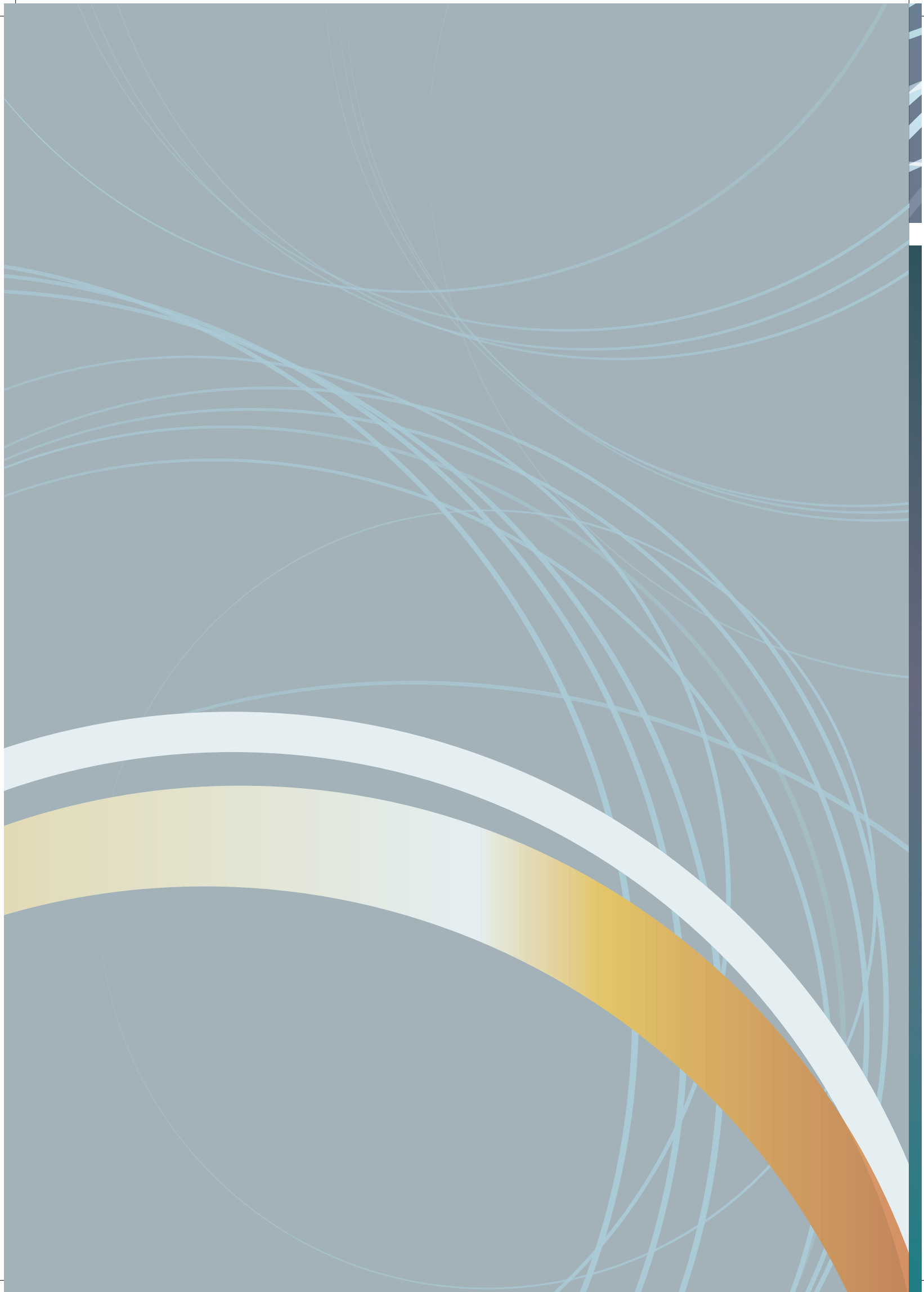
The background features a dark teal gradient with several thin, light blue curved lines that sweep across the frame. In the center, five white silhouettes of people in professional attire stand on a white curved platform. Below this platform is a thick, curved band with a gradient from white to orange. The overall composition is modern and dynamic.

Governance & Funding
of Second-level Schools
in Ireland





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Aim of Study

- Governance & trusteeship landscape
- Current funding & provision
- Roles & responsibilities of trustee
- Sustainable funding model(s)
- International comparisons
- Planning for the Future

Introduction

This booklet contains a summary of an in-depth independent study undertaken by the ESRI (*The Economic and Social Research Institute*) over the last eighteen months and was commissioned with the specific **Aim** of providing greater information and research for **Stakeholders (Fig.1)** in second-level education and to close the “research gap” on governance and funding of second-level schools in Ireland.

This is the first time that an in-depth study of this type has been carried out on the second-level sector in Ireland. The study establishes the true cost of delivering education; quantifies the value of the voluntary support second-level schools receive from their trustees, parents and local communities and also determines the cost of trusteeship. It identifies the shortfall in funding of Faith schools compared to State schools (ETBs / Vocational / Community & Comprehensive) (**Bar Chart 1**) and the critical need to establish sustainable future models to support and deliver post primary education in Ireland as desired by parents for their children.

The full version of the report is available to download at www.esri.ie

Aim of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to provide the first systematic analysis of the governance and funding of second-level schools in the Republic of Ireland which includes an overview of the variations across the three school sectors (voluntary secondary schools, ETB schools (formerly VECs including community colleges) and community/comprehensive schools. It also:

- Outlines the statutory role and function of trustees
- Identifies the ways in which schools are funded and the disparities which exist between the sectors, focusing in particular on voluntary secondary schools
- Quantifies the extent to which volunteers and parents contribute to the funding of voluntary secondary schools
- Sets out the ways in which schools utilise State funding



- Provides examples of models of second-level school education in other countries
- Encourages chairpersons, principals and other stakeholders to think clearly about their understanding of governance and funding issues in a challenging economic environment
- Provides clear evidence to substantiate the need for a debate on the sustainability of the current governance and funding arrangements for voluntary secondary schools and options for the future

Methodology of Study

The ESRI research comprises of three main planks; interviews with stakeholders; two postal surveys and questionnaires (principals and chairpersons) issued to all Irish second-level schools and research of alternative European and International models for funding of governance and trusteeship.

