Key issues for the INTO Submission to the DEIS Review: Building on Strengths and Addressing Gaps for DEIS II

INTO Presentation
25 May 2015

Dr Paul Downes
Director, Educational Disadvantage Centre
Senior Lecturer in Education (Psychology)
Member of the European Commission Network of Experts on the Social Aspects of
Education and Training (NESET I & II) (2011-2015)
St. Patrick's College
Drumcondra
Dublin City University
paul.downes@dcu.ie

A. Fundamental principle of no reduction in resources for DEIS schools

Backdrop of increased poverty rates for children

- The AROPE indicator is defined as the share of the population in at least one of the following three conditions: 1) at risk of poverty, meaning below the poverty threshold, 2) in a situation of severe material deprivation, 3) living in a household with a very low work intensity. From 2008 to 2011, the AROPE for children rose in 21 EU Member States

- Eurostat: The largest increases in the AROPE since 2008 were in Ireland (+11.0 percentage points (pp) up to 2010) and Latvia (+10.4pp). They were closely followed by Bulgaria (+7.6pp), Hungary (+6.2pp) and Estonia (+5.4pp).

B. Building on Success/Strengths: Remarkable Success against the backdrop of Child Poverty Increases

ESRI 2015:

Attendance rates have improved in urban Band 1 primary schools

The gap in retention rates between DEIS and non DEIS has narrowed significantly over time; from 22 per cent at senior cycle for the 1995 school entrant cohort to 10.5 per cent for the 2008 cohort.

DEIS urban primary – further improvements in reading and maths scores between 2010 and 2013 (Weir & Denner 2013)

DEIS – Needs to be firmly stated as a priority area for government investment

Highest priority at EU2020 targets level – Early School Leaving *headline* target the only one directly affecting children and young people in education and health for EU2020

Recognise government commitment to early school leaving as EU2020 *headline* target (8% Ireland, 10% across EU)

Government's own EU2020 National Reform Programme document sent to the European Commission in April 2011. It is notable that these commitments made in April 2011 explicitly refer to pupil-teacher ratios as part of the State's commitment to the EU2020 headline target for early school leaving of 10%
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nrp/nrp_ireland_en.pdf

Early School Leaving national rates: Ireland
11.6 % 2009
9.7 % 2012

Key principles underpinning this review

*Key that this is a holistic review wide in scope and not a cost cutting exercise narrowly focused only on pupil-teacher ratio

*Need fresh commitment from DES to DEIS schools given that there has been no national strategic response to poverty in education since the economic crash

*Commitment to review only in context of extra resources for DEIS II

*The improved budgetary situation needs to impact upon DEIS II

*Vital not to punish any DEIS school for its success

Resist a 'some are more equal than others' principle

ESRI (2015): '…question as to the overall aim of the DEIS programme. DEIS aims could be framed in two ways. Firstly, the goal may be to reduce or eliminate the overall gap in achievement between DEIS and non-DEIS schools. This would be an extremely ambitious agenda as it would mean reducing overall differences in educational outcomes between social class groups within and between schools' (p76).

ESRI (2015): 'the goal may be to reduce the negative effect of the concentration of disadvantaged students; in other words, the aim may to be to reduce the gap in achievement between working-class students in DEIS schools and working-class students in non DEIS schools. The DEIS programme was explicitly motivated by the existence of a 'multiplier effect' in schools with a high concentration of disadvantage. Thus, this would seem to be a fairer test of the success of DEIS' (pp.76-77).

Apology of Minister Quinn: Schools with DEIS legacy posts have factually higher levels of need

Any claim that there is equal level of need between legacy and other DEIS schools is quite simply inaccurate based on the findings:

- DEIS evaluation (ERC, December 2011): the reading data highlights that there is objective evidence of a notably higher level of need in the so-called legacy schools from previous schemes compared with other DEIS schools.
- For example, reading scores between legacy and other DEIS schools differ by almost 10% in 2007 in 6th class for those at or below the 10th percentile, with still an almost 7% difference in 6th class in 2010. As explicitly stated in the DEIS evaluation, these differences in level of need for both literacy and maths are statistically significant.

Remedy Gaps in DEIS I – and recognise economic crash since DEIS I

Commit to wider scope of DEIS review to include complex needs in system such as mental health, food poverty

1) Food poverty – Hunger prevention in schools centred on needs of child
2) Emotional and mental health supports (Downes 2008)
3) Multidisciplinary teams (+NBSS for primary)
4) Arts and social inclusion in education strategy
5) Schools not eligible though high number of students experiencing socio-economic exclusion

Food poverty – Hunger prevention in schools centred on needs of child

*12,661 10-17 year olds in Ireland from randomly selected schools throughout the country (Callaghan et al. 2010), 20.9% of schoolchildren in Ireland report going to school or bed hungry because there is not enough food at home.

