



CIRCULAR 34/00

**To Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and all Teaching Staff of
National Schools**

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Background to the School Development Planning Service

The School Development Planning Service (SDPS) was launched in May of 1999 to promote the practice of planning in Primary schools. The Service aims to support collaborative planning as a means of promoting school effectiveness and renewal.

In the school year 1999/2000, the School Development Planning Service has grant-aided 442 schools in the first phase of the programme. The majority of these 442 schools are designated as disadvantaged and include schools in the ESL (Early School Leavers) Initiative as well as schools in the Springboard and Breaking the Cycle Initiatives. A National Co-ordinator and four Regional Co-ordinators were appointed to co-ordinate the implementation of the SDPS. Individual schools were assisted in conducting planning programmes by 44 facilitators who were employed on a part-time basis as part of the support service for SDPS. Drumcondra Education Centre is administering the programme.

This programme is funded by the Department of Education and Science under the National Development Plan.

Extension of the Service in 2000

With effect from 1/9/00, the School Development Planning Service will be extended to include all remaining one, two and three teacher schools as well as those remaining schools with 24 or more mainstream classroom teachers. Disadvantaged schools will continue to participate in the Service for the current year. The School Development Planning Service in Drumcondra Education Centre has contacted the schools concerned.

As an immediate step in the expansion of the initiative, the Minister has appointed 15 full-time facilitators to assist schools with their planning. The services of part-time facilitators will continue to be available, as the need arises. The facilitators will engage with staffs in the development of school planning processes, and arrangements for the provision of facilitation services will be made in consultation with each school. Schools funded in this phase of the School Development Planning Service may not be funded in subsequent years.

Payment of Grants

The Department of Education and Science is currently finalising arrangements for the payment of grants to all eligible schools. The grants will be used to allow schools to

acquire school planning materials and to allow members of staff to attend in-career development programmes under certain conditions. Grant payments will be related to school size. Amount of grant assistance payable in this academic year may not be reflective of amounts payable under this initiative in future years.

The schools that will be funded under this initiative for 2000/2001 academic year have already been notified individually by the School Development Planning Service. Grant assistance in the amount of £215 will be paid to all one, two and three teacher schools. The schools that were involved with the initiative in the 1999/2000 academic year and who in September 1999 had between four and eight mainstream teachers (including the Principal) will also be paid grant assistance of £215.

All school who, in September 1999, had twenty four or more mainstream teachers will receive grant assistance of £415. All schools involved with the initiative in the 1999/2000 academic year and who in September 1999 had nine or more mainstream teachers (including the Principal) will also be paid grant assistance of £415.

It is expected that grant payments will be made to schools in November 2000. The grants issuing at that time will be in respect of the 2000/2001 academic year. The grant will be lodged in the school's bank account under the new system of transfer of grants. Schools will be notified separately of the lodgement when it has been made.

The School Development Planning Service, Drumcondra Education Centre, has already circulated guidelines for expenditure of grant allocations.

It should be noted that schools that receive funding under the School Development planning Service will not receive funding in this or future years unless reports on expenditure of the grant for the last academic year are submitted.

Further extension of the Service to all schools in 2001

The School Development Planning Service will be extended to all schools on a phased basis by the end of 2002. Payments of grants in future years will continue to be made on the basis of the number of mainstream teaching posts in September 1999. The Minister wishes to acknowledge the progress achieved to date by all schools involved in the initiative and looks forward to its continued expansion.

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