

# DEIS PLAN 2017

*Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools*



AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF  
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION  
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS



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## Foreword

Our ambition is to have the best education and training system in Europe within the decade. It includes the goals of improving the path of educational opportunity for those who come to education at a disadvantage and of strengthening the capacity of education and training to break cycles in communities with high concentrations of disadvantage.

Much of the work of school leaders, teachers, the Department of Education and Skills and its agencies is to ensure that any pupil or student who might struggle in education gets the best possible support. Special programmes are in place for children with learning challenges. In addition, the programme DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) was designed to give tailored support to schools who have high concentration of disadvantage.

A review of that programme has shown real improvements in terms of educational outcomes and in the progression through school for students involved. It has also identified areas for improvement which signpost the way ahead.

This new plan sets out new goals to be achieved in terms of improved outcomes for children. The aim is to narrow the gaps and develop better pathways.

The plan will: develop best practice in identification of schools needing support, pilot new approaches that can be mainstreamed over time, integrate the range of supports with other Departments and Agencies for optimal impact and aims to devise greater continuity of support across a wider range of schools over time.

My hope is that, over time, we can equip all schools to offer a learning environment in which any child can thrive without labelling of child or of school. By ensuring the best possible outcome, we can maximise the chances of every child getting the best possible opportunity to fulfil his or her potential in life. This is a journey, and this plan represents an important step on that journey.

**Richard Bruton T.D.**  
**Minister for Education and Skills.**



The DEIS Plan 2017, which replaces the current Action Plan launched in 2005, sets out our vision for future intervention in the critical area of social inclusion in education policy.

## Our Vision

For Education to more fully become a proven pathway to better opportunities for those in communities at risk of disadvantage and social exclusion.

## Our Ambition

To become the best in Europe at harnessing education to break down barriers and stem the cycle of inter-generational disadvantage by equipping learners to participate, succeed and contribute effectively to society in a changing world.

## Our Targets

To realise our vision we have devised an ambitious set of targets.

Measure	Target
DEIS LITERACY RATES <sup>1</sup>  [RELEVANT INDICATORS: NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS OF ENGLISH READING AND MATHEMATICS (NAERM); PROGRAMME FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT (PISA)]	INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS IN SECOND AND SIXTH CLASS IN DEIS BAND 1 SCHOOLS PERFORMING AT LEVEL 3 OR HIGHER IN READING LITERACY FROM 18% AND 21% TO 25% AND 27% RESPECTIVELY BY 2020  INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF 15 YEAR OLD STUDENTS IN DEIS SCHOOLS PERFORMING AT OR ABOVE LEVEL 4 IN READING LITERACY FROM 28% TO ABOVE 33% BY 2020  INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF 15 YEAR OLD STUDENTS IN DEIS SCHOOLS PERFORMING AT OR ABOVE LEVEL 5 IN READING LITERACY FROM 7% TO ABOVE 10% BY 2021  REDUCE THE PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS IN SECOND AND SIXTH CLASS IN DEIS BAND 1 SCHOOLS PERFORMING AT OR BELOW LEVEL 1 IN READING LITERACY FROM 44% AND 47% RESPECTIVELY TO 40% BY 2020  REDUCE THE PERCENTAGE OF 15 YEAR OLD STUDENTS IN DEIS SCHOOLS PERFORMING AT OR BELOW LEVEL 1

<sup>1</sup> Target developed as part of the Interim Review of the National Strategy on Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020.

	IN READING LITERACY FROM 16% TO BELOW 12% BY 2020
DEIS NUMERACY RATES <sup>2</sup>	<p>INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS IN SECOND AND SIXTH CLASS IN DEIS BAND 1 SCHOOLS PERFORMING AT LEVEL 3 OR HIGHER IN MATHEMATICS FROM 21% AND 19% TO 30% AND 27% RESPECTIVELY BY 2020</p> <p>INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF 15 YEAR OLD STUDENTS IN DEIS SCHOOLS PERFORMING AT OR ABOVE LEVEL 4 IN MATHEMATICS FROM 23% TO ABOVE 29% BY 2020</p> <p>INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF 15 YEAR OLD STUDENTS IN DEIS SCHOOLS PERFORMING AT OR ABOVE LEVEL 5 IN MATHEMATICS FROM 6% TO ABOVE 10% BY 2020</p> <p>REDUCE THE PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS IN SECOND AND SIXTH CLASS IN DEIS BAND 1 SCHOOLS PERFORMING AT OR BELOW LEVEL 1 IN MATHEMATICS FROM 52% AND 50% TO 45% AND 42% RESPECTIVELY BY 2020</p> <p>REDUCE THE PERCENTAGE OF 15 YEAR OLD STUDENTS IN DEIS SCHOOLS PERFORMING AT OR BELOW LEVEL 1 IN MATHEMATICS FROM 22% TO BELOW 16% BY 2020</p>
DEIS PUPIL RETENTION RATES	CONTINUE TO IMPROVE RETENTION RATES AT SECOND-LEVEL IN DEIS SCHOOLS, FROM THEIR CURRENT RATE OF 82.7% TO THE NATIONAL NORM, CURRENTLY 90.2%, BY 2025
STUDENT WELLBEING	<p>EXTEND THE INCREDIBLE YEARS TEACHER PROGRAMME IN DEIS PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO INCREASE REACH FROM C. 20,000 LEARNERS IN 130 SCHOOLS TO 104,000 LEARNERS IN 646 SCHOOLS BY 2019</p> <p>EXTEND FRIENDS PROGRAMME IN DEIS SCHOOLS TO INCREASE REACH FROM C. 25,000 LEARNERS IN 275 SCHOOLS TO 172,000 LEARNERS IN 831 SCHOOLS BY 2019</p>

<sup>2</sup> Target developed as part of the Interim Review of the National Strategy on Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020.

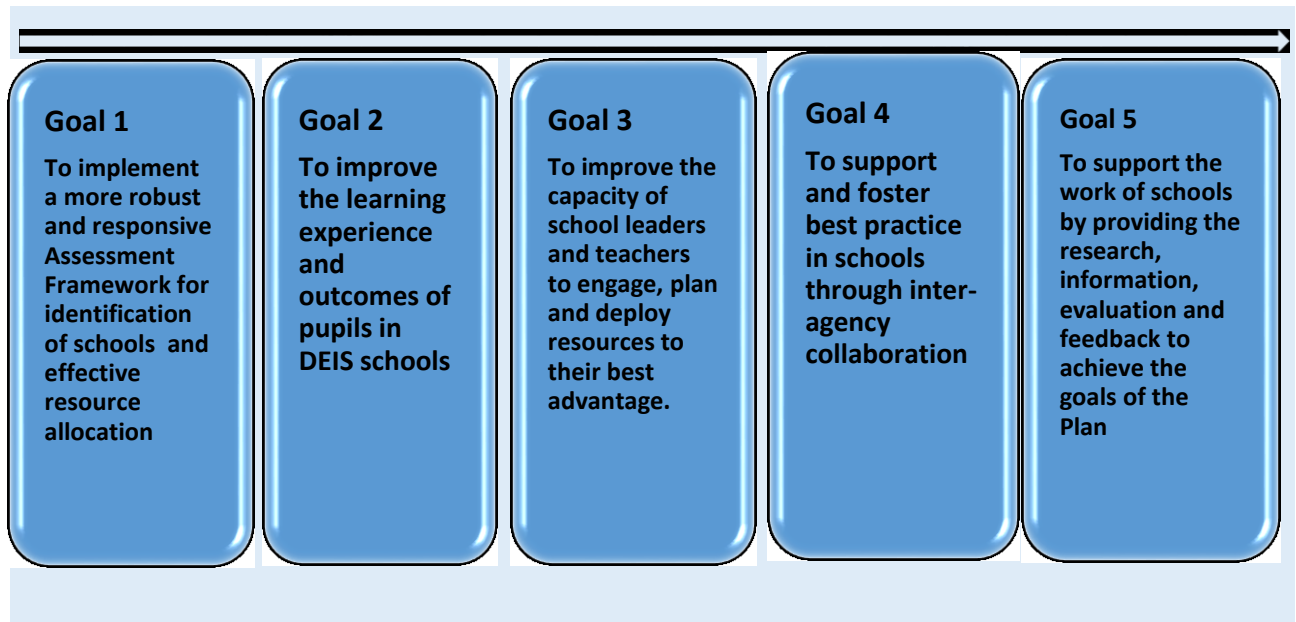


<p>PROGRESSION TO FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION</p>	<p>INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE FROM THE NON-MANUAL WORKER GROUP IN HIGHER EDUCATION TO 30% BY 2019</p> <p>INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE FROM THE SEMI/UNSKILLED MANUAL WORKER GROUP IN HIGHER EDUCATION BY TO 35% BY 2019</p> <p>INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF FIRST-TIME MATURE STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION TO 16% IN THE CASE OF FULL-TIME MATURE STUDENTS AND 24% IN THE CASE OF FULL AND PART-TIME/FLEXIBLE MATURE STUDENTS BY 2019</p> <p>INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS STUDYING ON A PART-TIME/FLEXIBLE BASIS IN HIGHER EDUCATION TO 22% BY 2019</p> <p>INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF NEW ENTRANTS TO HIGHER EDUCATION WHOSE BASIS FOR ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION IS A FURTHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATION TO 10% BY 2019</p> <p>INCREASE THE NUMBER OF IRISH TRAVELLERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION TO 80 BY 2019</p>
<p>TEACHER EDUCATION</p>	<p>INCREASE ACCESS BY STUDENTS FROM TARGET GROUPS TO INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION BY 2018</p> <p>ENHANCE TEACHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES TO SUPPORT THE RAISING OF EXPECTATIONS AMONG STUDENTS IN RELATION TO THEIR HIGHER EDUCATION POTENTIAL</p>
<p>PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT</p>	<p>IMPROVE THE LEVEL OF PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN THEIR SCHOOL COMMUNITIES THROUGH BETTER SCHOOL PLANNING AND TUSLA SERVICE PLANNING</p>
<p>COMMUNITY LINKS</p>	<p>IMPROVE LINKAGES THAT HELP STUDENTS ENGAGE IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES THROUGH BETTER SCHOOL PLANNING AND IMPROVED ENGAGEMENT WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES, AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEES</p>

These targets are set based on available metrics but we aim to continue to refine our capacity to measure programmes with new indicators.

