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# The Irish Santa in Education Myth

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# OECD 2008: EDUCATION AT A GLANCE

## ■ EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AS A % OF GDP

IRELAND 2005: 4.6%

OECD AVERAGE 2005: 5.8%

IRELAND 2000: 4.5%

IRELAND 1995: 5.2%

JOINT 20<sup>TH</sup> OF 29 COUNTRIES FOR  
PRIMARY/SECONDARY/POSTSECONDARY  
NONTERTIARY

# Galbraith – Culture of Contentment

BUILDING ON STRENGTHS

DO YOU THINK YOU WANT TO  
STAY ON AT SCHOOL UNTIL  
THE LEAVING CERTIFICATE ?

Primary Pupils: 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Class

Total: 750 yes 80 no

2 probably 15 don't know

15 no answer

Era 1: Joe Lee – no policy

Era 2: Isolated programmes,  
territories, some attempts at  
strategies: Some progress

Teachers' Unions as Driving  
Forces Early On

- Ad hoc SCP, Isolated HSL,  
Narrow Behaviour Support  
Service, Unfocused Inservice

Era 3: ???

# ERA 3: ???

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- - The Drive for Evaluation and its Limitations: Causes need supporting conditions to 'work'
  - Holistic Strategies: Teams not individuals, developmental and lifelong focus, community development and schools
  - School as community focal point ?
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ERA 3: ???


HENRY KISSINGER: "EVEN THE MOST AFFLUENT COUNTRIES WILL CONFRONT SHRINKING RESOURCES. EACH WILL HAVE TO REDEFINE ITS NATIONAL PRIORITIES" 20 JAN 2009 'THE INDEPENDENT' - A PEELING AWAY OF INVESTMENT?

ERA 3: ???

- THE KEY ROLE OF UNIONS
- WHAT ARE THE MISSING ELEMENTS OF A HOLISTIC STRATEGY ?

# Commissioned Reports:

- Count Us In. Tackling early school leaving in South West Inner City Dublin: An Integrated Response (2007)  
P. Downes and C. Maunsell. SICCDA and South Inner City Dublin Drugs Task Force
  - A Holistic Approach to Early School Leaving and School Retention in Blanchardstown (2006) P. Downes, C. Maunsell and J.Ivers. Blanchardstown Area Partnership.
  - Psychological Supports for Ballyfermot: Present and Future (2004)  
P. Downes. URBAN Ballyfermot.
  - Voices of children: St. Raphael's Primary School Ballyfermot (2004)  
P. Downes. URBAN Ballyfermot.
- Questionnaires returned:
- |                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Primary Schools: 852; | Secondary Schools: 677 |
| Total: 1,529          | Focus Groups 57        |



**NO MENTAL HEALTH  
STRATEGY FOR CONTEXTS  
OF EDUCATIONAL  
DISADVANTAGE: A KEY  
BARRIER TO PROGRESS**



# HEALTH ISSUES AND SCHOOL COMPLETION – ‘EDU-CARE’

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- Hunger in School
    - Bullying
  - Substance Abuse
  - Student-Teacher Conflict  
Resolution
  - Problematic Sleep Patterns  
among Pupils

# **A mental health strategy and fund for contexts of socio-economic disadvantage**

- **Not one early school leaving problem: ESL is a behaviour with a range of motivations**
- **Beyond piecemeal approach of SCP, beyond 8 week bereavement courses**
- **Wider referral processes – reach withdrawn kids: ‘a slap in the face’**
- **Need for prevention and early intervention: non-verbal therapeutic intervention Cf. Familiscope**
- **NEPS – Reactive to critical incidents**
- **Alternatives to suspension**
- **Drug prevention issue**
- **EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING IS A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE !**

**Kaplan et al's (1994) North American study of 4,141 young people tested in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and once again as young adults which found a significant damaging effect of dropping out of high school on mental health functioning as measured by a 10-item self-derogation scale, a 9-item anxiety scale, a 6-item depression scale and a 6-item scale designed to measure coping.**

**This effect was also evident when controls were applied for psychological mental health as measured at 7<sup>th</sup> grade. The significant damaging effect of dropping out of school was also evident even when controls were applied for gender, father's occupational status, and ethnicity**

# THE NEED FOR COMMUNITY BASED EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS

- **Would you talk to an adult working in the school about your problems?**
- Yes Primary 240
- No Primary 300
- Maybe/depends Primary 25
- Don't know Primary 6      No Answer Primary 46
  
- Yes Secondary 131
- No Secondary 312
- Maybe/depends Secondary 23

# COMMON FINDINGS

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- - evidence that some of the pupils and students that are most at risk of early school leaving are falling through the gaps and not accessing existing afterschool services,
- - the high levels of pupils experiencing problematic sleep patterns potentially affecting their academic performance and linked in some responses to levels of anxiety affecting their sleep,
- - a notable minority of pupils and students who stated that they have no one to talk with about their problems,

- - the limited availability of drug prevention programmes in local schools,
- - the need for system level work with parents, for example, regarding early intervention strategies for their children's literacy and speech and language development,
- - the need for early referrals,
- - the need for early intervention regarding speech and language development, and therapeutic emotional intervention.

## **SOME MISSING ELEMENTS OF A HOLISTIC STRATEGY**

- 1) COMMUNITY BASED PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES WORKING ALSO ONSITE IN SCHOOLS: PREVENTION, EARLY INTERVENTION**
- 2) TEACHER INSERVICE AND PRESERVICE: INCREASED FOCUS ON LITERACY TEACHING SKILLS AT PRIMARY, CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS AT SECONDARY: NDP OVER 300MILLION FOR INSERVICE AND CURRICULUM DEVT**
- 3) OUT OF SCHOOL SERVICES STRATEGY: SEE QDOSS DOCUMENT**
- 4) SCHOOLS OPEN AFTER HOURS FOR COMMUNITY**
- 5) COMMON STRATEGY: DES, DEPT HEALTH, JUSTICE, CHILDREN, COMMUNITY/RURAL AFFAIRS**



A DISTINCT FUNDING STRAND FOR MENTAL HEALTH  
AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

–SUPPORTED BY FUNDING FROM THE DEPARTMENT  
OF JUSTICE AND LAW REFORM FOR MENTAL HEALTH  
INTERVENTIONS FOR STUDENTS AT RISK OF  
SUSPENSION/EXPULSION

- INCLUDING MEDIATORS

- 10 MILLION FROM PRIVATE SCHOOLS FUND