It involved:

- Desk research
- International literature review
- Face to face interviews with key stakeholders
- Postal survey of all secondary school principals and chairpersons of Boards of Management
- Analysis of data

Findings of the Study

The main findings of the study reveal;

- Currently there is a broad range of second-level schools in Ireland which reflects parental demand.
- Parents of children in both faith-based and State schools value the choice that is provided and would want this diversity to continue.
- The ESRI report is based on the most comprehensive survey ever of second-level schools, and it shows that a significant gap (circa 30%) has developed between the funding of Faith based schools and State schools.
- It confirms the need for greater transparency in the funding of school-level governance and running costs.
- Enrolment levels at second-level schools are projected to increase by 31-34% by 2021 (CSO 2012), making further calls on scarce resources.
- At least some elements of the trusteeship function of the community and comprehensive sector and the VEC schools (now ETB's) is provided by the State. However the voluntary second-level schools sector receives no funding for its trustee function, although the duties of trustees are legislated for in the Education Act 1998.
- For these reasons (funding gap and growing enrolment) a sustainable and

equitable funding model for second-level education in Ireland is required.

- The ESRI study provides valuable research on funding models in other countries (P23)

Next Steps

After the publication of the ESRI Study we anticipate an inclusive engagement of all faith schools in a discussion on education in their local communities.

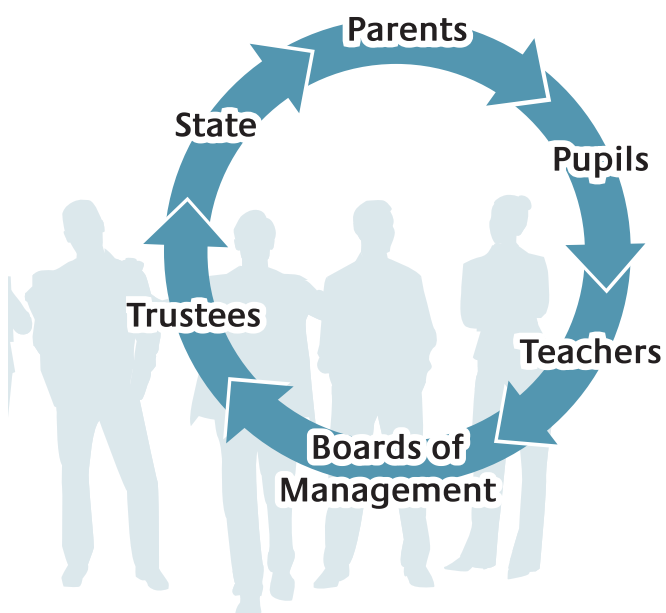
Thanks

We extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the chairpersons, principals and stakeholders who participated in this study. Their input generated a significant amount of new and valuable data which will serve as an important source of insight and evidence as the debate around the future sustainability of second-level schools governance and funding intensifies.

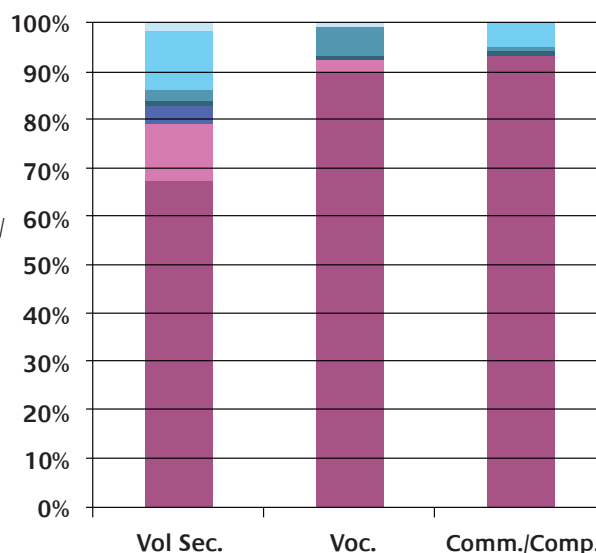
To, Dr Merike Darmody and Prof. Emer Smyth and their ESRI colleagues we are indebted for their detailed research and commitment in producing an extremely comprehensive study on the governance and funding of second-level schools in Ireland. We anticipate it will become a benchmark study for developing future sustainable models.

On behalf of the Steering Group

Fig 1: Stakeholders



Bar Chart 1: Proportion of funding from different sources by school sector



Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

Education Act 1998

The Education Act defines the Patron of a school as “The persons/.../who stand appointed as trustees or as the board of governors of a post-primary school and where there are no such trustees or school board, the owner of that school.” 8-(1) (6)



The current structure of post primary education in Ireland

State-funded education is available to all students in Ireland, unless their parents choose to send them to a private school.

The Irish education system comprises three types of second-level school:

- Voluntary Secondary Schools
- ETB's (formerly VEC's including community colleges)
- Community/Comprehensive Schools

Schools are largely State funded and follow the same State prescribed curriculum and take the same State public examinations.

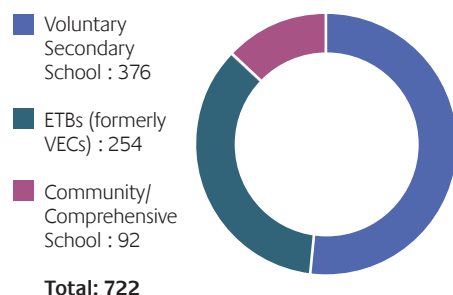
Unlike many countries, many aspects of the administration of the Irish education system are in the centralised control of the Department of Education and Skills with Education and Training Boards (ETBs) being the only regional administrative structure for education.