## Our goals

In order to achieve the targets we have set, and building on the five key goals set out in the Action Plan for Education 2016-2019, the Key Goals we have set ourselves in this DEIS Plan are:



There is a consistent emphasis in international research on educational disadvantage on the importance of early intervention, and the strong effects of intensive early intervention on medium and long-term outcomes.

Interventions in other countries to address educational disadvantage fall broadly into three categories, intensive programmes in early childhood education, measures designed to improve academic achievement, including class size and literacy programmes and compensatory or targeted funding for disadvantaged schools and areas. The DEIS School Support Programme has adopted a similar approach with an emphasis on supporting schools in the delivery of literacy and numeracy programmes and providing additional core funding, together with resourcing smaller classes for junior pupils in the most disadvantaged schools. There has been a particular emphasis in the Irish context on the adoption of a whole school approach, which is recognised internationally, to enable schools respond to new and complex challenges linked to increasing diversity in society. This involves the entire school community (school Principals, teaching and non-teaching staff, learners, parents and families) in a cohesive, collective and collaborative engagement with external stakeholders and the community at large to effect better outcomes for all.

Research has consistently pointed to education as a shared responsibility between parents and the school. In the Irish context, unlike other jurisdictions, parents have constitutional and legislative recognition as the first educators of their children with a critical role in their children's educational journey. The success of Ireland's Home School Community Liaison scheme, which promotes parental involvement through empowerment, to support their children's education, has seen it recognised as an innovative measure in other jurisdictions.

The DEIS Plan identifies more than 100 actions in support of the goals we have identified. These actions will ensure that the targets we have set will be achieved and learners most at risk of disadvantage will experience improved outcomes.

Those actions include the following:

- School leaders and teachers in DEIS schools will be prioritised for accessing professional leadership training, preparation courses for newly appointed principals, mentoring and coaching courses
- All post-primary schools participating in the School Support Programme will have access to a dedicated career guidance counsellor
- The connections between pre-schools and primary schools in communities will be strengthened
- Schools will be asked, in the annual review of their School Plan, to set specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time specific targets, including targets for literacy and numeracy, CPD and leadership and to evaluate these annually
- A pilot approach to identify effective interventions and explore how these and further creativity around teaching and learning, and the delivery of other supports have made effective use of the resources available to schools to achieve good educational outcomes will be adopted
- A new School Excellence Fund will be established, which will be supported by a pilot DEIS Development Unit, to support the implementation of new interventions and help broker the necessary resources from the various support agencies
- Operation of a Book Rental Scheme will become a mandatory requirement for schools participating in the School Support Programme by September 2017
- Greater prioritisation of NEPS service to DEIS schools
- Education and Training Boards will establish formal outreach arrangements with DEIS schools to encourage access through its existing education pathways
- Learning from ABC programmes will be incorporated into current teaching, learning and other supports in schools
- The Schools Business Partnership will be expanded to cater for new schools included in the School Support Programme

## The Plan

The DEIS Plan presents an ambitious set of objectives and actions to support children who are at greatest risk of educational disadvantage; and introduces actions to support:

- **A new methodology for the identification of schools**  
Improved centrally held data means that we now have a better way of identifying schools that is more responsive to demographic and other changes. It is now possible to move away from the quite rigid and inflexible system for identification of schools and resource allocation that has operated to date.
- **A more effective system of resource allocation to ensure that resources are matched to identified educational need in schools**  
Improved data also means that we can more closely match resources to need, ensuring that those in greatest need receive suitable supports for the appropriate length of time. Findings from the evaluation of the DEIS programme indicate that while the gap between DEIS and non-DEIS schools is narrowing, overall achievement in reading and maths, particularly in Band 1 schools, remains below that in other schools. This tells us that we need to introduce further targeted measures to help to reduce that gap. We also know that the impact of socio-economic factors on educational outcomes can be different between urban and rural settings and we need to take account of that.
- **Better interdepartmental and inter-agency working to achieve more effective delivery of services in and around schools**  
There are a range of state agencies and state-funded Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in and around schools to support those at risk of educational disadvantage. Improved arrangements for interagency working and collaboration mean that these supports can be more effective. Accordingly actions aimed at improving the school readiness of pre-school children, increasing the effectiveness of behavioural and therapeutic supports and integrating services that support school attendance, retention and progression are included.
- **A pilot approach to introducing measures which have been shown to work well in improving educational outcomes**  
Some excellent practice in teaching and learning has been developed in recent years, both in DEIS schools and in the wider education community. We want to support the embedding of good practice whilst also encouraging further innovation and creativity by schools in pursuit of improved outcomes for their students. In particular we want to encourage schools to work collaboratively with other schools in clusters and networks to encourage peer learning and sharing of experience.
- **A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to gather better information on school performance**  
We need to gather information on educational practice and outcomes in individual schools to inform our decisions about resource allocation and future policy direction on educational disadvantage. We also need to feed this information back to the school system and to service providers to help them to improve performance.

This document is the culmination of more than 18 months of consultation and discourse with education partners and other stakeholders to ensure that future delivery of interventions is fully informed by the practical experience of teachers, parents, students and non-governmental organisations working on behalf of children at risk of educational disadvantage and their families.

It is evident from these consultations and discussions, that while the overall impact of supports under the DEIS Programme has been positive, we still do not know enough about what is happening in and around individual schools in terms of the effectiveness or impact of particular interventions. This limits our capacity to make informed decisions in terms of prioritising particular interventions and resource allocation generally.

To address these information and data deficits a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, which will gather information on, and assess all aspects of, a new School Support Programme (SSP) is required. A Pilot approach to implementing interventions in school clusters will allow us to more closely monitor innovative approaches and identify good practice.

Better information about what works well to improve school engagement and achieve better learning outcomes will allow us to more effectively support those most at risk and deal more equitably with schools in terms of resource allocation.

Improved communications are also required – in terms of the information made available by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) to schools, parents and other education partners, and in terms of how schools share information with each other.

## **The Policy Framework**

The following key Government policy documents are particularly relevant to tackling educational disadvantage and frame the context in which a New DEIS Plan is formulated:

### **(i) The Programme for a Partnership Government 2016**

The Programme for a Partnership Government 2016 recognises that *“Education is the key to giving every child an equal chance in life and our ambition is that every child has an opportunity to participate in creating and sharing new wealth for our country”*.

Specific Programme for Government commitments/actions related to educational disadvantage include:

- Publication of a new DEIS Plan within 12 months with particular focus on DEIS schools;
- Smaller classes, for junior and senior infants in particular, are proven to increase pupil achievement, especially for disadvantaged children;
- Publication of a new School Completion Strategy to further improve school completion rates;
- Increasing mandatory schooling to age 17;

- Improving school attendance monitoring systems to address poor attendance within some families;
- Improved transitions to work or further education for young school leavers;
- Establishing a new in-school speech and language service to support young children as part of a more integrated support system;
- Investment in additional resources in the National Educational Psychologists Service (NEPS) to ensure earlier intervention and access for young children and teenagers;
- Establishment of a new School Excellence Fund (SEF) to reward new approaches – with priority for proposals to tackle educational disadvantage.

## **(ii) The Action Plan for Education – 2016-2019**

Published in September 2016, the Action Plan for Education 2016-2019 sets out the strategic direction and goals of the Department of Education and Skills for the education and training system and has a strong focus on provision for disadvantaged students through harnessing education to break down barriers for groups at risk of exclusion.

The Plan sets out five high level Goals, one of which is to improve the progress of learners at risk of educational disadvantage and learners with special educational needs. The Plan notes that, while considerable progress has been made in advancing equity and equality, significant challenges remain. The publication of a new DEIS Plan is central to the provision of supports and resources to schools catering for concentrated levels of disadvantaged pupils. In addition to the commitment to publish a new DEIS Plan, actions directly related to tackling educational disadvantage include:

- Supporting the implementation of Aistear, the Early Years curricular Framework and Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Years Children’s Services;
- Supporting the development of the workforce within the early years sector;
- Implementing the national programme of Early Years Education-focussed Inspections (EYEI);
- Continuing to improve retention rates at second level in DEIS Schools;
- Improving performance in Literacy and Numeracy in DEIS schools;
- Roll out of the *Incredible Years Teacher Programme* and *FRIENDS* programmes to all DEIS schools as resources permit;
- Engaging directly with disadvantaged communities to promote the benefits of higher education – and specifically increasing the number of Travellers in higher education;
- Increasing participation in Initial Teacher Education by access target groups;
- Increasing financial supports for post-graduate students with a particular focus on those from low income households;
- Developing a cohesive life-course approach to tackling educational disadvantage, with a policy statement on interaction between measures to tackle educational disadvantage across the education continuum.

### **(iii) The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020 - Better Outcomes Brighter Futures (BOBF)**

Specific actions relating to educational disadvantage within the five national outcomes of BOBF include:

- The adoption of strategies to strengthen transitions through the educational system;
- Supporting the development of interdisciplinary and inter-professional training programmes which encourage leadership and collaboration for professionals working with children and young people across the range of service delivery;
- Building on existing good practice around clustering of schools to enable better access to educational supports and encourage greater connections between schools, and community and State services;
- Addressing information-sharing issues across sectors and strengthening the integration of data systems, including, where appropriate, to support greater use of data to inform policy, planning and service development;
- Ensuring that resource allocation is based on current evidence of need and directed towards services and programmes that have evidence of effectiveness in improving outcomes;
- Strengthening the connections between pre-school and infant classes at primary level, including through the roll-out of Aistear and Síolta;
- Implementing strategies to improve school engagement and reduce suspensions, expulsions and early school leaving;
- Implementing the National Strategy on Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life (2011-2020);
- Providing opportunities for early school leavers to engage with further education and training;
- Strengthening social inclusion measures and re-invigorating efforts to improve educational outcomes among particular groups;
- Implementing and monitoring the National Travellers/Roma Integration Strategy, with a particular focus on the engagement of Roma in education.