*A 2013 IPPN survey of over 600 primary school principals found that over 20% of primary principals observed an increase in children coming to school hungry.

*Differences between 7 DEIS Dublin primary schools ranged from 6% to 33% of pupils stating they were either often, very often or everyday too hungry to do their work in school (Downes & Maunsell 2007).

In a different Dublin area approximately 18% of the 6th class pupils attending school on the given day stated that they were either often, very often or every day too hungry to do their work in school – this figure was notably higher in 3 of the 4 schools where 21%, 25% and 25% of pupils stated that they were either often, very often or every day too hungry to do their work in school (Downes, Maunsell & Ivers 2006).

*A systematic national strategy to prevent hunger in school is not currently in place.

Current initiatives include the School Meals Programme funded by the Department of Social Protection and Breakfast clubs facilitated by School Completion Programme through the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. Yet these are not systematically available for all children in need.

Not every School Completion Programme includes breakfast clubs and school participation in the School Meals Programme is varied and requires a school principal to apply to be part of it.

Unlike countries such as Britain, France and Poland, Irish schools have poor infrastructure for meals in schools, with little investment historically in kitchen facilities in schools.

A National Strategy for Hunger Prevention in Schools

- One Government Department to be responsible for developing the strategy, implementation and monitoring of this national strategy.

- A specific civil servant to have responsibility for this issue for the primary school age group (5-12)

- Establishment of a Food Forum to address the issue of hunger in schools

- Ensuring children's needs are met in a systematic rather than ad hoc way regarding hunger prevention in schools and quality of food
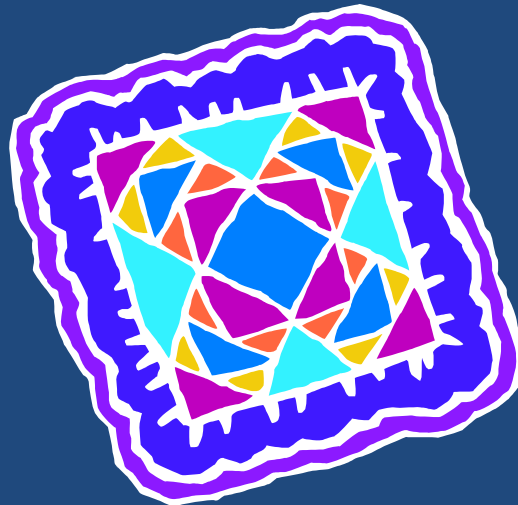
1) Emotional and mental health supports
2) Multidisciplinary teams (+NBSS for primary)