In 2010, the Government agreed a restructuring of the Vocational Education Committee system, involving a reduction in the numbers of VEC's from 33 to 16 through the merger of existing VEC's. Educational and Training Boards (ETBs) have taken over the work of the VEC's and have an expanded role, underpinned by the Education and Training Boards Bill (2012), in delivery of education and training across the country.

The Education Act 1998 provides a statutory basis for the whole education system. The Department of Education and Skills has the statutory responsibility to implement the Education Act, including the funding of recognised schools and accountability for such funding.

The Act recognises the autonomy of each school, under its patron, and sets out the main responsibilities and rights of the patron, the board of management and the principal, subject to regulations made by the Minister.

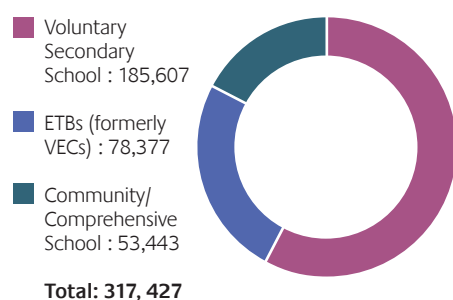


Fig 2 : Number and type of post primary schools in Ireland

Of the 722 secondary schools in Ireland, 55 (8%) are fee-paying schools.

In recent years, the number of schools across the three sectors has changed:

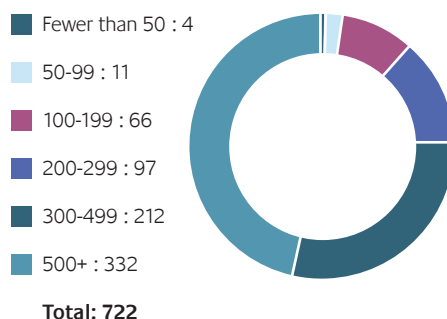
- The number of voluntary secondary schools has fallen by 48 from 424 in 2000 to 376 in 2012, driven by amalgamations, school closures and reduced patronage for the sector
- The number of vocational schools has increased by 9 over the last 13 years
- The number of community schools has increased by 12 over the last 13 years
- The very small comprehensive school sector has also decreased slightly

Fig 3 : Number of full-time students at second-level in 2011/2012*

*Junior and Senior Cycle students only.

Source: www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Key-Statistics-2011-2012

- Different types of schools can have a specific ethos, that is, a distinctive range of values, beliefs and customs which define the school's philosophy or characteristic spirit. More than 52% of schools are owned by religious congregations, the local Catholic diocese or by Education Trust Companies. There are currently 14 comprehensive schools and there are no plans for further expansion.

Fig 4 : Enrolment size (number of pupils) at second-level in 2011/2012

Source: <http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Key-Statistics-2011-2012>

Enrolment levels in second-level schools are projected to grow by 31-34% by 2021 peaking at 413,118. (CSO 2012)

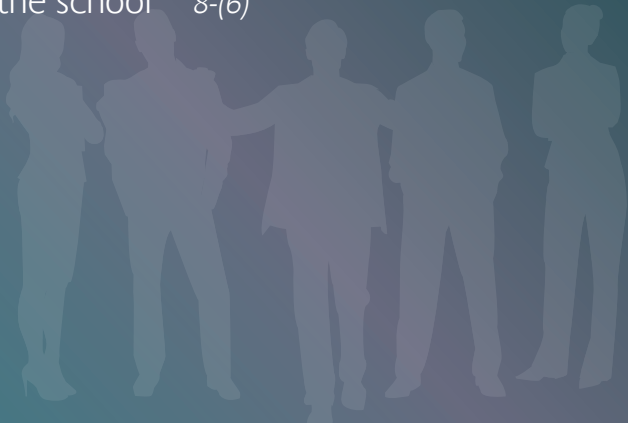
Admissions Policy

In June 2011 the Minister for Education and Skills opened the way for an overhaul of the enrolment policies of all schools. The Minister published a discussion document on admissions policy aimed at bringing about changes in regulations and legislation on how primary and second-level schools allocate places to students. Central to this debate on the enrolment is the need to ensure for a fair and transparent system for all schools, which does not discriminate unfairly against students or parents. A draft Education (Admission to School) Bill 2013, aimed at making school enrolment policies fairer, was published in September, 2013.



Trusteeship Education Act 1998

“The patron of a school shall carry out the functions and exercise the powers conferred on the patron by the Act and such other functions and powers as may be conferred on the patron by any Act of the Oireachtas or instrument made thereunder, deed, charter, articles of management, or such other instrument relating to the establishment of the school” 8-(6)



Trusteeship in Second-Level Schools

The trustee or patron is responsible for ensuring the running of schools, which includes provision of education appropriate to the abilities of the students and promotion of the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students.

Trustees/Patrons have a moral as well as legal responsibility to maintain schools in accordance with a specific ethos or characteristic spirit.

Trustee/Patron of voluntary secondary schools includes Bishops, Religious Orders, Boards of Governors, Education Trust Companies and Private individuals.

In recent years, several voluntary secondary schools under the patronage of different religious orders joined together under one Education Trust Company, while others remained independent. These Education Trust Companies are comprised in whole, or in part, of lay people with responsibility for running schools transferred by the religious orders. The underlying objective of these Trust Companies is to ensure the continuation of a denominational ethos in the schools they own.

There is a growing recognition among the religious orders who founded voluntary secondary schools that existing arrangements for trusteeship are not sufficient, and that new models of funding and trusteeship arrangements will be required to ensure their continuation.

A lack of funding will pose serious problems for these Trust Companies in the future, threatening the sustainability of 52% of all second-level schools in Ireland.