Also relevant to the Review process is the life cycle approach in the **National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, 2007-2016** and the European Commission's Recommendation on 'Investing in Children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage', as part of the Social Investment Package.

#### **What has already been achieved under DEIS**

This DEIS Plan is about building on what has already been achieved by schools since the DEIS – Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools - Programme was first introduced in 2005.

Overall rates of literacy and numeracy, school retention, and progression to further and higher education have increased for pupils in DEIS schools. Innovations under DEIS, such as school planning, have paved the way for planning and self-evaluation structures in the wider

school community. Our objective is to build on these and other positive elements of the programme to both encourage and challenge schools towards further improvement.

Both the Educational Research Centre (ERC) and the DES Inspectorate have conducted evaluations of aspects of the DEIS programme and the findings of this work are contained in a series of reports published since 2009.

There is clear evidence from research undertaken to date that the DEIS programme is having a positive effect on tackling educational disadvantage.

- Research carried out by the ERC in DEIS urban primary schools in 2007, 2010 and 2013 showed consistent overall improvement in both the mathematics and reading levels of pupils.
- Assessments of reading and mathematics performance in DEIS rural primary schools show that students in these schools in some cases perform better than rural non-DEIS schools and at the same level as their counterparts in urban non-DEIS schools.
- ERC evaluation of the impact DEIS at post-primary level also show encouraging trends in terms of both attainment and pupil retention. There is a significant upward trend from 2009 onwards in overall attainment levels in both English and Mathematics at Junior Cert level.
- Research carried out by the DES Inspectorate shows that the majority of schools are now engaging in effective planning for improvement. Most primary schools engage in effective planning for improvement in relation to DEIS themes such as attendance, literacy, numeracy and partnership with parents. Most post-primary schools engage in effective planning in relation to attendance, retention and progression, literacy and partnership with parents. Where schools have taken a whole-school, evidence-based approach to improving literacy, especially at primary level, they report improvements in pupil attainment levels.
- The DES *Retention Rates of Pupils in Second Level Schools 2009 Entry Cohort* (July 2016) shows that the improvement in DEIS schools' retention rates to Leaving Certificate has in recent years, been significantly higher than the overall improvements nationally – up from 68.2 % in 2001 to 82.7% in 2016. (The national equivalents are 81% and 90%). The corresponding rates at Junior Certificate Level are 94.3% for DEIS schools, against a national norm of 96.7%.

However, the research also shows that overall performance in DEIS schools continues to remain below the national average indicating that continued supports are required to maintain and build on the gains made. In doing this, we will focus on schools with the greatest concentration of students at risk of disadvantage.

The rationale for allocating resources and supports based on a schools' level of concentrated disadvantage is based on the existence of a 'multiplier effect', whereby students attending a school with a concentration of students from disadvantaged backgrounds have poorer



academic outcomes, even taking account of individual social background. Research by the ERC and the ESRI indicates a strong evidence base in the Irish context that the social class mix of a school matters, providing a rationale for prioritising supports for schools which cater for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Students in schools with high concentrations of peers from lower socio-economic background have lower achievement levels than those in schools with a more socially advantaged intake, all other factors being equal. There is strong evidence of such an effect in DEIS post-primary schools and in urban DEIS primary schools, especially Band 1.

## **DEIS Plan 2017 – Goals and Actions**

### **Goal 1 To implement a more robust and responsive Assessment Framework for identification of Schools and effective resource allocation**

#### **Identification of Schools**

Two separate approaches were adopted in the 2005 process for identifying schools, due to the lack of sufficient centrally held data available at that time. Developments in both Central Statistics Office (CSO) and DES centrally held data mean that it is now possible to develop a more robust system that is sufficiently flexible to cater for both expected and unexpected changes to the profiles of individual schools. An identification process, which uses CSO Small Area data as represented in the Haase Pratschke Index of Deprivation (HP Index) combined with DES Primary and Post Primary data supplied by schools, will be used as the basis for a new Assessment Framework for the identification of schools and to assist with resource allocation.

The HP Index is increasingly used by Government Departments and Agencies to more effectively allocate resources – e.g. Departments of Health, and Children and Youth Affairs, Pobal, Tusla, BIM, LEADER and RAPID Programmes, Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) and Local and Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Forces. It is considered the most appropriate method for identifying individual schools in terms of the socio-economic demographic of their pupil cohorts in the context of additional resource allocation to mitigate educational disadvantage. In particular, it will address the current inflexibility in the system where it has not been possible to undertake an ongoing assessment of schools to cater for changing demographics and other factors.

A particular strength of the new methodology is that all schools can be assessed using independent data, and schools will not need to apply for assessment as the information required is already available to the DES.

The responsiveness of this methodology means that the following frequency of application is possible:

- An initial identification process to be applied to all recognised primary and post primary schools;
- Thereafter an annual updating of the database in terms of DES POD and PPOD data collection. This will allow for adjustments, if required, where a school's profile undergoes significant demographic change;
- A 5-yearly update, as required, in line with the development of the HP Index following each National Census of Population;
- Newly established/amalgamated schools can be assessed prior to establishment/amalgamation on the basis of enrolment data.

Engagement with some individual schools will be necessary where factors such as location, school size, and over-representation of particular groups are relevant. There will also be a

verification process with which schools can engage to ensure the accuracy of the data being used. It is also proposed to engage directly with education partners and other stakeholders, including the research community, to communicate and discuss the new identification methodology.

On completion of the first application of the new identification methodology, arrangements will be made for independent validation and peer review. This new methodology for the identification of schools will be a key element of the Plan's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and, as such, will be subject to ongoing evaluation to ensure that it is using those variables which best predict the risk of educational disadvantage. In order to support best practice in the application of the identification and resource allocation processes, the Technical Group established during the DEIS Review Process will continue in existence, supplemented as necessary by additional research and data expertise.

While this new methodology is considered to be a significant improvement on the system used in 2005 in terms of assessing socio-economic disadvantage, it is acknowledged that further work will be required to refine its application in terms of resource allocation. The staged approach to resource allocation will facilitate the continuing analysis required to consider any refinements that may be required to improve its accuracy.

## Resource Allocation

Improved DES data on the socio economic demographic of schools will have an impact not only on the assessment of schools for inclusion in the programme, but also on the scaling of particular resources to meet specific identified needs. The proposed new assessment process will also inform resource allocation in the context of location (urban/rural) school size, over-representation of particular groups such as Travellers and pupils in need of English as an Additional Language (EAL) provision. Information available to the Department on overall resources available to individual schools, including those funded by other Departments and agencies, will be taken into account. This means that, unlike the current Programme where it is not possible to adjust the range or level of supports to schools to reflect demographic and other changes that impact on the risk of educational disadvantage, it will now be possible to better target the particular identified needs of schools on an ongoing basis.

Budget 2017 allocated €5m in additional funding to the current DEIS allocation of €97m for 2017 – equivalent to a full year value of €15m. This level of funding will allow for new schools to participate in a renewed School Support Programme through a gradual allocation of support as well as the creation of a number of pilot projects for school clusters to test effective interventions and provide evidence for future resourcing.

Our plan is based on the premise that if we are to have the maximum possible impact on providing opportunities for students most at risk of disadvantage, then our extra resources must be targeted as closely as possible at the students with the greatest level of need.

The new model is identifying that there are a number of schools in disadvantaged areas, not currently within DEIS, whose level of disadvantage is significantly higher than many schools

already in DEIS, and we are moving as a first step to include those schools within the Schools Support Programme.

The implementation of the new objective data-based model of identifying levels of disadvantage within school populations, as described in this plan, will be followed by a further programme of work to create a more dynamic model where levels of resource more accurately follow the levels of need identified by that model.

In order to achieve that, the following programme of work will be carried out, in consultation with stakeholders:

- The model will be further refined and, for both financial and logistical reasons, the following incremental phased approach to the deployment of resources will be implemented:
  - In early 2017 all schools across the primary and post primary sectors will be assessed in terms of their socio-economic demographic using the new Assessment Framework;
  - From September 2017, supports under the School Support Programme will be extended on a phased basis to those schools not already in receipt of these supports and who are identified as having the highest concentrations of pupils at greatest risk of educational disadvantage;
  - Further analysis will be conducted to examine other variables known to be strong predictors of educational disadvantage in the context of resource allocation.
- Work will be carried out to consider designing a more tailored system of resource allocation, within which there are more grades of disadvantage identified and resources allocated accordingly in response to the needs of individual schools;
- A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will be implemented, to improve transparency and to determine which interventions are having the greatest impact in terms of delivering better outcomes for learners;
- A review will be carried out at the end of the 2017/2018 academic year to examine how the new model of allocating resources has operated;
- The aim will be that, following this work, in 2018 the new model of resource allocation will be finalised, the objective of which will be to more closely match resources with identified needs in individual schools.

In delivering on this, we must be conscious that there are ongoing changes in demographics which may be more marked in some areas than others. Populations in some areas have changed considerably since the list of the current schools included within DEIS were evaluated. 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.

It is intended that the incremental approach to the introduction of elements of a new DEIS Plan will also facilitate the alignment of additional teaching resources to schools – including those currently allocated for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and DEIS purposes.

The database created to support the assessment model will be expanded to include a range of information in relation to individual schools in terms of both DES supports and those provided by other Departments and Agencies, as well as NGOs and other organisations in receipt of State funding.

The key message from the foregoing is that that we are moving away from the quite rigid and inflexible system for identification of schools and resource allocation that has operated to date. In future, schools supported under the DEIS School Support Programme will see greater movement in the range and level of supports they receive as these are matched to identified need within their pupil cohorts.

Details of schools currently participating in the School Support Programme are published on the DES website at - <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/DEIS-Delivering-Equality-of-Opportunity-in-Schools/>. These listings will be updated regularly to take account of future changes.

