership posts. This will mean 1,000 additional assistant Principal posts between primary and post-primary schools. **Management duties in schools have increased exponentially and this increase will barely scratch the surface of what's required to ensure our schools are at the top of their game. Time also needs to be allotted for management duties to be undertaken and to ensure that the role of the school leader is sustainable in the long run.**
- ❖ €1.3 billion for school building projects - We were long enough in temporary premises to know that most schools have endured lengthy waits for a decent and fit-for-purpose building. Despite applying for two additional modular classrooms we **do not know how long we'll be waiting for them. These additional rooms are essential for us to provide two proper autism classrooms to some of our most vulnerable children.**

In-school Leadership Opinion:

Most members of the public will be unaware of the Education section of the budget. It's something that often goes unnoticed and isn't widely discussed. We believe it's vitally important that there is a wider understanding by parents and the wider public of the impacts of the Education budget.

We were hoping, going into the budget that it would be a positive budget for Education. With the country in surplus, it seemed a great chance for the government to show that they support and value education. **We hoped we would see a reduction in class sizes, which are currently the highest in the EU, and an increase in school funding.** Unfortunately, **we got neither. Education was not prioritised in the budget.**

The headlines in the media will not reflect this. The headlines will be of free books for post-primary, phone pouches and increases in staffing. But the headlines won't explain that while parents may get 'free books', it will also fall on them to cover the shortfall in capitation funding, via fundraising etc. Or that the staffing increases are in line with demographics and won't address the gaps that exist for support. Or that our pupils sit in classes that are on average larger than every other EU country, impacting their learning daily. **We cannot overstate the difference it makes for a child to be in a class of 20-22 children compared to the 28+ children that are in a number of our classes. The pupil-teacher ratio must come down!**

Call to Action:

Education was not prioritised in the last two budgets, and as things stand it will not be an election issue or priority for any party. I ask all parents to take time to **Make Education An Election Issue**. This will not happen unless there is enough public pressure to do so. Take 5 minutes in the coming weeks, to email your local representatives and make it clear that you know the realities of this budget and that in particular, the school funding deficits along with not reducing class sizes are not good enough. That our children deserve better. Please find below a template to email your local TDs and those standing for election. You can find the email addresses for your local representatives [here](#), just type in your Eircode.

If you have any questions, email priomhoide@gsmnc.ie.

Is sinne, le meas,
Áine + foireann na scoile

Rphoist Samplach do thuistí / *Sample Email for Parents*

Subject: **Tús áite d'Oideachais sa Toghchán** / Prioritising Education in Upcoming Elections

Dear [Representative's Name],

I hope this message finds you well. As a concerned (parent/teacher) in our community, I urge you to prioritise education in your campaign for the upcoming election.

The recent Budget 2025 has revealed significant shortcomings in funding for primary education, including;

- ❖ **Inadequate capitation funding:** a 12% increase in core funding with a reduction in the cost of living funding. An absolute minimum of 20% had been campaigned for. 12% will not allow us to keep the lights and heat on in schools without fundraising. We have still not reached pre-recession levels of capitation funding, while costs soar annually.

- ❖ **Leadership posts:** 1000 new posts were granted, but posts have still not been restored to pre-2010 levels. Over 15 years now of less leadership capacity in our schools. This is a core issue impacting the Principal retention crisis and the teacher retention crisis.

- ❖ **Class sizes:** Despite a huge surplus, we failed to reduce class sizes for the second year running. We have the biggest class sizes in the EU, impacting the learning of every child in every class in the country.

Our children deserve better, and education must be a key election issue.

Please share your plans for addressing these challenges and ensuring that our schools receive the necessary support to provide quality education.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I look forward to your response.

Best regards,