Each of the Trust Companies provides essential support to the leadership and management of schools and Boards of Management in relation to ethos development. They are also responsible for policy and consultation, strategic issues, change of status of schools, appointments, school accountability, school policies, school effectiveness, communications and training as well as providing advice to Boards of



Management on their legal responsibilities, property and procurement related issues. The board of directors of the Trust Companies are generally experienced professionals who undertake functions as pro bono work.

The cost of trusteeship of voluntary secondary schools is significant and is not funded by Government;

Schools pay the trustees an annual licence fee of anything between €1 and more than €6 per student. However the cost of Trusteeship is €25 per student. This results in the Trust Companies having to fund the gap of €19 to €24 per student per year to continue to deliver its service to schools.

“[Education Trusts] do not have any golden bucket or bottomless pit of money. They did have a lot when they were set up, on paper they were worth an awful lot but now that figure on paper is very little.” Trustee 3

The cost of Trustee support to schools by Trust Companies is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain.

Financing the work undertaken by the Trust Companies is an increasing challenge due to:

- Cutbacks in the education sector
- Decreasing return on the ‘seed funding’ investment from the founders
- Sharp decline in the value of property investments held by the Trust Companies or religious orders
- Decreasing number of religious and other volunteers who are able to give their time free-of-charge to fulfil roles which are now having to be undertaken by paid lay people

Response to the Financial Challenges

As well as reducing spending, where possible, other scenarios, such as amalgamation and selling of property have also been considered. However, these attempts have been hampered by the current economic climate.

Some trusts have rationalised their education offices and are operating with minimal resources.

The Future

The funding gap between the income and operating cost of Education Trust Bodies is unsustainable and requires a permanent solution.

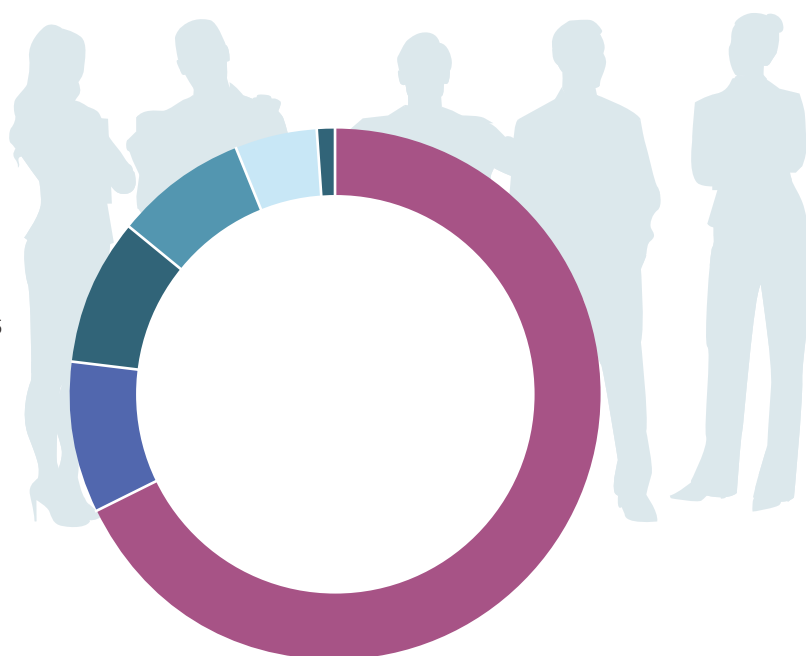
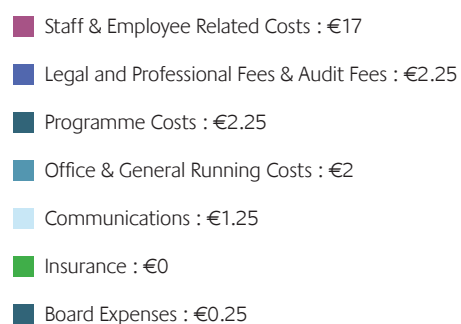
All trustee representatives and most education stakeholders suggest that some form of State funding should be available for Education Trust Bodies to enable them to carry out the duties and responsibilities required of them under the Education Act.

The current Education Trust bodies are considering new models of trusteeship for schools under their care and ensure upholding of the characteristic spirit of these schools.

Closer collaboration between Education Trust bodies and other organisations is required to avoid duplication of services.

New models providing sustainable and equitable funding for trusteeship of voluntary secondary schools will have to be found if this sector is to continue.

Fig 5: Cost of Trusteeship per student



Study Findings: “More than half of all principals reported that their school intake had increased over the past five years and almost half of all principals expect student numbers to increase in the future.”

Source: *Survey of second-level School Principals (2012)*

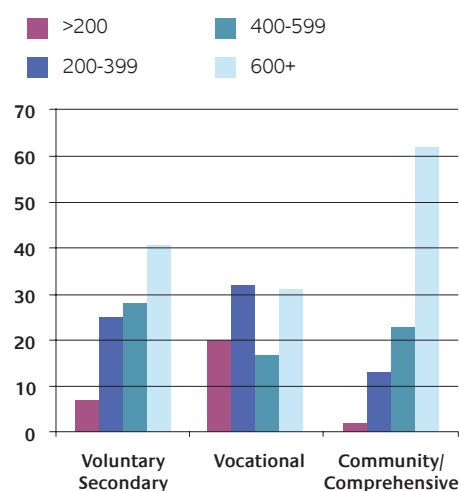
“For the first time in 22 years there’s a new voluntary secondary school in the Catholic tradition opening in Mulhuddart under the Le Chéile trust and a Church of Ireland school for the first time in forty or fifty years opening in the Church of Ireland tradition in Greystones.” *Trustee 10*

The Operation and Governance of Second-Level schools in Ireland

International research shows that successful schools are characterised by the fact that both the board and principal demonstrate that they have a clear understanding of their different roles and responsibilities by functioning as a partnership team.

The three second-level sectors in Ireland vary significantly in size:

Bar Chart 2: Sector Sizes



School sector by size (number of students)

Choosing a school for a child is a hugely complex process influenced by numerous factors.