At present, 825 schools participate in the programme (640 Primary and 185 Post Primary), serving 170,000 pupils. The current cost of the Programme to the DES is €97.62 million. This is used to improve pupil teacher ratio in classes, supply additional funding and provide a Home School Community Liaison service to those schools. Additional expenditure by the Departments of Social Protection and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs brings total overall expenditure on additional supports to schools to address educational disadvantage to some €161 million. On the basis of current budget allocations, in 2018 some €112 million will be available for additional funding, teaching resources and other supports to DEIS schools.

Details of the School Support Programme are at [Appendix 1 - Supports provided under the DEIS School Support Programme\\*](#).

## Goal 1

<b>Goal 1.1 – Application of new Assessment Framework</b>			
No.	Action	Timelines	Delivered By
1	Application of new identification model to all schools to conduct a socio-economic profile of pupil cohorts.	Q1 2017	DES
2	Identification of schools with the highest concentrations of pupils at greatest risk of educational disadvantage.	Q1 2017	DES
<b>Goal 1.2 – Application of new DEIS Resource Allocation Model</b>			
3	Commence extension of SSP supports to those schools not already in receipt of such supports and who are identified as having the highest concentrations of pupils at greatest risk of disadvantage.	Q3 2017	DES
4	New resource allocation model developed for application to all SSP schools to include a more tailored system of resource allocation, within which there are more grades of disadvantage identified and resources allocated accordingly in response to the needs of individual schools.	Q1 2018	DES
5	Conduct further analysis to examine other variables known to be strong predictors of educational disadvantage in the context of resource allocation.	Q2 2017	DES, ERC, education partners, Tusla

<b>Goal 1.3 – Updating of identification methodology</b>			
6	Appointment of a specific DES data analytics function to support the identification and resource allocation processes, and to meet ongoing SIU and Inspectorate data analysis needs in the context of a new Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.	Q1 2017	DES
7	Update HP Index to take account of Census 2016 SAP data.	5-yearly to coincide with CSO data release schedule	DES
8	Update POD/PPOD data.	Annually	DES

## Goal 2 To improve the learning experience and outcomes of pupils in DEIS schools

### Supports for schools

Supports to schools participating in the School Support Programme come in many forms – additional financial assistance, enhanced grant payments, additional teaching resources, psychological and behavioural supports, access to Home School Community Liaison and School Completion programmes and priority access to School Meals Schemes. The objective of all of these supports is to improve teaching and learning outcomes in DEIS schools so that children and young people at greatest risk of educational disadvantage can access, participate and benefit from education.

The DEIS Review Process identified a number of key areas for improvement in terms of targeted supports for DEIS schools:

- Supporting Good Practice and Innovation – the need to support the embedding of good practice whilst encouraging innovation and creativity by schools;
- School Planning – renewed focus on target and goal setting linking deployment of additional resources to outputs and outcomes;
- School Climate – a renewed focus on implementation of DES Guidance on anti-bullying and codes of behaviour;
- Supporting transitions across the education continuum – from pre-school, where school-readiness is a key stage, through to further and higher education and training;
- Literacy and Numeracy supports – Renewed effort under the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy to address achievement levels in DEIS schools;
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) – Increase current level of service to enhance the provision of the full continuum of support to pupils and teachers in SSP schools;
- Behavioural Supports – under the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and planned Inclusion Support Service to cover both Primary and Post Primary Schools;
- Supporting vulnerable groups – a renewed focus on measures to improve attendance, participation and retention of travellers, Roma and other students at particular risk of poor engagement with education and early school leaving;

It is the intention of this Plan to deliver changes in a systematic way which would deliver on these areas of improvement year by year, in a process which engages stakeholders in consultation and evaluates the impact of initiatives being taken.

Key areas identified for improved cross-sectoral working are:

- **Early Years** – where improved engagement between pre-school and DEIS school settings will be encouraged;



- **Prevention & Early Intervention** – where there is scope to mainstream the learning from the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme (PEIP) and ABC Programme;
- **Educational Welfare Services** – where the development of an integrated service delivery model will benefit both Tusla and schools;
- **Local Service Delivery** – where there is significant scope to improve service delivery to schools through cooperation between e.g. Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), Children and Young People’s Services Committees (CYPSCs), School Completion Projects (SCPs), Prevention Partnership and Family Support (PPFS), Meitheal, Youth Services;
- **In-School Speech and Language Therapy** – where delivery on this key Programme for Government commitment will help significantly with oral language skills and overall learning outcomes;
- **School Meals** – where engagement between Tusla and the Departments of Social Protection; Children and Youth Affairs; Health; Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government; and Education and Skills will improve future delivery of the School Meals schemes.

## Supporting Literacy and Numeracy

National policies such as *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People* (2014-2020) have recognised developing good literacy and numeracy skills, including digital literacy skills and oral language skills, as fundamental to the life chances of each individual and essential to the quality and equity of society. The DEIS School Support Programme already includes a range of measures to support Literacy and Numeracy which have contributed to the overall improvements in this area to date.

Findings from the evaluation of the DEIS programme indicate that while the gap between DEIS and non-DEIS schools is narrowing, overall achievement in reading and maths, particularly in Band 1 schools, remains below that in other schools. The Performance Report from the National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics (NAERM ), 2014 highlighted the gap that exists between DEIS urban Band 1 schools and pupils in other schools in both reading and maths. Performance in rural DEIS schools is about the same as the national average, while performance in DEIS Band 2 primary schools has improved substantially according to the 2014 National Assessments.

All schools are required to monitor the progress they are making on the goals they have set for improving literacy and numeracy as part of their SSE process. The Interim Review of the National Strategy on Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life has prepared a set of DEIS specific targets for literacy and numeracy for schools catering for the highest concentrations of pupils at greatest risk of educational disadvantage, to maintain focus on reducing the gap between DEIS and non-DEIS schools. Schools should take account of these targets in keeping a focus on improving literacy and numeracy, informed by best practice.

## Goal 2

<b>Goal 2.1 – Supporting Literacy and Numeracy</b>			
No.	Action	Timelines	Delivered By
9	Implementation of actions arising from the Interim Review of the National Strategy on Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020 to commence in all SSP Schools.	Q3 2017	DES
10	In accordance with School Self Evaluation Guidelines, SSP schools should, in the next review of their School Plan, set specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time specific targets, including targets for literacy and numeracy, CPD, leadership, attention, participation and retention, and to evaluate them annually.	Q4 2017	Schools
11	Implementation of the National Strategy on Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020 and its Interim Review Report 2017 in DEIS schools to be a particular focus of the DEIS/SSP Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.	Q3 2017	DES
12	Implementation of DEIS-specific targets developed in the context of the National Strategy on Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020 to be supported by delivery of appropriate professional development supports for teachers.	Q4 2017	DES
13	Schools should ensure that deployment of additional Literacy and Numeracy programmes are considered on the basis of identified need and alignment with DES policy and practice on teaching and learning in this area.	Q4 2017	Schools
14	Schools to seek to build effective working relationships with parents and communities to support learning and to build opportunities for cross-learning to benefit all SSP schools.	Q4 2017	Schools

## Supporting children whose first language is not English or Irish

The needs of ‘English as an Additional Language’ (EAL) students are the subject of specific Action in the National Strategy: Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life. Findings from both NAERM 2014 and PISA 2015 show that these students perform significantly lower than other pupils in English reading. Supports for this group are particularly important in the context of DEIS schools as they cater for large numbers of children for whom English or Irish is not their first language. As in other areas, improved data is required to help to ensure that the educational needs of these pupils are being met.

<b>Goal 2.2 – Supporting Integration and English as an Additional Language</b>			
No.	Action	Timelines	Delivered By
15	EAL provision at second level be reviewed with a view to establishing current identified educational need, particularly in relation to reading literacy.	Q4 2017	DES
16	Arrangements to be made for the collection of data on EAL inputs, outputs and outcomes in all schools, with particular emphasis on provision in schools with the highest concentrations of pupils from disadvantaged communities to establish whether the needs of pupils are being met.	Q4 2017	DES

## Financial supports

Since 2005, additional funding has been made available to schools participating in the SSP to support their pupils in terms of their additional educational needs. It is also the case that these schools do not have the same capacity to fund-raise, either from parents, or in their local communities. It is proposed to continue supporting schools on this basis for the time being, alongside a renewed focus on how this funding can be more effectively deployed to maximise their impact.

<b>Goal 2.3 – Financial Supports</b>			
No.	Action	Timelines	Delivered By
17	Allocate grant aid to schools participating in the SSP.	Annually	DES

18	Streamline payments to schools – future additional funding to SSP schools to be integrated with overall capitation grant payments to schools.	Q4 2017	DES
19	Updated guidelines to be issued to schools in relation to appropriate use of additional funds provided under the SSP – to ensure that inputs are linked to outputs and outcomes and to generate data on resource allocation.	Q3 2017	DES
20	Operation of a Book Rental Scheme to be a mandatory requirement for schools participating in the SSP.	Q3 2017	DES
21	Mechanisms to assess the impact of the implementation of the Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020 on schools with concentrated levels of disadvantage will be developed in the context of the requirement of the Digital Strategy to evaluate ICT integration at School Level. These will be reported on under the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.	Q4 2020	DES

## Supporting Good Practice and Innovation

We know from evaluation of the programme to date that good learning outcomes have been achieved through a range of good practice including networking of DEIS schools, imaginative programmes to improve parental engagements and engagement with local businesses and other organisations within communities. The growth in early years provision and the involvement of DEIS schools in collaborations with PEIP, ABC and other initiatives, together with the overall experience of implementing the DEIS SSP since 2006, has identified a range of early interventions which can have a significant impact on school readiness and successful progressions for pupils most at risk of educational disadvantage.

It is proposed to adopt a pilot approach to identify effective interventions and explore how these and further creativity around teaching and learning and the delivery of other supports have made effective use of the resources available to schools to achieve good educational outcomes.

