

## **Post-primary Transfer: Summary of Ministerial Proposals**

### **Context**

1. The last 11+ Transfer Test will take place this year. Continuing demographic decline, the obligation to deliver the Entitlement Framework and the need to raise standards presents us with further challenges and opportunities to initiate a much needed programme of fundamental educational change so as to meet the needs of a modern day society.
2. Following the last Transfer Test this year we will move towards a system based upon children transferring to post primary school at 11, based on non academic criteria and making informed choices on their educational pathway at 14, much in the same way as they do now when electing GCSE subjects.
3. Academic excellence is a key plank of post primary education. The ending of academic selection will mean equal educational provision and opportunity for all children. The system must be about delivering quality education including academic excellence.
4. In order to manage this process of change I am prepared to adopt a three year phased approach, proceeding from the end of the Transfer Test (i.e. from Transfer 2010), which will allow those schools which need it, time to adapt to the new system.

### **Proposals**

10. I am proposing;
  - a. The ending of Academic Selection;
  - b. The introduction of new post primary admissions criteria;
  - c. A process of informed election at age 14.

The process will be as follows:

11. September 2009 – pupils will transfer on the basis of the current system (11+) for the last time
12. September 2010 – Pupils will begin to transfer under the new arrangements to post primary school at 11 on the basis of non academic admissions criteria. To facilitate transition schools can apply for the option of admitting by academic selection on a limited basis. In 2010 this will permit selection by up to 50% of intake
13. This will be the first post primary intake to avail of the full benefits of the choices of Level 2 courses (GCSE and equivalent vocational courses) available under the Entitlement Framework when they reach 14 in 2013.

14. The CCEA will draw up a standard test which will not distort the teaching of the Revised Curriculum. The remainder of these schools' intake will be based on non academic admissions criteria.
15. In September 2011 the ratio of intake will become 30% academic – 70% non academic admissions; in September 2012 the ratio of intake will become 20% academic – 80% non academic admissions.
16. In September 2013 all admissions will be on the basis of non academic criteria (see Annex A). This will also be the first year of pupils making informed choices for their educational path based on the full Entitlement Framework at age 14.

**Minister of Education**

## Annex A

### Phase 1 – Transfer 2010-2012

- The non academic criteria specified in regulations which will be used by Schools is set out below:
  - Geography
    - Parish
    - Catchment Area
    - Nearest Suitable School
  - Family criteria:
    - Currently attending sibling only
    - Eldest/first child
  - Community:
    - Feeder primary
  - Socially disadvantaged criteria
    - looked after children;
    - children entitled to Free School Meals
  - Tie-breakers eg.
    - Random Selection
- DE/ESA will ensure that the system of Transfer will take account of rurality.

For those schools seeking a transitional period will be defined as “bilateral” (there are currently 4 bilateral schools).

- Schools defined as Bilateral will be able in regulations to admit up to 50% of their intake by reference to academic selection in September 2010, 30% in 2011 and 20% in 2012. The remainder of the bilateral schools’ intake will be admitted by non-academic admissions criteria.
- For the three years of this transition, the CCEA will draw up a revised standard test for transfer from primary school to bilaterals. This test will not distort the teaching of the Revised Curriculum.

### Preparations for Phase 2

- DE will review its management of school capacity (i.e. its current definition of numbers).
- From 2010, schools involved in collaborative arrangements with other schools will enjoy maximum discretion and flexibility on capacity within physical limits.
- This flexibility and autonomy will ensure that popular schools will manage demand, all schools securing sustainability but most importantly all schools

delivering access to an increased range of courses under the Entitlement Framework.

- Similarly, the current capital build programme will be reviewed to ensure that it is compatible with the new area based plans and that collaborating schools will enjoy maximum discretion.
- Transport Policy will be reviewed to ensure that it is compatible with the new post-primary arrangements.
- DE's area-based planning framework will guarantee availability of the Entitlement Framework's post-14 pathways from 2013, drawing on the work of my area-based planning process. The area-based planning process will also be the means by which the costs of any structural change will be identified – although here it should be remembered that the issues of sustainability and surplus, the need to expand post-14 provision, and estate modernisation all require structural change and, therefore, present an opportunity here.

#### Phase 2: 2013 – Election at 14

- In September 2013 all admissions will be on the basis on non academic criteria. This will also be the first year of pupils making informed choices for their educational path based on the full Entitlement Framework at age 14
- Election at 14 will mean pupils making informed decision on their educational pathway based on vastly increased choices.

Under the Entitlement Framework this will mean access to 24 Courses at Level 2 (GCSEs or equivalent) and 27 Level 3 courses (A levels or equivalent). To achieve this level of access many schools may be required to collaborate with other schools, FE institutions and other providers. Such collaboration will continue to be incentivised and supported.