

Press Release

11th October 2009

The Joint Managerial Body Welcomes the Commitments to Education in the new Programme for Government.

The Joint Managerial Body which represents the boards of management and school management of almost four hundred Voluntary Secondary schools has welcomed the Government's commitment to prioritise education in the new Programme for Government.

“ In its Pre-Budget Submission for Budget 2010 the JMB outline the serious consequences of the decision to increase the Pupil Teacher Ratio in Budget 2009. The commitment in the new Programme to maintain the PTR at the 2009/10 levels is welcomed as is the proposal to immediately restore 200 teaching posts across primary and post-primary sectors. However, this proposal must be seen in the context of the outcome of a recent JMB survey which indicates that over 600 teaching posts have been lost across the Voluntary Secondary sector alone as a result of the increase in the PTR in Budget 2009” asserts Ferdia Kelly, General Secretary of the Joint Managerial Body.

“ The proposal to restore some elements of a book grant to schools to assist necessitous pupils and families is most welcomed as is the allocation of grants to assist schools in providing programmes such as Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Applied, Leaving Certificate Vocational and Junior Certificate Schools. The JMB also welcomes the restoration of grant aid to support vital subjects such as physics, chemistry, home economics and music”, says Ferdia Kelly.

“ The proposal to maintain capitation grants at current levels is welcomed in the context of the suggestions of further reductions in the McCarthy Report. However, it must not be forgotten that JMB research has indicated that Voluntary Secondary schools must raise over 30% of its annual expenditure from local sources,” claims Ferdia Kelly.

” The Joint Managerial Body also welcomes the commitments in the new Programme for Government to pupils with special needs with the decision to go ahead with the implementation of the EPSEN Act, the appointment of 28 psychologists to NEPS and the commitment to ensure that special needs assistants will be available to support pupils. It is essential that adequate resources to be provided to ensure that these commitments can be fully implemented,” says Ferdia Kelly.

“ The commitments to the capital budget and the summer works scheme are also welcomed by the JMB,” says Kelly.

“ However, it is a source of deep regret to the JMB that the negotiations on a new Programme for Government didn’t recognise the severe impact on school management of the moratorium on filling vacancies in the middle management structures in schools. The moratorium has resulted in an intolerable burden on some schools with losses of up to three quarters of the assistant principals in the school. Principals find themselves in an impossible situation in such circumstances and the impact of the moratorium must be alleviated immediately,” asserts Ferdia Kelly

“The Joint Managerial Body has consistently outlined the severe impact of Budget 2009 on Voluntary Secondary schools. As an organisation we welcome the fact that the Government partners have responded to our representations to prioritise education and have accepted the basic argument that an investment in education is an investment in our future”, says Ferdia Kelly.

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