Areas to be considered for piloting include:

- Leveraging evidence-informed good practice of what interventions are effective in meeting the needs of students at risk of educational disadvantage;
- Developing and building on relationships with local community organisations and businesses to support the work of schools, including before and after school provision

- Encouraging strategic clustering of small groups of schools in acutely disadvantaged areas;
- Connecting schools with the supports and resources that are tailored to their needs, through individualised brokerage and constructive challenging;
- Supporting schools to continuously improve the service they provide to their students
- Enhancing school leadership and better equipping teachers in meeting the needs of students from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- Enhancing teaching capacity in meeting the needs of students who experience challenges in mental health and wellbeing;
- Improving parental engagement and participation in student learning;
- Supporting transitions across the education continuum;

Priority will be given to proposals from schools serving the most disadvantaged communities in inner city areas.

It is intended that pilot programmes will be delivered through a School Excellence Fund (SEF), which is a Programme for a Partnership Government commitment to be actioned under the DEIS Plan, designed to support new approaches to delivering improved learning outcomes.

The SEF is an innovation of the Department of Education and Skills, which will enable schools to apply for funding to implement innovative programmes, which are context-specific and aimed at improving learning outcomes. Access to the SEF is designed to ensure that some of the barriers frequently cited by school personnel as being impediments to improvements can be removed.

In establishing the SEF, the DES aims to both encourage and reward innovative practice in schools by helping to remove some of the barriers that schools report as being inhibitors of progress. It also aims to address the key recommendations made in the reports *Looking at Action Planning for Improvement in DEIS Primary Schools* (Department of Education and Skills, 2015), *Looking at Action Planning for Improvement in DEIS Post-Primary Schools* (Department of Education and Skills, 2015) and in the *Report on the Evaluation of DEIS at Second-Level* (Education Research Centre, 2014). These include the need to:

- Build capacity in DEIS schools for improvement in planning, target setting and self-evaluation
- Build school leadership capacity
- Address specific DEIS themes where weaknesses persist
- Improve co-ordination and accountability in DEIS schools

The Department will also want to learn from schools' experiences of participating in the initiative. For example, enabling schools to adopt more creative and innovative approaches to tackling educational disadvantage will, in turn, enable the identification of better and more effective ways to achieve improved outcomes for young people.

The overarching aim of the initiative is to improve learning outcomes for young people. The initiative is also being established to challenge schools to:

- Promote innovation by adopting new evidence-based approaches to tackling under-performance in literacy and in the STEM subjects in DEIS schools
- Develop teacher subject-knowledge and subject-specific teaching methods at primary level that *inter alia* support the transition to second-level
- Develop communities of good practice by encouraging schools to develop effective networks and partnerships which will support teacher collaboration within sectors and cross-sectorally
- Improve teacher confidence by demonstrably improving their competence and effectiveness
- Improve learner outcomes in both the immediate content and in terms of long-term educational attainment and outcomes
- Improve learner participation in the shaping and development of their experience, as well as in terms of more learner-centred education
- Work to ensure that students' expectations are justified, attainable and enabling for them to meet their potential
- Document and share the innovations with other schools facing similar challenges to foster wider adoption of the most successful approaches.

The School Excellence Fund is specifically targeted at schools within the DEIS scheme because of the priority attaching to increasing student attainment within these schools.

Proposals for supports under the SEF, which are currently in development, anticipate that clusters of schools (including pre-schools) spread across the regions will be invited to trial implementation of the initiative. Schools participating in the programme will be involved in ongoing engagement with the DES Inspectorate over the course of the pilot phase.

Clusters of schools identified by the Inspectorate will be invited to submit applications which will detail how they intend to work innovatively and creatively to improve outcomes for their students. These clusters will reflect the range of school type, size and location. The following criteria will be used to identify the schools to participate in the project:

- The overall quality and potential impact of the plan.
- The demonstrated capacity of the schools to deliver on the project outcomes.
- The extent to which the project actions are innovative.

Application of the School Excellence Fund will be supported by a pilot DEIS Development Unit to support the implementation of new interventions and help broker the necessary resources from the various support agencies.

Projects should focus on research-based and evidence-based practice in teaching and learning to produce significant improvements in student outcomes. The establishment of networking initiatives has been shown to support schools in effecting improvement. Schools will be encouraged to use existing networks or to create new networks, with a particular focus on linking with schools with a track record of excellence, on establishing links between primary and post-primary schools, and where appropriate, including partnerships with third-level specialists in education and/or relevant industry or community groups. Examples of networking initiatives may include:

- Clusters of schools working collaboratively as project partners to identify particular problems and challenges.
- Working collaboratively to identify solutions to the problems, taking account of the best assessment practices and the best teaching practices.

The scale of the initial phase of the pilot programme will be determined by the number of proposals approved for implementation, and is expected to increase over time. Funding will be available from within the overall DEIS envelope for this element of the SSP. The ambition is to grow this element over time as the number of school clusters engaging with this initiative expand and the evidence from effective interventions is harnessed and disseminated for system wide improvements in learning outcomes.

The School Excellence Fund initiative will also include a research and evaluation component that will involve schools documenting and learning from their efforts and the outcomes of their work and involvement with the Department's Inspectorate. The ultimate purpose of the action research will be to disseminate good practice to other schools. Proposals for SEF funding that involve linkages between schools and academic institutions that can support action research by the schools involved will be encouraged.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, which will accompany this Plan, will have a particular focus on the implementation and outcomes of programmes and other interventions piloted by schools supported by the School Excellence Fund. Each project chosen during the pilot phase of the project will be required to engage periodically with the inspectorate. Inspectors will provide support, advice and challenge to projects by engaging in co-professional dialogue with key personnel in the schools. It is envisaged that this engagement will involve at least two visits from the Inspectorate during the course of each school year.

Mindful of the need for schools to focus their attention on seeking improvements in practice, paperwork will be kept to a minimum. Each cluster of schools will be required, however, to submit succinct annual progress reports. The submission of annual progress reports will trigger continued funding for the following year up to the duration of the project.

Schools will be invited to collect qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data may include questionnaire responses, focus group sessions and interviews with teachers to monitor changes in their knowledge, skills and attitudes. Teachers may also maintain journals/diaries of the project's progress to promote reflective learning. Quantitative data

may include results from standardised tests, teacher-designed tests and tasks and other assessment methods.



<b>Goal 2.4 – Supporting Good Practice, Innovation and Creativity</b>			
No.	Action	Timelines	Delivered By
22	Finalise proposals for the School Excellence Fund to support innovative practice and creativity in teaching and learning, to include the establishment of a dedicated DES resource to support schools through constructive challenging and individualised brokerage.	Q1 2017	DES
23	Identify first tranche of clusters of SSP schools, with partnering external bodies where practicable, to participate in initial trial having regard to those areas of greatest challenge.	Q2 2017	DES
24	Approve proposals from schools, which will have a tangible impact on children’s experience in schools, and commence initial trial of pilot in first group of schools.	Q3 2017	DES
25	Commence support/advisory services to schools in relation to the School Excellence Fund.	Q3 2017	DES
26	Establish a DEIS Development Unit to support the development and implementation of innovative practice.	Q3 2017	DES

### **Additional Teaching Resources**

While the allocation of additional teaching resources to DEIS primary schools with the highest concentrations of children at greatest risk of educational disadvantage has served to improve learning outcomes, achievement levels in these schools are still low and warrant a continuation of current supports.

Supports provided under the new Model for Allocating of Teaching Resources to support students with Special Educational Needs includes an allocation of an additional 900 teaching posts throughout the school system. The principal aim of the new model is to provide a better, fairer and more equitable means of allocating resources to schools to support children with Special Educational Needs and will benefit pupils in DEIS schools who are experiencing learning difficulties.

However, there is also a need to take a closer look at current class size in terms of the support it offers, particularly in relation to exemplars of good practice in this area.

<b>Goal 2.5 – Additional Teaching Resources</b>			
No.	Action	Timelines	Delivered By
27	Evaluation of the level of teaching resources for schools participating in the SSP to be undertaken within the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to inform future policy in this area.	Q1 2018	DES
28	Pending the evaluation of the level of teaching resources in schools, primary schools supporting the greatest concentrations of pupils with the highest risk educational disadvantage will implement a staffing schedule to accommodate class sizes of 20:1 (junior classes); 24:1 (senior school).	Annually	Schools DES
29	Teacher allocation for urban primary schools supporting the highest levels of pupils at risk of educational disadvantage to be reviewed in context of improved school data and development of SEN Resource Allocation Model.	Q2 2018	DES
30	Allocation of Administrative Principal to urban primary schools with the highest concentrations of pupils from disadvantaged communities on a lower pupil enrolment threshold than those which apply in primary schools generally to be kept under review in context of improved school data.	Annually	DES

### **Goal 3 To improve the capacity of school leaders and teachers to engage, plan and deploy resources to their best advantage**

#### **Teachers as leaders of teaching and learning**

In the Action Plan for Education 2016 – 2019, it is acknowledged that success in education is built inter alia on quality of leadership and ingenuity in teaching. It further acknowledges that Ireland is fortunate to attract high calibre people to the fields of teaching and training who deliver to high standards. However, as the Action Plan points out, as new challenges place new demands on the education and training system, we must ensure that we have the capacity to develop and adopt best practices.

Therefore, the DEIS Plan includes a key goal to support those delivering education services to continuously improve and identifies a number of key actions to progress this goal, including:

- Developing leadership capacity
- Strengthening teaching and learning
- Promoting innovation
- Delivering quality initial teacher education and continuous professional development.

These areas of activity are particularly important in the context of educational disadvantage and the challenges facing schools catering for significant concentrations of pupils at risk of poor learning outcomes. It will also be important to ensure that the additional resources available to school leaders and teachers are effectively deployed to improve outcomes for all learners. These resources and their outcomes will be documented in school planning and self-evaluation processes which in turn will feed into the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework being developed to support this Plan.

