into
Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

1,000 MORE PRIMARY TEACHERS FOR OUR CHILDREN TO *THRIVE!*

Our key priority for primary and special education in Budget 2027

A pre-budget submission from the
Irish National Teachers' Organisation

BUDGET 2027 MUST TACKLE TEACHER SHORTAGES AND OVERCROWDED CLASSROOMS

Why 1,000 more primary teachers?

SUPPORT TEACHERS AND PUPILS

- Allows more time for teaching/learning.
- Reduces burnout.
- Increases substitute cover/supply panels.

PRIMARY SCHOOL STAFFING AND ENROLMENT			
Year	Enrolment	Mainstream class teachers lost	School closures and amalgamations
2023	556,084	-237	5
2024	552,116	-290	2
2025	545,646	-381*	13
*Projected			

STRONGER SCHOOLS

- Saves small schools.
- Retains expertise/ boosts time for leadership.
- Future-proofs our education system.

SMALL SCHOOLS AT RISK OF CLOSURE	
Connacht	33
Munster	19
Leinster	10
Ulster*	9
*Based on preliminary enrolments; schools with <16 pupils; *Cavan, Donegal, Monaghan*	

THE SHAME OF EUROPE: AVERAGE CLASS SIZES	
Ireland	23
Greece	17
Luxembourg	16
Croatia	15
Based on OECD figures from Education at a Glance 2025	

BETTER OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

- Reduces class size to the EU average.
- Provides more attention for every pupil.
- Supports inclusive education.

PUPILS LOSING OUT!	
Children in classes above EU average of 19	419,823*
Unqualified persons covering short-term absences	7,864*
Unfilled teaching posts	996**
*2024/2025 school year; **2025/2026 school year	

The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) is the largest education union on the island of Ireland, representing over 55,000 teachers.

In our pre-budget submission, we are calling on the Government to increase teacher numbers so that Ireland's children can *THRIVE!*

Since August 2024, the Government has cut the number of mainstream class teachers by over 900, leaving Ireland's children languishing behind their European peers in overcrowded classrooms. The Government's failure to retain these vital teaching posts at a time when enrolment has been falling has done untold damage.

In the last three budgets, despite the Government's commitment to reduce class sizes to the EU average of 19, no changes have been made to the appointment and retention figures for primary teachers. Consequently, 80% of Ireland's pupils remain in classes above the EU average size.

The majority of children with additional needs attend mainstream schools. To maintain an inclusive education system, schools require urgent additional teaching support, yet many schools have seen their allocation of special education teachers (SET) reduced.

As well as this, the substitute supply panel scheme has not been expanded with the result that thousands of substitute positions are being filled by people without a primary teaching qualification.

Schools are also losing their administrative principals and deputy principals because the primary staffing schedule has not been adjusted for the last three years.

Furthermore, 75 small rural schools are under severe threat of closure. In the last year alone, at least 11 schools have closed permanently while others were amalgamated.

The Government is hoping that a redeveloped primary curriculum will support high-quality inclusive and evidence-based learning for all children, recognising the right of every child to prosper. That is a forlorn hope unless the major structural deficiencies in staffing, which threaten the viability of our primary schools, are fixed quickly.

From Budget 2027, 1,000 more primary teachers is the **minimum** required to start creating the right circumstances for Ireland's children to thrive.

John Boyle Brendan Horan

Budget 2027

- ***BETTER*** OUTCOMES
- ***STRONGER*** SCHOOLS
- ***SUPPORT*** TEACHERS AND PUPILS

"INVESTING IN 1,000 MORE PRIMARY TEACHERS IS AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARDS PLUGGING THE CHRONIC STAFFING GAP IN IRELAND'S PRIMARY AND SPECIAL EDUCATION SYSTEM"

1,000 MÚINTEOIR BUNSCOILE EILE CHUN *LEASA ÁR LEANAÍ!*

Cost of Government inaction

- Overcrowded classes, much larger than the EU average.
- Number of mainstream teachers decimated.
- Thousands of substitute positions filled by unqualified personnel.
- Special/inclusive education lacks required teaching support.
- Successful implementation of redeveloped curriculum won't happen without qualified teachers being available.
- Over 75 small schools face threat of closure.

WITH 1,000 MORE PRIMARY TEACHERS, OUR CHILDREN WILL *THRIVE!*

Cost of 1,000 more teachers

- Full-year cost of 1,000 more primary teachers is €59.7 million[1].
- As new teachers would not take up employment until September 2027, the cost for 2027 is just €20 million.
- Providing 1,000 more primary teachers would increase expenditure at Department of Education and Youth by only 0.5% in 2027/28 school year[2].

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1. *oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2026-06-16/516/*
2. *bit.ly/EducationBudget2026 (based on current expenditure).*