Differentiated Levels of Need for Prevention
see Downes (2014) on this for ESL
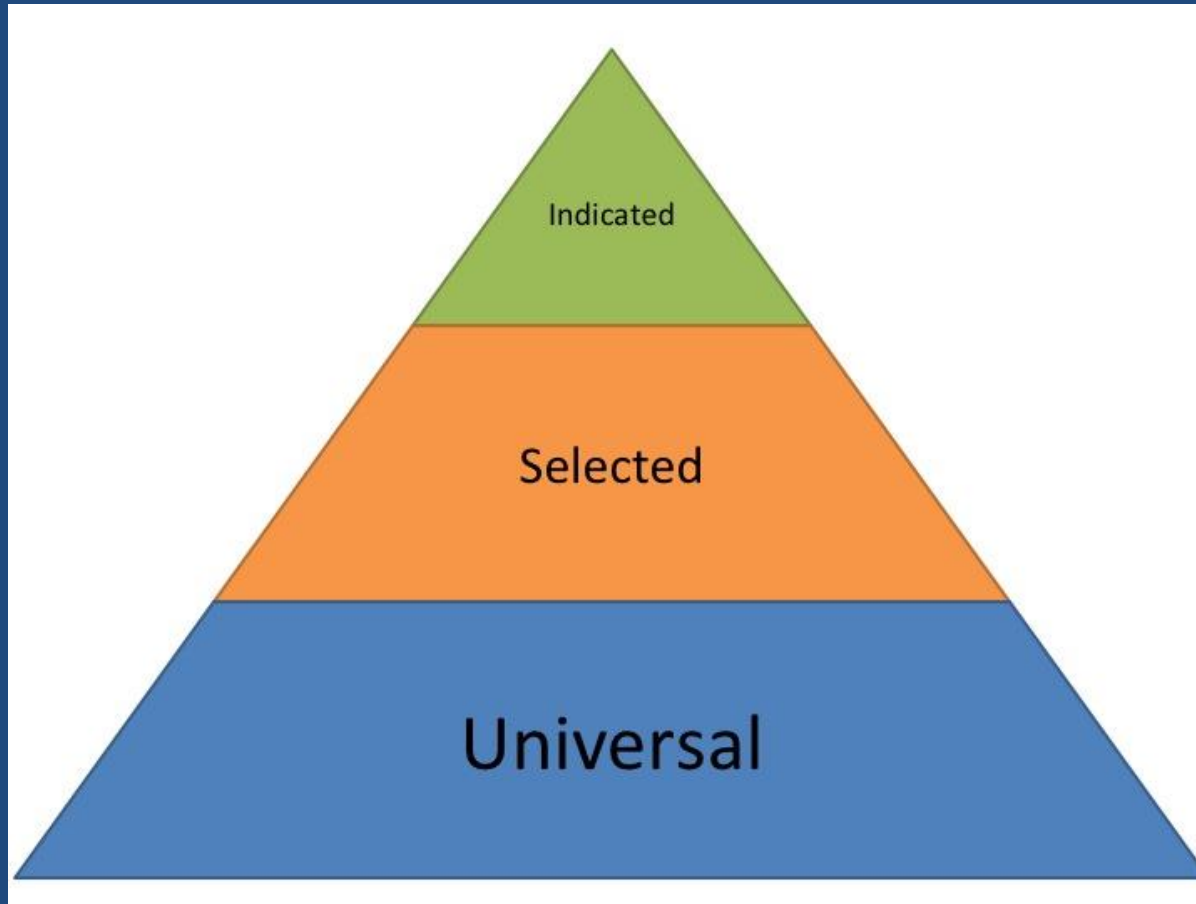
From Multiple Agencies to Cohesive Multidisciplinary Teams for Early School Leaving Prevention

-Emotional support
-Outreach family support
-Speech and language

The *Alliances for Inclusion* report (Edwards & Downes 2013) reviewed the enabling conditions for the effectiveness of multidisciplinary teams and crosssectoral approaches for early school leaving prevention, building on 16 examples from 10 European countries.

-A policy focus is needed to go beyond multiple agencies -Need to minimise fragmentation across diverse services 'passing on bits of the child' and family (Edwards & Downes 2013)

-the multi-faceted nature of risk requires a multi-faceted response that needs to go beyond referrals to disparate services resulting in this 'passing on bits of the child'

- For genuine interprofessional collaboration for early school leaving prevention, for example, between schools and multidisciplinary teams of outreach care workers, therapists/counsellors, nurses, speech and language therapists, social workers, occupational therapists, policy-led co-location is not sufficient. Efforts are needed to support inter-professional collaborations and overcome resistance. It is not enough just to designate a desk for these services in schools.

Need to focus on direct delivery and to minimise 'committee sitting' (Downes 2013a)

Prevention and early intervention focus
• To engage directly with problems related to early school leaving, for example, nonattendance, trauma, bullying, mental health difficulties, language development, parental support, sleep deficits, risk of substance misuse, suspension/expulsion, conflict with teachers

*Outreach work to reach most marginalised families – not simply those of moderate risk

• Each family has one 'lead professional' to link them with others (Edwards & Downes 2013a)

Community based family support centres, with multidisciplinary teams linked with preschools and schools, with a focus on child and parent mental health, emotional support and school attendance

Between 2006 and 2012 approx. 3,000 of the total 9,000 child care centres in the German federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) are being developed into certified "Familienzentren" (family centres). Family centres are designed to bundle services for families in the local community. The concept of the state programme "Familienzentrum NRW" acknowledges the significance of early support and intervention for children and families (Eurochild 2011)

As described by Eurochild (2011), the Familienzentrum Nordrhein-Westfalen…
• develops children's day-care facilities into places for learning and gathering experience for children and their parents whose parenting skills get enhanced,
• assists parents in resolving everyday conflicts because such assistance can be provided more immediately and smoothly,
• helps immigrant families and educationally deprived families to be better cared for,

The municipality of Eindhoven has chosen for a family support policy based on multifunctional services directly linked to primary schools in these SPIL Centres. This choice had been made based on the principle of the early detection of children at risk as early as possible and as close to the family as possible. The main reason for this is that schools, day care centres and kindergartens are places with the best access to 'find' children at risk and their parents (Eurochild 2011)

Downes (2014) 10 European City Municipalities Strategies for Early School Leaving Prevention:

*Community 'one stop shops' of multidisciplinary teams address system fragmentation of services

*Beyond community centre focused outreach, there is also a need for individual outreach to some families' homes at the level of highest need (indicated prevention). Many such families may have a history of intergenerational substance abuse.