This DEIS Plan sets out the Department's objectives of:

- Encouraging schools participating in SSP to provide placements for trainee teachers
- Continuing to prioritise schools participating in the SSP for professional development support for teachers
- Prioritising access for Principals in schools supported by the SSP to leadership training and other relevant courses approved by the Centre for School Leadership
- Considering the viability for a sabbatical scheme for teachers in SSP schools, as resources permit

### Goal 3

<b>Goal 3.1 – Supporting Initial Teacher Education &amp; Professional Development</b>			
No.	Action	Timelines	Delivered By
31	Initial teacher education programmes to place particular emphasis on educational disadvantage so that future teachers will better understand the factors which can impact on teaching and learning.	Q 4 2018	DES
32	Schools participating in the SSP to be encouraged to provide placements for trainee teachers and should report on this activity under the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.	Annually	Schools
33	The national induction programme for all newly qualified teachers, to include specific elements to support teachers in schools participating in the SSP.	Q3 2018	DES
34	PDST to continue to prioritise professional development support for teachers in schools participating in the SSP, including targeted support for a. new schools participating in the SSP, and b. teachers in DEIS schools to support the specific progress targets for these schools in the Interim Review of the National Strategy on Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life.	Q1 2018	DES
<b>Goal 3.2 – Supporting School Leadership</b>			
35	Priority to be given by the Centre for School Leadership (CSL) and PDST to Principals and teachers from schools supported under the SSP in accessing professional leadership training, preparation courses for newly appointed principals, mentoring and coaching courses. No. of places allocated to be reported	Q4 2017	DES, Centre for School Leadership

	by the CSL under the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.		
36	Planning and targets for such training should be set out in the School Plan.	Q4 2017	Schools
<b>Goal 3.3 – Supporting Teacher Retention in SSP Schools</b>			
37	Consideration to be given to the initiation of a sabbatical leave scheme for teachers in SSP schools, as resources permit.	Q3 2018	DES

### Supporting Successful Engagement with Education

One of the key findings of the ESRI *Report on Learning from the Evaluation of DEIS* is the importance of school climate and the need to ensure that schools provide an environment which is conducive to successful engagement with education. This is of particular importance when considering the factors that give rise to poor school attendance, poor concentration and engagement in class, and early school leaving. In addition to ensuring that DES guidance on the curriculum and on school policies is fully implemented, schools should also avail fully of the range of supports available under the SSP. This is particularly relevant in post primary schools where the structure for teaching and learning is different to that at primary level. A whole school approach is key to ensuring a positive school climate for the entire school community. This means that everyone, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents and pupils themselves, has a role to play.

<b>Goal 3.4 – To create a positive School Climate</b>			
No.	Action	Timelines	Delivered By
38	School Planning should include measures for the full engagement of all stakeholders in the creation and maintenance of a positive school climate – and successful initiatives should be reported under the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.	Q4 2017	Schools
39	Schools should adopt a whole school approach to teaching and learning, and to their engagement with other services in and around schools to maximise the support and encouragement given to pupils to fulfil their potential.	Q4 2017	Schools

## Promoting wellbeing

Fostering the personal development, health and well-being of learners and the wider school community helps to ensure that our children and young people develop resilience, have respect for diversity, learn to create and maintain supportive relationships and become active and responsible citizens in society. This is particularly important in DEIS schools which are known to have the highest levels of complexity of need among their student populations. Supporting wellbeing in DEIS schools is a particular focus of this Plan.

As part of our planned actions in this area, we will actively support and develop wellbeing initiatives to ensure that mental resilience and personal wellbeing are integral parts of the education and training system. In particular, we will increase the reach of the Incredible Years Teacher Programme and the Friends programme within DEIS schools and we will increase the capacity of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).

<b>Goal 3.5 – To promote Wellbeing</b>			
No.	Action	Timeline	Delivered By
40	SSP schools to strengthen links with the relevant support services to improve pupil and teacher wellbeing, in accordance with DES Wellbeing Guidelines for Schools.	Q4 2017	Schools
41	SSP schools to continue to provide a safe and supportive environment for staff members. It is crucial that staff members are supported in maintaining their personal health and well-being.	Q4 2017	Schools
42	SSP schools to include measures to improve wellbeing and engagement in positive community activities in their School Plan.	Q4 2018	Schools
43	All SSP post primary schools to implement the Junior Cycle wellbeing programme for students entering first year in September 2017.	Q3 2017	Schools
<b>Goal 3.6 – Provide an enhanced level of Educational Psychological Services for SSP Schools</b>			
44	Increase NEPS time allocation to SSP schools in accordance with NEPS plan developed for	Q4 2017	NEPS

	priority service delivery. This will enhance the supports to schools for the implementation of interventions at a preventive and early intervention level in addition to ensuring that those pupils with emerging and complex learning and emotional needs will have access to the support of an educational psychologist.		
45	Commence the appointment of an additional 10 educational psychologists for 2017.	Q2 2017	NEPS
46	Commence the roll-out of IY TCM and Friends Programmes to all DEIS schools, specifically deliver the IY TCM programme to 500 teachers in SSP schools in Q4 2017 and the Friends programmes to 400 teachers in Q4 2017.	Q4 2017	NEPS
47	Develop a model for substitution for NEPS training in the context of a pilot project in a single school cluster to inform future policy.	Q2 2018	NEPS
48	Expand the Student Support team project to an additional cluster of 20 SSP Post-Primary Schools.	Q4 2017	NEPS
49	Teacher substitution for NEPS training to be developed in the context of a pilot project in a single school cluster to inform future policy.	Q2 2017	NEPS, DES

### Promoting and supporting family literacy

Literacy and numeracy are fundamental skills in deriving benefit from education. They have a significant impact in the capacity to benefit from training and on gaining employment while community education empowers people to grow in confidence in their own employability and engage effectively with the labour market.

Supporting parents and family literacy is one of the 12 key elements of the Further Education Training Strategy. Actions on family literacy are being prioritised in 2016/17, including enhancing partnerships between schools and Further Education and Training to highlight opportunities for adult learners and a focus on family literacy in NALA's 2016/17 awareness campaign. Parents will also benefit from the broader implementation of the Strategy,

including a focus on more intensive provision and group engagement, improved initial assessment arrangements and a range of other developments.

The National Strategy: Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life also recognises the need to support parents in developing their children’s literacy and numeracy skills as part of everyday life.

The establishment of a collaborative approach for the provision of educational support and leisure reading materials between schools and public libraries is an objective of the *Public Library Strategy 2013-2017 Opportunities for All*. Libraries have a central role to play in supporting family literacy, providing a space where parents and children access free literacy and numeracy resources, including extensive digital resources.

These and other initiatives demonstrate how community and family learning can work as a bridge between home and formal education. The challenge is how to find ways of mainstreaming the learning from such initiatives to support the national effort for further improvement on literacy and numeracy.

<b>Goal 3.7 – To Promote and Support Family Literacy</b>			
No.	Action	Timelines	Delivered By
50	Adult and family Literacy service providers to formally engage with related support services (Home School Community Liaison (HSCL), SCP LCDCs and CYPSCs) to ensure that family literacy is fully supported and engagement with education is improved.	Q4 2017	DES Tusla SOLAS CYPSCs
51	Planning for engagement with parents in the context of family literacy services to be included in the School Plan and Tusla HSCL service planning.	Q4 2017	Schools Tusla DES
52	Data on family literacy service inputs, outputs and outcomes to be collected and reported under the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.	Q1 2018	Schools Tusla



## Supporting Successful Transitions

There are a number of key transitions for learners as they move across the education continuum:

- From home to pre-school setting
- From pre-school to the junior year of primary school
- From junior to senior classes at primary level
- From primary school to post primary school
- From junior to senior cycle within post primary school
- From post primary school to further and higher education and the world of work.

The success or otherwise of these transitions is determined by the capacity of children and young people, and their families to cope with the sometimes significant change involved and by the level and range of supports available to help them on this journey. Parents with social, cultural and economic capital can mobilise these assets to help their children whereas parents and children from poorer socio-economic backgrounds are not as well equipped. In DEIS schools, strong transfer programmes and targeted engagement with parents from groups with a traditionally low level of engagement with education are key to achieving successful transitions. The key actors in supporting this process are: professionals in early years and school settings, HSCL Coordinators, SCP Project Coordinators and access officers from further and higher education institutions.

<b>Goal 3.8 – Supporting Successful Transitions</b>			
No.	Action	Timelines	Delivered By
53	School Plans to include arrangements to support successful transitions at key stages throughout the education continuum (Early Years to Primary; Primary to Post-Primary; Post-Primary to Further and Higher Education).	Q4 2017	Schools
54	All post primary schools participating in the SSP will have access to a dedicated career guidance counsellor.	Q4 2017	DES
55	School Plan to provide for formal engagement between guidance counsellors, HSCL coordinators and Further Education and Higher Education access officers to support successful transitions.	Q4 2018	Schools, HSCL Coordinator and Access Officers

56	Formal arrangements to be put in place for engagement between the key actors in supporting transitions and access to Further and Higher Education and Training to ensure pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are fully supported.	Q2 2018	HSCCL coordinators, School Guidance Counsellors, FET providers and Higher Education Access Officers
57	Primary SSP schools will establish structures to support engagement and successful transitions with local pre-schools.	Q4 2018	
58	Explore the potential for greater use of TY in SSP Post Primary schools order to encourage retention.	Q1 2018	DES
59	SSP schools to consult teachers/students and their parents/guardians in the development/review of current TY programmes to raise participation levels.	Q1 2018	Schools
60	Education and Training Boards to establish formal outreach arrangements through its FET Services to support and encourage access through its existing education pathways.	Q3 2018	ETBs
61	FET Programme and Learner and Support System (PLSS) to be fully rolled out to assist with better data collection on participation on FET programmes.	Q3 2017	SOLAS
62	Mainstream the delivery of equity of access in Higher Education Institutions.	Q4 2019	DES, HEA, Higher Education Institutions
63	To assess the impact of current initiatives to support equity of access in Higher Education Institutions.	Q4 2019	DES, HEA, Higher Education Institutions
64	To gather accurate data and evidence on access and participation and to base policy on what that data tells us.	Q4 2019	DES, HEA, Higher Education Institutions

65	To build coherent pathways from further education and to foster other entry routes to higher education.	Q4 2019	DES, HEA, Higher Education Institutions
66	NCCA Review of Senior Cycle Programmes and vocational pathways in senior cycle, with a view to recommending areas for development. Commence senior cycle review with a scoping of international developments	Q 1 2017	DES, NCCA

### Supporting Travellers and Roma

Engagement of Travellers and Roma in education is a continuing challenge. Aspects of Traveller and Roma culture, together with past experience of some traveller parents and grandparents with education can give rise to difficulties with school attendance, participation and retention. It is important that existing good practice and innovation in schools and in ancillary support services is harnessed to improve the educational experience of Traveller children in all schools.

