

**RÁITEAS Ó CHAÍTRÍONA
RUANE MLA CHUIG AN
TIONÓL AR SHAINCHEIST
DHEIREANACH NA
TREORACH UM AISTRIÚ
2010**

30 JUNE 2009

**STATEMENT BY
CAITRÍONA RUANE MLA
TO THE ASSEMBLY ON
THE FINAL ISSUE OF
GUIDANCE REGARDING
TRANSFER 2010**

30 MEITHEAMH 2009

Is rud mícheart amach is amach é páistí a chur faoi scrúdú le socrú a dhéanamh faoi iontráil chuig iarbhunscoil, go háirithe nuair a bhraitheann gach rud ar na torthaí. Níl leithscéal ar bith ann le páistí óga a chur faoin bhrú seo nuair atá roghanna eile ann. Is eispéireas trámach é don iliomad páisti. In ionad an spreagadh agus an cothú, is córas é a chuireann ainm teipe ar ár bpáistí, rud atá míchothrom agus míchruinn ach rud a fhánann leo ar feadh a saolta. Is rud mímhoralta é an t-ainmniú sin ar pháistí 11 bliain d'aois is go bhfeictear mar theipeanna iad, is rud míchóir é agus ní chóir go dtarlóidh a leithéid arís.

Caithfidh an córas athrú. Tá córas oideachais de dhíth atá lárnach don pháiste, a fhreastalaíonn ar riachtanais an tsaoil nua aimseartha agus a dhéanann soláthar dár bpáistí ar fad agus a ligeann dóibh forbairt a dhéanamh ar a gcuid láidreachtaí agus a gcuid buanna. Caithfidh an fócas ar leith atá ar chumas acadúil a

Testing children at the age of 10 or 11 for the purpose of determining admission to post-primary school is totally wrong, particularly in circumstances where the stakes are so high. Putting young children under this sort of intense pressure when there are alternatives available is indefensible. For many children the experience is traumatic. Rather than encouraging and nurturing, it is a system that brands many of our children as failures – an unfair and inaccurate categorisation that follows them through their entire lives. Branding 11 year old children as failures is immoral, it is unjust and it should not be continued.

The system has to change. We need a child centred education system which meets the needs of the modern world and which delivers for all our children and allows each of them to develop their individual strengths and talents. The singular focus on academic ability must be replaced by a focus on all talents and

athrú ionas go mbeidh an fócas dírithe ar bhuanna agus ar inniúlachtaí. Tá sé ar intinn agam a chinntiú go bhfuil na riachtanais, na mianta, leas agus cearta pháistí ag croí lár ár gcórais oideachais. i mo bharúil, ní teip é páiste ar bith agus mar gheall air sin ní bheidh aon tástáil stát-urraithe ag 11 bliain d'aois a thuilleadh.

Ar an darna dul síos, táispeánann an fhianaise go soléir gur chruthaigh an seanchóras míchothromaíocht; d'fhreastail sé ar líon beag go maith ach theip sé ar líon níos mó. Is cosúil go bhfaigheadh páistí a bhfuil cónaí orthu i gceantair atá níos saibhre, iontráil chuig scoil ghramadaí ná in ionad na páistí sin a bhfuil cónaí orthu i gceantair atá faoi mhíbhuntáiste. Níl mé sásta glacadh le míchothromaíocht mar seo.

Ach ní bhaineann an fhadhb leis an mhíchothromaíocht ó thaobh fála ar áiteanna ag scoil ghramadaí amháin, ar bhonn aonair. Ach is fadhb a bhaineann leis an mhíchothromaíocht

aptitudes. I intend to ensure that the needs, aspirations, well-being and rights of children are at the heart of our education system. In my opinion no child is a failure and for that reason alone there will be no further state sponsored testing at age 11.

Secondly, the evidence clearly shows that the old system created inequality; it served a small number very well, but failed many more. Children living in well-off areas are much more likely to gain admission to a grammar school than those living in more disadvantaged areas. I am not prepared to tolerate such inequality.

But the problem is not just one of inequality in access to grammar school places at an individual level. It is also one of systemic inequality amidst demographic decline. Children from

shistéamach i measc meatha déimeagrafach í. Tá rónadaíocht déanta ar pháistí ó chúlraí socheacnamaíochta faoi mhíbhuntáiste san earnáil iarbhunscoile neamhroghnach, earnáil a bhfuil deiseanna agus soláthar oideachais srianta agus faoi bhagairt laghdaithe agus neamhinbhuanaitheachta.