*High levels of unexplained nonattendance by a student at school is a clear behavioural manifestation associated with risk of early school leaving. This nonattendance issue is tied up with emotional and mental health issues in the family system and needs to be engaged with through an integrated holistic response, such as with outreach care workers or other professionals to provide psychological and practical support.

Houses of the Oireachtas
Joint Committee on Education and Skills Report (2010)

"Recommendation 2e: For the next round of DEIS, refinements to the methods used to identify schools for receipt of additional supports under the SSP should be made. For example a sliding scale could be identified, and the broad support packages provided through the SSP could be divided into sub-sets of supports and applied for separately by schools based on individual schools' needs."

- Need to address gaps in DEIS, including a) emotional and mental health supports, b) multidisciplinary teams, c) Area Based Childhood Projects to run as national integrated strategy with DEIS II

- Clear vision of integrated role for Tusla in DEIS II

- Develop stronger arts in education for social inclusion strategy in DEIS II

- Extend NBSS to primary sector

- Bring investment in kitchens and food poverty strategy up to standards of UK, France and many other EU countries

- Widen scope of consultation process – but ensure review before next election

Callaghan, M. and the HBSC Ireland Team (2010). Food poverty among schoolchildren in Ireland. Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway

Downes, P. (2014). Towards a Differentiated, Holistic and Systemic Approach to Parental Involvement in Europe for Early School Leaving Prevention. Policy Recommendations Report for the EU Urbact, PREVENT project involving 10 European City Municipalities. European Union, European Regional Development Fund, Urbact Programme, Paris.

Downes, P. (2013a) Invited Presentation, Developing multi-agency and cross-sector synergies in and around education, 5th meeting of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture (EAC), Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving, Brussels, 28-29 January 2013

Downes, P. (2008) Mental health strategy for deprived children missing from education plan in Action on Poverty Today, 21: Combat Poverty Agency: Dublin

Downes, P, Maunsell, C. & Ivers, J. (2006). A Holistic Approach to Early School Leaving and School Retention in Blanchardstown Current Issues and Future Steps for Services and Schools. Dublin: Blanchardstown Area Partnership.

Downes, P. & Maunsell, C. (2007). Count us in: Tackling early school leaving in South West Inner City Dublin, An integrated response. Dublin: South Inner City Community Development Association (SICCDA) & South Inner City Drugs Task Force.

Edwards, A. & Downes, P. (2013).   Alliances for Inclusion: Developing Cross-sector Synergies and Inter-Professional Collaboration in and around Education. Commissioned Research Report for EU Commission NESET (Network of Experts on Social Aspects of Education and Training). Foreword to report by Jan Truszczynski, Director-General of DG EAC

Edwards, A. and Downes, P (2013a). Invited Presentation, Cross-sector policy synergies and inter-professional collaboration in and around schools: Examples and evidence. May 28, Brussels, European Commission, Directorate General, Education and Culture and Directorate General, Research and Innovation.

Eurochild (2011). The role of local authorities in parenting support. Family and Parenting Support Thematic Working Group Round Table Report. Brussels: Eurochild.

IPPN (2013). Survey of School Principals, Conference data.

National Reform Programme For Ireland under the Europe 2020 Strategy Submitted to the European Commission 29 April 2011

http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nrp/nrp_ireland_en.pdf

Oireachtas (Irish Government and Senate) Joint Committee in Education and Skills on Early School Leaving (2010). Staying in Education: A New Way Forward - School and Out-Of-School Factors Protecting Against Early School Leaving

Smyth, E., McCoy, S & Kingston, G. (2015). Learning from the Evaluation of DEIS RESEARCH SERIES NUMBER 39 April 2015

Weir, S & Denner, S., (2013). The evaluation of the school support program under DEIS: Changes in pupil achievement in urban primary schools between 2007 and 2013. Dublin: Education Research Centre.

Weir, S., Archer, P with Adrian O'Flaherty and Lorraine Gilleece (2011) DEIS 2005 - A Report on the First Phase of the Evaluation of DEIS. Dublin: Education Research Centre