In consultation with Traveller representative groups, The National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019 sets an ambitious target for this group in terms of participation in higher education which will provide role models for Traveller children in the school system.

Planned increased collaboration between the DES and Tusla, and other services to support Travellers in the context of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy seeks to bring together all of the services to support this group. The arrangements for this are included in this Plan given the very large numbers of Traveller and Roma children in DEIS schools.

<b>Goal 3.9 – Supporting Travellers and Roma</b>			
No.	Action	Timelines	Delivered By
67	Collaboration with Tusla and Traveller Representative Groups on measures to improve Traveller engagement with education in the context of the National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy.	Q3 2017	DES & Tusla
68	Current additional Traveller-specific resources to be evaluated in the context of the Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education	Q1 2018	DES Tusla

	Strategy and the objective of supporting Traveller children's school attendance, participation and retention.		
69	Best practice and innovative measures developed by DEIS schools in support of traveller attendance, participation and retention to be explored in a pilot context supported by the School Excellence Fund.	Q3 2018	DES TUSLA

## Supporting knowledge and skills

The 2016 *STEM Education in the Irish School System* Report points out that STEM subjects are widely perceived by students, their parents and career guidance counsellors as being difficult, and not relevant to many young people's lives. Access to better information about the value of STEM qualifications for their future careers will provide young people with incentives to continue studying STEM subjects through to Leaving Certificate and beyond. A National STEM Education Policy Statement will be adopted in 2017, which will emphasise, among other things, the importance of Mathematics as fundamental for all STEM education. This emphasis on the link between Mathematics and STEM will be important for DEIS schools where performance in Mathematics continues to be lower than the national norm. It is important to encourage and support STEM in all underrepresented groups.

The arts nurture a motivation to learn by emphasising active engagement, creativity and innovation, disciplined and sustained attention, persistence and risk taking, among other competencies. The integration of the arts in education is also part of an inclusivity strategy and can result in strong positive cognitive, emotional, social and collaborative changes in learners. This is particularly relevant to DEIS schools which cater for high numbers of children from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds whose access to the arts may be limited.

One of the objectives of the Action Plan for Education 2016-2019 is to create a stronger focus on Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Innovation by implementing the Arts in Education Charter, launched in 2013, and by the expansion of Music Generation Music Education Partnerships. A mapping exercise will be undertaken under the Arts in Education Charter, which will highlight areas of the country with poor arts in education access and participation for young people. This may highlight disadvantaged schools and areas with a view to using the data to improve access and participation for young people to the arts in those areas highlighted. Devising an integrated implementation plan for arts in education is also a priority for the Creative Ireland Programme 2017-2022 under Pillar 1. The Plan, Arts Rich School Award ARÍS, will be launched in co-operation with the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in September 2017.

**Goal 3.10 – Supporting STEM**

No.	Action	Timelines	Delivered By
70	SSP schools to renew focus on STEM subjects to improve STEM take-up– in accordance with STEM Education Policy Statement.	Q3 2020	Schools

**Goal 3.11 – Supporting Arts in Education**

71	Initiatives under the Arts in Education Charter to take account of the needs of schools in the SSP.	Q4 2017	DES
72	Interventions developed by SSP schools around the arts to be included in school planning and reporting under the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.	Q4 2017	Schools

## Goal 4 – To Support and Foster Best Practice in Schools through Inter-Agency Collaboration

### Cross-Departmental and cross-agency working

The 2005 DEIS Action Plan noted that:

*“The education system operates in a context of broader social and economic circumstances. A wide range of issues such as poverty, family breakdown and health problems can adversely affect the learning capacity of pupils. The education system cannot resolve these issues single-handedly, nor can it be expected to, but it must adopt a leading role in influencing interventions that directly impact on the ability of pupils to derive maximum benefit from educational provision”*

Government initiatives in recent years such as the introduction of Better Outcome Brighter Futures, the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, and the establishment of the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) mean that there is already a policy impetus for cross-Departmental and inter-agency working to support children and families, particularly those at risk of poor outcomes in their lives, including education. A comprehensive cross-Departmental input to the development of any future strategy to tackle educational disadvantage is seen as critical.

Working relationships already developed across Government Departments and Agencies, and with non-governmental organisations through the structures of *Better Outcomes Brighter Futures* will be further developed through the implementation planning which will follow on from this DEIS Plan, in particular through the establishment of a programme Steering Group which will oversee ongoing implementation of the Programme.

In addition to the broad range of supports provided for schools by the DES, other Government Departments and agencies provide key services in and around schools to help to address some of the factors which contribute to educational disadvantage, including:

#### **The Department of Social Protection**

DSP have responsibility for the School Meals Programme. In addition to the health and nutritional benefits of breakfast clubs and other food interventions provided by early year’s settings and schools under the School Meals Scheme, school meals provide an important socialisation opportunity and, at post primary level, the availability of food at lunchtime can help to reduce the number of students leaving before the school day is finished.

#### **The Department of Children and Youth Affairs/Tusla**

Supports and services to DEIS schools provided by the DCYA extend across a number of policy areas – Early Years Care and Education, Children’s Services Prevention and Early Intervention, Youth Services, Educational Welfare, Family Supports and after-school services. It also oversees *Better Outcomes Brighter Futures* which brings together the main statutory, community and voluntary

providers of services to children and young people to enhance interagency cooperation and realise stated national outcomes. Two key elements of the DEIS SSP – Home School Community Liaison services, and the School Completion Programme are part of Tusla’s integrated educational welfare service and work to improve school attendance, participation and progression and prevent early school leaving. Improved early years’ provision together with developments in the quality of that provision mean that this area of early childhood education now makes a considerable contribution to school readiness and improved engagement with education. There is now a need to reflect the increased level of provision, and the potential of this sector to have a positive impact on future learning outcomes, in the arrangements for engagement between professionals in both early years and school settings. Successful interagency working is also key to supporting engagement with education, particularly for groups such as school age students who disengaged from the mainstream education system.

### **The Department of Health/HSE**

The Department of Health and the HSE provide a range of services to school-age children and their families which have an important impact on school attendance, participation and progression. Services to support oral language and other therapeutic services can significantly improve engagement with education and positive outcomes for children in need of these additional services, particularly where these are made available at pre-school age. Mental health services are also identified as an important support, particularly for post primary age students. While these are universal services, they are especially important to children at higher risk of educational disadvantage, particularly when they are attending schools with the highest levels of complexity of need.

### **Department of Housing Planning Community and Local Government**

DHPC&LG policy areas relevant to educational disadvantage include Housing, Library Services, Local Community Development Committees. A key principle of the Departments work in these areas is to support and enable communities themselves to identify and address social and economic issues in their own areas. In particular, communities that are vulnerable, disadvantaged or under threat are supported through a range of provision including the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), Local Community Development Committees (LCDC’s) and Library Services. SICAP and LCDC interventions are particularly important to those elements of the SCP, which seek to extend supports beyond the school day, and the school year through holiday and weekend provision. Library services are critically important to student and family literacy and are mentioned in the Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life National Strategy 2011-2020 as a valuable resource of families and communities, particularly in relation to the development of oral and literacy skills in very young children.

There is a significant interaction, and even interdependence between the services delivered by these Government Departments and agencies. As with other supports under the DEIS SSP, it is often difficult to attribute credit for positive outcomes to any one particular intervention.

It is however possible to identify areas where some services are not working particularly effectively, or may not be present at all. The Actions below seek to improve both the effectiveness of individual supports, and their delivery in combination with other services. The overall objective is to improve the effectiveness of service delivery to improve outcomes for learners.

Where relevant and appropriate, relationship protocols and/or service level agreements will be drawn up with other Government Departments/Agencies and other service providers to ensure an effective and consistent approach towards the provision of supports to tackle educational disadvantage.



## Goal 4

<b>Goal 4.1 – Interagency Collaboration to Improve Services to Schools</b>			
No.		Timelines	Delivered By
73	School planning to identify formal and informal links between early years' settings, schools, parents, families and communities in order to support children in the transitions across the educational continuum.	Q3 2017	Schools
74	The role of the HSCL Co-ordinator to be re-stated to reference role in supporting transitions between Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) settings and the formal school environment.	Q4 2018	Tusla
75	Future resource allocation for pre-school services in disadvantaged communities should be informed by centrally held pupil data combined with CSO Small Area statistics.	Q2 2018	DCYA
76	Schools should acknowledge, support and promote related prevention and early intervention initiatives – including where these are funded and provided by other providers.	Q4 2017	Schools
77	Schools should ensure that when engaging external service providers that account is taken of evidence-based learning from such services/supports.	Q4 2017	Schools
78	Schools should give particular consideration to currently provided evidence-informed provision which is well evaluated and is delivering measurable improvements in the outcomes sought for the pupil cohort.	Q4 2017	Schools
79	SSP supports to consider programmes provided under ABC pilots where relevant to the needs of the children of the school. Learning to date from the ABC sites, where relevant to the pupil cohort identified, should	Q4 2017	DES DCYA Schools