Leis seo uile a thabhairt le chéile, bhí géilleadh sa mhúinteoireacht i mbunscoileanna mar gheall ar an seanchóras, cuireadh gnáthcheachtanna ar leataobh le páistí a ullmhú le haghaidh teist trí phaipéir trialacha a dhéanamh. Thosaigh roinnt scoileanna an cleachtadh seo i Rang 5. Fágadh na páistí sin nach ndearna an teist - trian de na páistí ar fad – gan bheith páirteach sna hullmhúcháin agus mar sin, bhí baol ann go gcaillfidis suim agus nach mbainfidís na bunleibhéil litearthachta agus uimhearthachta amach.

Nuair a bhí oiliúint á tabhairt dár bpáistí le haghaidh teist, bhí páiste eile den aois chéanna, ar fud na hEorpa, ag cur feabhais ar

disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds are significantly over-represented in a non-selective post-primary sector where provision and educational opportunity are increasingly restricted and threatened by shrinkage and unsustainability.

Compounding all of this, the old system led to the distortion of teaching in primary schools, as normal lessons were abandoned in order to put children through practice papers in preparation for a test. Some schools began conditioning at P5. However, those who did not take the test – one third of all children – were left out of preparations and were, therefore, in danger of losing interest and falling behind in achieving basic levels of literacy and numeracy.

While our children were being coached for a test, others of the same age across Europe were improving their literacy and

a scileanna litearthachta agus uimhearthachta, ag foghlaim teangacha agus ag glacadh páirt i ndrámaí agus i spóirt. Tá ár bpáistí faoi mhíbhuntáiste mar gheall ar an seanchóras i gcomparáid le páistí i dtíortha eile. Ní mar sin a bheidh sé as seo amach.

Tá dualgas reachtúil ann leis an curaclam a sheachadadh. Ach seachas an dualgas a bhfuil ceangal dlí ag gabháil leis, tá sé mícheart go mbíonn líon beag scoileanna ghramadaí ag déanamh iarracht le cleachtadh teagaisc sna bunscoileanna a dheachtú agus leis seo a dhéanamh ar son a bhféinleasa. Ní féidir linn ligint don mhionlach leithleach bheith freagrach ar luas na hathruithe. Rinne na hiarbhunscoileanna neamhroghnaithe eagrú agus labhair siad go soléir. Is mar aon ceardchumann na múinteoirí. Tá an Coimisiún Caitliceach tiomanta go mbeidh deireadh le roghnú san earnáil sin. Tá tromlach na múinteoirí bunscoile agus príomhoidí bunscoile i ndiaidh a gcur i gcoinne ó thaobh

numeracy skills, learning languages and participating in drama and sport. Our old system has put our children at a disadvantage in relation to children elsewhere. That will no longer be the case.

There is a statutory duty to deliver the curriculum. But apart from that legally binding duty, it is wrong that a small number of grammar schools should attempt to dictate teaching practice in our primary schools, and to do so in pursuit of their own narrow self interest. We cannot allow a selfish minority to dictate the pace of change. The non-selective post-primary schools have organised and spoken clearly. The teaching unions are as one. The Catholic Commission is determined that selection will end in its sector. The vast majority of primary schools teachers and principals have reiterated their opposition to academic selection. I, as Education Minister, and the department are clear that academic selection is coming to an end.

roghnaithe acadúil de a athrá. Tá mé féin mar Aire Oideachais, agus an Roinn, soléir go bhfuil roghnú acadúil ag teacht chun críche.

Foilsíodh an t-eagrán deireanach den Treoir um Aistriú 2010 ar 25 Meitheamh, 2009. Tharla sé seo i ndiaidh dhá chomhairliúchán ar an Treoir, as a dtáinig 3224 freagra (tá tuairiscí maidir leis na freagraí seo foilsithe ar shuíomh gréasáin na Roinne). Thug 3054 (95%) de na freagraí seo tacaíocht don Treoir. Ó thaobh na heochairphointí de, níor athraigh an Treoir – ach tá neart ábhar cuiditheach sa bhreis sa Treoir. Tá mé buíoch dóibh siúd uile a thug freagraí dúinn sna chomhairliúcháin.

Cad iad na rudaí nach bhfuil athraithe?

Ar dtús, ní sholáthróidh an Roinn aon Theist Aistrithe le haghaidh Aistriú 2010. Chuir tromlach na ndaoine sin a thug freagra sa chomhairliúchán fáilte mhillteanach mhór roimhe seo. Sa darna chás, coinníonn an Treoir

The final version of Transfer 2010 Guidance was published on 25 June, 2009. This followed two consultation exercises on the guidance, providing 3224 responses (reports of which have been published on the DE website). 3054 of these responses (95%) were supportive. In terms of its key points, the Guidance remains unchanged – but there is much additional helpful material in the Guidance. I am very grateful to all who responded in the consultation.

What remains unchanged?