In light of the current economic climate some reconfiguration of school choice is likely to take place. Interviews with stakeholders indicated that it is difficult to provide a choice of schools across all regions.

Schools compete for students.

- 83% of all second-level schools reported having another school nearby
- 34% of all schools are over-subscribed
- Almost half of all voluntary secondary schools are over-subscribed
- Large schools are more likely to be over-subscribed than small schools
- 20% of over-subscribed schools are fee-paying schools



What influences school choice?

The two most common criteria are:

1. Having a sibling or parent who attended the school
2. Being from the local area

Voluntary secondary schools were more likely to consider religious ethos as influencing enrolment, compared to ETBs (Vocational schools) which cited academic performance as a key factor.

When asked to describe their school's ethos, many principals described their schools as a safe environment for all students, all inclusive, holistic and supportive.

One measure of school ethos is students' engagement with, and behaviour in the school.

Ethos is also influenced by the behaviour of teachers

Fig 6 : School admission criteria across all second-level schools (2013)

	Voluntary Secondary	Vocational	Community/ Comprehensive
Residence in local area	59%	71%	77%
Student's record of academic performance	8%	26%	7%
Entrance examination	6%	8%	0%
Recommendation of feeder schools	26%	41%	36%
Parents' endorsement of the religious philosophy of the school	46%	11%	14%
Preference given to family members of current or former students	88%	65%	64%

Source: Survey of second-level school principals

Note: Respondents could tick multiple responses so the percentages sum to more than 100.

Fig 7 : Principals' views on students in their school (true of nearly all)

	Voluntary secondary	Vocational	Community/ Comprehensive
Enjoy being at school	90%	82%	82%
Are well-behaved in class	90%	81%	84%
Show respect for their teachers	92%	86%	84%
Are rewarding to work with	86%	79%	82%
Are well-behaved during break times	88%	80%	82%

Source: Survey of second-level school principals

Fig 8 : Principals' views on teachers in their school (true of nearly all)

	Voluntary secondary	Vocational	Community/ Comprehensive
Teachers are positive about the school	92%	87%	92%
Teachers get a lot of help and support from colleagues	85%	84%	84%
Teachers are open to new developments and challenges	54%	66%	56%
Teachers are eager to take part in professional development	55%	67%	53%

Source: Survey of second-level school principals

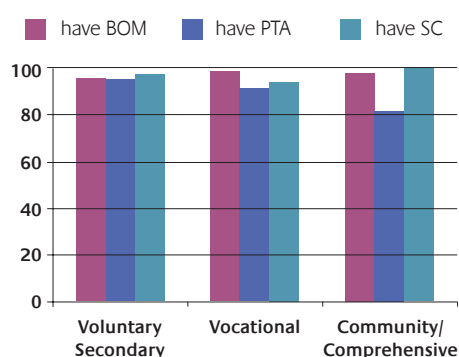
How do schools develop or maintain their ethos?

Fig 9 : Responses from principals

Denominational	Vocational Schools	Community Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily prayers • Iconography • Prayer room • Regular liturgies and prayer services • Students participate in local parish youth choirs • Retreats are organised for all students • Religious education studied as a core subject, but not necessarily for examination • Pastoral care system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open enrolment policy and inclusive approach to all applicants • Environment where everybody is valued • Promoting respect for self and others • Providing pastoral care, guidance and counselling • Focusing on needs of students • Supporting staff • Celebrating success and achievement • Providing a good range of subjects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open enrolment policy • No streaming • Recognising students' needs and supporting them • Providing liturgical services and mass • Promoting positive interpersonal relationships at school • Organising carol services at Christmas • Providing pastoral care • Providing Christian values and spiritual education • Providing daily tutorials, assemblies and meditation for all classes

Governance of Second-Level Schools

Bar Chart 3 : Existence of governing bodies in schools



Source: Survey of second-level school principals
BOM: Board of Management
PTA: Parent Teacher Association
SC: Student Council

FACT: 71% of principals reported that nearly all parents attend parent-teacher meetings. However, only 10% of principals reported that nearly all parents attend other meetings.

Voluntary secondary school principals are seen to have the most say in implementing policies, hiring staff and implementing child protection policies as well as employment/management of Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) and staffing structures/in-school management.

39% of principals considered themselves or their Board of Management to have the most say in planning school buildings and extensions when, in fact, it is the Trustees who are deemed to have ultimate control over this area.

Fig 10 : Voluntary second-level principals' views on who has the most say in various school processes

	Principal	Teachers	Parent-Teacher Association	Board of Management	Trustees
Implementation of legislation relevant to second-level schools	58%	9%	1%	42%	10%
Implementation of child protection (policies and legislation)	66%	12%	1%	40%	4%
DES Circulars/ correspondence	87%	10%	0	13%	6%
Evaluations/ school planning	57%	46%	2%	14%	1%
School policy development and drafting policies [e.g. admissions]	52%	41%	9%	34%	4%
Financial management and planning	64%	2%	0.2	39.%	14%
School buildings/ extensions	44%	5%	1%	42%	26%
Provision of teaching resources/equipment	73%	19%	1%	14%	7%
Curriculum issues (policies, use of texts, etc.)	40%	64%	3%	12%	4%
Training for members of BOM	30%	10%	2%	43%	27%
School ethos/values	41%	36%	8%	37%	23%
Religious education	41%	46%	3%	21%	17%
Contract, payment, supervision of cleaners/ caretaker	72%	4%	0.4%	14%	14.%
Employment/management of SNAs and others	81%	3%	0.2%	12%	12%
Staffing structures/ in-school management	83%	6%	0.4	15%	8%
Traveller Education	39%	30%	0.4%	7.0%	4%
Migrant education/ language support	37%	41%	0.4%	9%	4%
School budget	60%	2%	2%	40%	15%
School fees (if applicable)	29%	4%	4%	21%	4%
Fundraising	43%	22%	37%	17%	4%