	be incorporated into current teaching and learning in schools.		
80	Schools should engage with local LCDC and CYPSCs structures for service delivery to maximise use of existing resources and expertise and to avoid duplication of provision. The role and funding model of the School Completion Programme and the functions of HSCL Coordinators in this regard is particularly relevant.	Q4 2017	Schools Tusla DCYA LCDC CYPSCs
81	Engagement with local LCDC and CYPSCs should also make linkages that help pupils engage in local community activities.	Q4 2017	Schools Tusla LCDC CYPSCs
82	DCYA and Tusla to consider the incorporation of certain ABC programmes/activities such as the Home Visiting Programme within the Family Resource Centre Programme - in accordance with Goal 2.6 of BOBF.	Q1 2018	DCYA Tusla
83	A re-statement of the role of the HSCL Coordinator will be published to provide clarity to teachers taking on HSCL duties and to other service providers on the role of HSCL in supporting transitions across the education continuum.	Q2 2018	Tusla
84	An examination of HSCL clusters is required to ensure that they are aligned with arrangements for school networking and clustering under the new SSP – and with SCP clustering arrangements.	Q1 2018 (C. Dolan recommended change to Q1)	DES Tusla
85	Schools to engage with relevant services to improve and support parental participation in their children’s education. Arrangements to be included in School Plan and reported under Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.	Q4 2017	Schools Tusla CYPSCS
86	Implementation by DCYA/Tusla of the Programme for Government commitment to	Q3 2017	DCYA

	develop a School Completion Strategy in the context of the recommendations of the ESRI Review of the School Completion Programme.		
87	<p>A School Completion Strategy to deal with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future funding of the School Completion Programme in the context of new SSP requirements;</li> <li>• Resourcing of the Tusla EWS Senior Management Team;</li> <li>• The need for a set of core activities for delivery by SCPs with a further list of agreed optional activities to be provided as appropriate to particular local circumstances, and with regard to existing services;</li> <li>• Greater cohesion in the delivery of out of school activities including summer clubs and other holiday activities to avoid duplication of services.</li> <li>• Improved collaboration between Tusla and the Departments of Social Protection; Children and Youth Affairs; Health; Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government; and Education and Skills on future arrangements for the delivery of the School Meals Schemes.</li> <li>• Setting targets for improved pupil retention in schools.</li> <li>• Evidence of proven models of good practice in family support service delivery to support Tusla's integrated educational welfare service – e.g Meitheal practice model.</li> </ul>	Q3 2017	Tusla DSP DCYA D/Health D/HPCLG DES
88	Review of current out of school and second-change provision to inform future supports in this area, including those provided through TUSLA.	Q3 2018	DES, TUSLA, ETBs, SOLAS
89	More detailed school attendance data to be included in Tusla's Annual School Attendance Report to support a greater focus on outcomes for schools and ancillary services and improve school attendance. (Data by school year &	Q2 2018	Tusla

	term; by grade level and banded to highlight absences between 20-60 days)		
90	Tusla to require schools to report on the number of pupils who are on a reduced timetable.	Q4 2018	Tusla
91	DCYA to engage with the Department of Health, DSP and DES on the development of guidelines on food health and nutrition for food provided in schools, including guidance for suppliers/purchasers.	Q3 2017	DCYA D/Health DSP DES
92	Expansion of Schools Business Partnership to cater for any additional schools included in the SSP.	Q3 2017	Tusla
93	Work with HSE on its review of current Speech and Language Therapy provision and consider proposals arising from that review.	Q2 2017	HSE D/Health DCYA
94	Further piloting of previously trialled Speech and Language Therapy interventions in individual schools or school clusters, where evidence is available of their success, and where this does not involve a duplication or displacement of existing services.	Q 3 2017	DCYA D/Health DES
95	DSP funding for school meals to continue to be targeted at schools participating in the DEIS School Support Programme (SSP) with a particular focus on the promotion of breakfast clubs.	Q4 2017	DSP
96	DSP to engage with DCYA/Tusla/DHPCLG/DES on the arrangements for future delivery of the School Meals Schemes in the context of the development by the DCYA of a School Completion Strategy.	Q4 2017	DES DSP DCYA DHPCLG Tusla
97	Where relevant and appropriate, relationship protocols and/or service level agreements to be drawn up with other Government Departments/Agencies and other service providers to ensure an effective and consistent approach towards the provision of SSP	Q2 2018	DES DCYA DSP DHPCLG DOH Tusla

	supports		NCSE SOLAS
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## **Goal 5 To support the work of schools by providing the research, information, evaluation and feedback to achieve the goals of the Plan**

### **Effective programmes**

While we know that the overall impact of supports under the DEIS Programme has been positive, we still do not know enough about what is happening in individual schools in terms of the effectiveness of particular interventions, or combinations of interventions.

Apart from data collected by the ERC and the DES Inspectorate as part of the evaluation of DEIS, and survey data collected from schools by the DES in relation to expenditure by schools of the DEIS Grant, there is very little statistical information available for analysis on individual elements of the SSP. The lack of comprehensive input, output and outcome data on the range of resources deployed in SSP schools is seen as a significant gap.

A new School Support Programme will be supported by a strong Monitoring and Evaluation Framework which will bring together information provided through existing reporting structures.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**

A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, which is being developed by the DES to support the new School Support Programme, will:

- Maintain a currency of information on socio-economic demographics in the school context;
- Build on existing data sources to provide a comprehensive dataset of all DES and other resources available to DEIS schools;
- Build on existing reporting arrangements by schools to ensure more effective deployment of resources (by linking inputs to outputs and outcomes);
- Making the linkage between School Planning for Improvement and teaching and learning outcomes;
- Oversee pilot programmes and assess outcomes in the context of School Excellence;
- Provide annual reporting on the implementation of the DEIS Plan, including annual updates on the identification and resource allocation methodologies as required.

## Goal 5

<b>Goal 5.1 – Implementation Plan</b>			
No.	Action	Timelines	Delivered By
98	DES to develop a detailed Programme Implementation Plan to include appointment of Programme Steering Group comprising DES, relevant other Government Departments and Agencies, and education partners.	Q2 2017	DES
<b>Goal 5.2 – Monitoring and Evaluation Framework</b>			
99	SIU, Statistics Section, Inspectorate, ERC and external evaluation expertise to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for a new SSP to improve transparency and to determine which interventions are having the greatest impact in terms of delivering better outcomes for learners.	Q2 2017	DES
<b>Goal 5.3 – Data Collection and Maintenance</b>			
100	Provision of a comprehensive current and accessible database to record and provide details of all DES resources allocated to schools – to assist with resource allocation and monitoring and evaluation.	Q2 2017	DES
101	Allocation of IT and other staff resources to ensure the maintenance of the database to meet the ongoing monitoring, evaluation and other research needs of the DEIS Plan.	Q2 2017	DES
<b>Goal 5.4 – Development of a Communications/Information System</b>			
102	The DES to establish a DEIS information portal to provide information for all SSP supports including external supports and services. The Portal will also provide information on the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.	Q3 2017	DES

103	The portal should be interactive, with a social media content to facilitate engagement and information sharing at local level on local services and proven approaches in and around schools to address particular challenges experienced in these schools.	Q3 2017	DES
<b>Goal 5.5 – DEIS Plan Process</b>			
104	Actions will be monitored against published timelines.	Ongoing	DES
105	Responsibility for actions will be clearly assigned.	Ongoing	DES
106	A review will be carried out at the end of the 2017/2018 academic year to examine how the new model of allocating resources has operated.	Q3 2018	DES
107	A report on implementation of the DEIS Plan will be published annually.	Q4 annually	DES
108	Periodic reporting on actions will be made as required through the BOBF and NAPSI structures.	Ongoing	DES



## Appendices

### Appendix 1 - Supports provided under the current DEIS School Support Programme

#### Resources for Band 1 Primary Schools:

- Reduced class sizes - application of a staffing schedule to DEIS Band 1 primary schools to accommodate class size of 20:1 at junior classes and 24:1 at senior classes

#### Resources for Band 1 and Band 2 Primary Schools:

- Allocation of administrative principals on lower enrolment and staffing figures than apply in primary schools generally (116 in Band 1 and 144 in Band 2)

#### Resources for Band 1, Band 2 and DEIS Rural Primary schools:

- Additional grant aid based on level of disadvantage
- Enhanced rate of funding under the Schools Book Grant Scheme
- Access to Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) services
- Access to a range of supports under School Completion Programme (SCP)
- Access to literacy/numeracy support service to specific literacy/numeracy measures
- Priority access to Schools Meals Programme
- Priority access to a range of professional development supports
- Priority access to Centre for School Leadership
- Expansion of NEPS provision in DEIS schools
- Roll out of Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management Programme and Friends Programme to all DEIS schools

#### Resources for DEIS Post-Primary schools:

- Additional grant aid based on level of disadvantage
- Enhanced guidance allocation of 1.15 of the PTR (non-DEIS allocation is 0.4)
- Enhanced rate of funding under the Schools Book Grant Scheme
- Access to Junior Certificate Schools Programme
- Access to Leaving Certificate Applied Programme
- Access to Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) services
- Access to a range of supports under School Completion Programme
- Priority access to Schools Meals Programme
- Priority access to a range of professional development supports
- Priority access to Centre for School Leadership
- Expansion of NEPS provision in DEIS schools
- Roll out of Friends Programme to all DEIS schools

- As noted in the text under Goal 1 at page 15 , From September 2017, supports under the School Support Programme will be extended on a phased basis to those schools not already in receipt of these supports and who are identified as having the highest concentrations of pupils at greatest risk of educational disadvantage;

## Appendix 2 - Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

ABC	Area Based Childhood Programme
BOBF	Better Outcomes Brighter Futures
CSL	Centre for School Leadership
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CYPSC	Children & Young People’s Services Committee
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DES	Department of Education & Skills
DHPCLG	Department of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government
DOH	Department of Health
DSP	Department of Social Protection
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme
ERC	Educational Research Centre
EYEI	Early Years Education-focused Inspections
FET	Further Education and Training
HES	Higher Education Authority
HEI	Higher Education
HSCL	Home School Community Liaison Scheme
HEAR	Higher Education Access Route
ICT	Information & Communications Technology
ISS	Inclusion Support Service
IYTCM	Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management Programme
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NAPSI	National Plan for Social Inclusion
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service

NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
PLSS	Programme and Learner Support System
POD	Primary Online Database
PPOD	Post Primary Online Database
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
SAPs	Small Areas Population Statistics
SCP	School Completion Programme
SEN	Special Educational Needs
Solas	Further Education and Training Authority
SIU	Social Inclusion Unit
SLT	Speech and Language Therapy
SSP	School Support Programme
TUSLA	Child and Family Agency