First, there will be no Transfer Test provided by the Department for Transfer 2010. This was welcomed by the overwhelming majority of consultation respondents. Second, the Guidance maintains its recommendation that schools do

an moladh nár chóir do scoileanna critéir iontrála acadúla a úsáid. Cuireadh fáilte mhór roimhe seo fosta. Sa tríú chás, coinníonn an Treoir an moladh gur chóir do gach scoil úsáid a bhaint as an critéar, mar an chéad chritéar iontrála, a thugann tosaíocht chomhréireach do pháistí atá i dteideal Béilí Saora Scoile (FSME). Is aitheantóir cothrom agus éifeachtach an íseal-ioncaim í an Teidlíocht le haghaidh Béilí Saora Scoile. In aghaidh roinnt tuairmí fuithi, tá an Teidlíocht (in ionad an fíor líon a ghlacann léi) bunaithe ar chomhéid i ngach pobal.

Cad is nua ann? Is cáipéis í an Treoir atá níos mionsonraithe agus níos cuimsithí anois. Tá sainmhínte soléire agus teoracha praiticiúla curtha san áireamh leis na hiarscríbhínní 2 agus 3 chomh maith le sampla ar úsáid na gcritéir a bhaineann le Béilí Saora Scoile. Mar gheall ar na comhairliúcháin agus ar mhaithe le tuismitheoirí, agus iad saor na scoileanna is fearr leo a roghnú, tá moladh nua curtha san áireamh leis an Treoir, a mholann

not use academic admissions criteria. This was equally welcomed. Third, the Guidance maintains its recommendation that all school should use as their first admission criterion, a criterion that gives proportionate priority to children entitled to Free School Meals (FSME). Free-School-Meal-Entitlement is a highly effective and fair identifier of low-income. Contrary to some suggestions, Entitlement (as opposed to actual up-take) is established at an equal rate across communities.

What is new? The Guidance is now a much more detailed and comprehensive document. Annexes 2 and 3 include clear definitions and practical guidelines on criteria and an illustration of how to use the Free-School-Meal-Entitlement Criterion. As a result of consultations and in the interests of maintaining the ability of parents freely to express their preferences for schools, the Guidance also contains within it a new recommendation that schools do

do scoileanna gan critéir iontrála a úsáid a thugann tosaíocht d'iarrathóirí bunaithe ar an scoil a bhfuil roghnaithe acu mar phríomhrogha nó mar dharna rogha agus mar sin de.

Soléiríonn an Treoir na ról atá ag bunscoileanna agus ag na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne maidir leis an aistriú iarbhunscoile, lena chinntiú go leanfaidh an tsoiléireacht seo le tuismitheoirí agus le páistí. Tugtar muinín do bhunscoileanna go háirithe le cur in iúl dóibh nach gcuirfear faoi bhrú iad a bheith ag freastal ar phróiseas iontrála na n-iarbhunscoileanna – agus tuigeann neart acu sin cheana féin. Is é an ról atá ag bunscoil, ról luachmhar agus ríthábhachtach, ná oideachas iarbhunscoile a sholáthar do pháistí – agus sin a bhfuil ann. Tá neart bunscoileanna ag rá a leithéid iad féin.

Tá córas atá lánach don pháiste agus a sholáthraíonn comhdheis do gach pháiste a c(h)umas a bhaint amach de dhíth orainn. Choinnigh an seanchóras

not use admissions criteria that prioritise applicants according to whether or not they have applied to the school in question as their first preference, or second preference and so on.

The Guidance continues to give primary schools and the Education and Library Boards clarity about their role in post-primary transfer, to ensure continuing clarity to parents and children. Primary schools are particularly assured that they cannot be pressured into serving the admissions process of post-primary schools – and many already understand that. The role of a primary school, a vital and precious role, is to deliver primary education to children – nothing else. Many primary schools are declaring that for themselves.

We need a system that is child-centred and provides every child with an equal opportunity to reach their full potential. The old system deprived children of a fulfilling and

eispéireas oideachais d'ardchaighdeán sna blianta deiridh den bhunscoil ó na páistí mar gheall ar an díriú iomlán ar ullmhú le haghaidh teist. Ghlac an seanchóras go daingean leis an mhíchothromaíocht. Chuir an seanchóras stiogma an teipe ar pháistí 11 bliain d'aois. Caithfidh seo athrú. Creidim gur céim chun tosaigh é éisiúint na Treorach seo, i dtreo córais oideachais atá níos fearr, níos cothroime, i dtreo córais a chothaíonn agus a fhreastalaíonn ar ár bpáistí ar fad go cothrom.

quality educational experience in their final years in primary school because the entire focus was on preparing for a test. The old system entrenched inequality. The old stigmatised 11 year old children as failures. This has to change. I believe that the issuing of this guidance marks another important step forward, towards a better and more just education system that cherishes and serves all of our children equally.