Source: Survey of second-level school principals

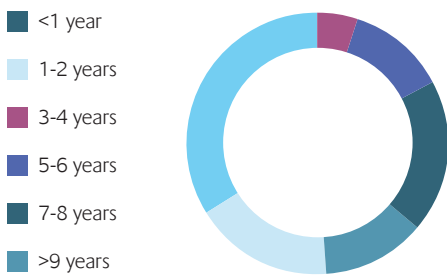
Chairpersons of Boards of Management

The Education Act specifies the various duties and functions of a Board:

- The Board must manage the school on behalf of the patron for the benefit of the students and their parents and provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student in their school
- It must also uphold the characteristic spirit of their school
- Boards of Management of Catholic voluntary secondary schools operate in accordance with the Articles of Management for Catholic Secondary Schools negotiated by the Association of Secondary Teachers (ASTI) and the Catholic Managerial Bodies in 1984
- Community schools, comprehensive schools and community colleges operate under Deeds of Trust
- Boards of Management of ETBs second-level schools are sub-committees of the ETBs

Chairpersons have an important role to play in the governance of schools. They are appointed by the Trustees and are required to attend all meetings of the Board of Management.

Fig 11 : Length of service of Chairpersons of Boards of Management



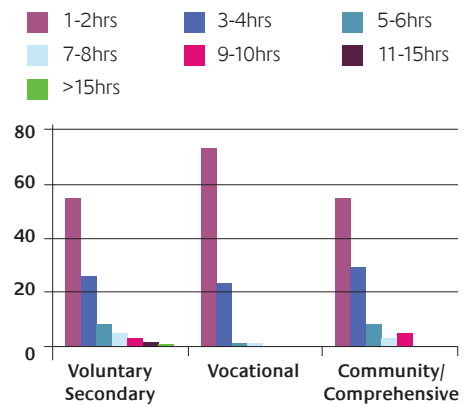
Source: Survey of Chairpersons of second-level schools

FACT: 40% of Chairpersons of Voluntary secondary schools had been on their Board of management for more than nine years.

Only 3% of voluntary second-level school chairpersons believe that the government provides sufficient training and only 21% believe that the Trustees provide sufficient training.

Voluntary second-level chairpersons are least likely to believe that board members should be entitled to recoup expenses.

Bar Chart 4 : Time spent by Chairpersons on governance related tasks per week



Source: Survey of chairpersons of second-level schools

Fig 12 : Statements about governance of schools: Principals (strongly agree)

	Voluntary Secondary	Vocational	Community/Comprehensive
I'm clear about the purpose, duties and functions of the Board of Management	79%	66%	87%
I'm clear about the function of Trustees	68%	57%	65%
In future, governance structures in schools will require paid expertise available to them (e.g. financial, HR, etc.)	54%	34%	43%
All Board members should be entitled to recoup expenses incurred while engaged in the work of governance	41%	32%	34%
Board matters take up too much of my personal time	12%	3%	10%
The Board has the necessary skills available to it to conduct all matters – legal, financial, employment etc. appropriately	9%	6%	8%
There is sufficient training provided for members of BOM by Trustees	18%	16%	23%
There is sufficient training provided for members of BOM by the government	4%	6%	20%
Members of BOM take time to avail of training	19%	14%	18%

Source: Survey of Principals of Second level schools

section 4 (cont'd): the operation and governance of second-level schools

Organisations which chairpersons availed of training include the JMB (Joint Managerial Body), ACCS (Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools), Religious Orders and ETBs (Education and Training Boards).

The type of training chairpersons have availed of include child protection, interview competencies/training, new Junior Certificate, staff recruitment, support of Principal, VAT and RCT workshop.

Fewer than half of all chairpersons have availed of any training at all. Only half were satisfied with the training provided.

Fig 13 : Statements about governance of schools: Chairpersons (strongly agree)

	Voluntary Secondary	Vocational	Community/ Comprehensive
I'm clear about the purpose, duties and functions of the Board of Management	79%	63%	82%
I'm clear about the function of Trustees	72%	43%	61%
In future governance structures in schools will require paid expertise available to them (e.g. financial, HR, etc.)	36%	24%	31%
All Board members should be entitled to recoup expenses incurred while engaged in the work of governance	29%	31%	37%
Board matters take up too much of my personal time	7%	4%	8%
The Board has the necessary skills available to it to conduct all matters – legal, financial, employment etc. appropriately	19%	24%	27%
There is sufficient training provided for members of BOM by Trustees	21%	18%	18%
There is sufficient training provided for members of BOM by the government	3%	3%	13%
Members of BOM take time to avail of training	16%	23%	34%

Source: Survey of Chairpersons of second-level schools.

Fig 14 : Chairpersons' views on training

	Training provided by Trust		Training provided by Government		Training provided by other body		Have not availed of Training	
	All schools	Voluntary Secondary Schools only	All schools	Voluntary Secondary Schools only	All schools	Voluntary Secondary Schools only	All schools	Voluntary Secondary Schools only
Maintenance of school ethos/ characteristic spirit	26%	43%	2%	1%	9%	8%	58%	46%
Personal Spirituality and Development	14%	24%	1%	0%	8%	10%	69%	61%
School Policy Development	14%	14%	10%	10%	14%	14%	56%	57%
Property	11%	19%	1%	0.6%	6%	8%	73%	67%
Finance	14%	23%	4%	7%	15%	22%	61%	47%
Insurance	8%	11%	3%	3%	6%	7%	75%	74%
Board meetings	21%	27%	6%	6%	13%	13%	54%	53%
Role of chairperson	21%	30%	7%	5%	13%	13%	53%	50%
School management	20%	27%	7%	7%	14%	14%	53%	50%
Legal responsibilities (school, students, parents, staff etc)	17%	23%	9%	6%	17%	18%	53%	50%

Source: Survey of Chairpersons of second-level schools.

Fig 15 : Summary of the management and governance of second-level schools in Ireland

	Voluntary Secondary Schools	Vocational Schools	Community Colleges	Community Schools	Comprehensive Schools
Patron body/Trustees	Bishop/religious orders Boards of Governors Trust Companies e.g. CEIST, ERST, Le Chéile	Education and Training Boards (ETBs)	Education and Training Boards (ETBs)	The joint Trustees are the Vocational Education Committee, the Religious Order(s) and/or the Bishop [Deed of Trust, Community School] or the duly authorised nominated person(s) deemed to be acting on behalf of the Trustees	Comprehensive Schools operate under the trusteeship of religious denominations – either Catholic Bishop or under the Trusteeship of the Church of Ireland
Executive functions of Patrons / Patrons performed by:	Chief Executive of Trusts	Chief Executive Officer of the ETB's	Chief Executive Officer of the ETB's	Each community school is a completely independent school liaising directly with the Department of Education and Skills	Each comprehensive school is a completely independent school liaising directly with the Department of Education and Skills
Governing/Managing Body	Boards of Management	Boards of Management	Boards of Management	Boards of Management	Boards of Management
Other relevant governing organisations	All BOMs represented by JMB	BOMs are sub-committees of ETBs	BOMs are sub-committees of ETBs	Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS)	Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS)
Composition of Boards of Management	Eight persons appointed by the Trustees. Four members are nominated by the Trustee along with two parents and two teacher representatives The principal acts as secretary to the board but is not a member	Not more than 12 members nominated or elected comprising three/four members nominated by the ETB of which at least two shall be members of the ETB, two parent and two teacher representatives. Additional places may, with ETB approval on the nomination of the board, be filled to facilitate relevant partnerships	A matter for local negotiation. A designated Community College will usually have three nominees of the religious trustees, three nominees of the ETB, two teachers and two parents with the option of co-opting a tenth member. Each community college is part of the local ETB and board decisions have to be ratified by the ETB itself	Three nominees of the religious authorities, three nominees of the ETB, two parents of children who are pupils in the school and who are resident in the area, two teachers employed in the schools forming the new community school or who are employed in the existing community school. The principal acts as a non-voting member of the Board	A) Two nominees of the Diocese, one nominee of the ETB, the Chief Executive Officer of the ETB, two nominees of the parents and two nominees of the teachers. B) Six nominees of the Trustees, one Chief Executive Officer, two parents and two teachers

“The ETB, they get their capitation grant, the teacher claw back, all their insurance is paid by the State, all of their security is paid by the State, all of their caretaking is paid by the State, on top of what they get in terms of the capitation grant.” *Trustee 1*

Voluntary secondary schools are more likely to apply and use a grant for major renovations, whereas vocational schools were more likely to apply and use a grant to build a new school and community/comprehensive schools were more likely to do so for minor repairs.

The smallest schools are less likely to receive grants.

There are more small schools in the voluntary secondary school sector than the other sectors.

Funding Structures vs Allocations of second-level schools

The imbalance of State funding across the three school sectors is problematic and needs to be regularised in the interest of equitable distribution of State resources.

Greater transparency of funding and a clear distinction is required in relation to the specifics of funding **STRUCTURES** v **ALLOCATIONS**.

Funding structures vary across the three school sectors, ETBs (formerly VECs) expenditure is submitted in aggregate form (Block Grant). More detailed data is available on the financial profile of each specific school within the comprehensive & community schools sector as they must submit a budget and request an allocation annually from the State. In the case of voluntary secondary schools the annual funding is entirely dependent on the number of students attending the school, based on the returns submitted to the Department on the 30th September annually.

In the case of the Voluntary sector, a capitation grant (€301- post Budget 2013) per capita, is allocated to each Board of Management, whereby the size of the student body determines the amount of funding received from the State. Building maintenance etc. is expended by the Boards of Management from within the capitation grant, despite the increasing costs of Insurance, maintenance, administration and security etc.

ESRI Study confirms that there is no equity in the way in which secondary schools in Ireland are funded.

ETBs and community/comprehensive schools receive 90% or more of their funding from government sources. Voluntary sector schools receive less than 70%.

Historically, trustees, parents and other benefactors have been required to make up the difference. This situation equates to an additional tax on parents who send their children to voluntary secondary schools in the free education scheme.

“Chaplains are paid for in the ETB and community comprehensive scheme, they’re not paid for in the voluntary secondary [sector]” *Trustee 4*



“The capitation grants [...] are being reduced and grants for other services have been reduced and it’s a major concern to many of the schools.”
Trustee 1

The Capitation Grant

- Is paid to schools within the voluntary sector on the number of recognised pupils enrolled in their schools
- 2012/13 rate is €301 per student with additional specific purpose grants available e.g. book grant – cuts expected in 2014 and 2015
- Intended to contribute towards general operating costs of schools and non-pay costs of specific educational programmes e.g. Transition Year and Leaving Certificate applied programmes
- Additional funding available based on student need e.g. DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) schools receive extra financial support
- The way in which the Capitation Grant is used varies between second-level school sectors
- Protestant block grant facilitates attendance of disadvantaged children at Protestant secondary schools (which are fee paying schools)
- Other private fee paying schools are not eligible

Specific Purpose Grants

Four-fifths of voluntary secondary schools receive a specific purpose grant e.g. towards caretaking, secretarial services, books and so on.

DEIS Schools are significantly less likely to receive a grant than other schools.

DEIS School Designation

Voluntary secondary schools are significantly less likely than other schools to be designated as disadvantaged and thus to receive DEIS funding.

Almost 50% of principals felt that DEIS status either had no effect or a negative effect on attracting students to their schools.

Additional funds for Special Education Needs

One-fifth of voluntary second-level schools receive this type of funding compared to 36% of vocational schools and 35% of community/comprehensive schools.

Only 13% of fee-paying schools receive this type of funding and all schools that are oversubscribed are somewhat less likely to receive SEN funding.

Capital Grants

Provided that the Trustee approves an application, the Board of Management may seek capital funding from the Department of Education for:

- New building and extensions
- Extensive refurbishment/conversion works
- Improvement works
- Emergency works
- Temporary accommodation
- Health and safety

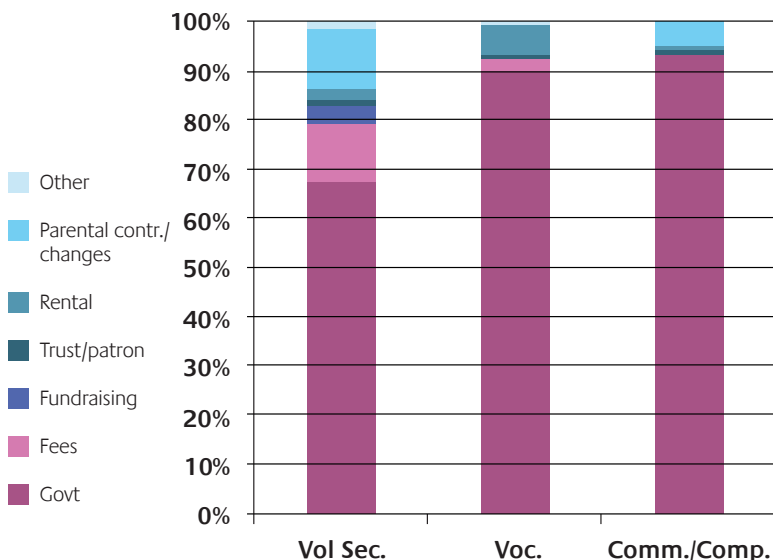
Fee-paying schools are not eligible for capital grants.

Smaller maintenance work

“That’s all down to the school management to do the work out of their school budget.”

Educational Stakeholder 1

Bar Chart 5 : Proportion of funding from different sources by school sector



Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

Fig 16 (a): Percentage of Voluntary Second-level costs which are met by parents

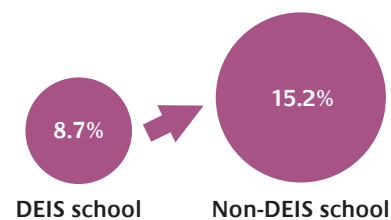
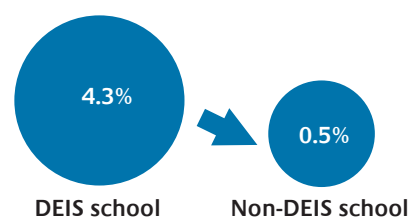


Fig 16 (b): Percentage of Voluntary Second-level costs which are met by trustees



Parental Contributions

Almost four out of five non-fee paying voluntary secondary schools receive voluntary contributions compared with three out of five community/comprehensive schools and fewer than half of vocational schools.

DEIS schools are significantly less likely to receive parental contributions.

FACT: Of all schools, voluntary secondary schools are most reliant on parental contributions to help run the school

Amount of parental voluntary contribution by school sector

Voluntary Contribution

Requested by school but with no compulsion to pay.

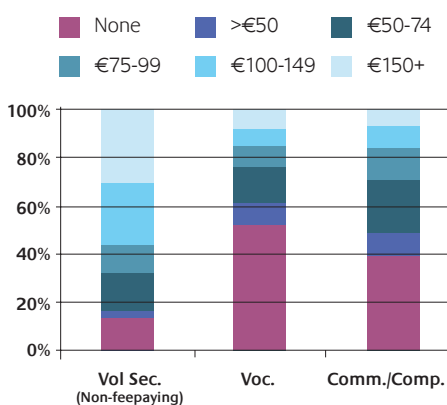
“You’ll have voluntary contributions from parents, but that has become more and more difficult as economic circumstances dictate. And in some cases, it’s almost non-existent...schools in better off areas it would average around two hundred... Over the summer...fifty percent of parents haven’t paid.” Trustee 2.

Compulsory Contribution

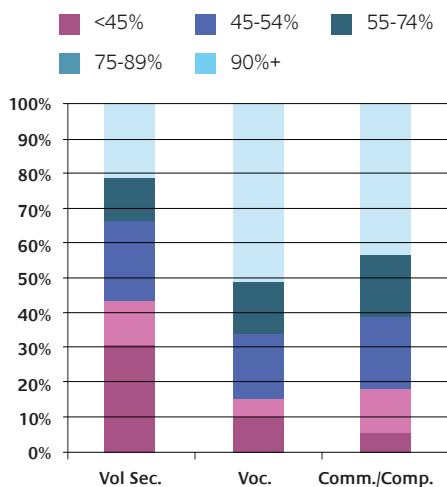
Requested by schools as payment for basic costs e.g. school books, photocopied materials, meals and refreshments which are not compulsory and extra activities such as tours and supervised after-school study.

“In the non-fee paying schools generally throughout Ireland parents are asked to give a voluntary contribution and that can range [...] from fifty Euros up to six or seven hundred Euros.” Trustee 2.

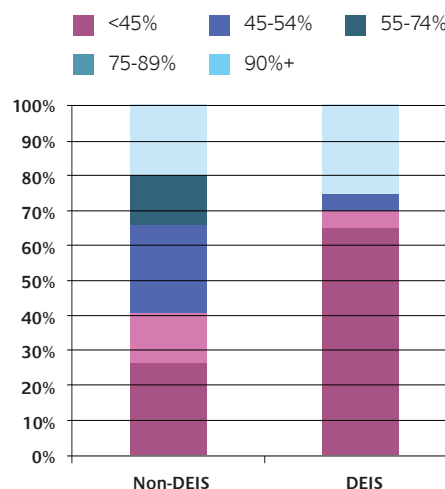
Bar Chart 6(a) : Amount of parental voluntary contribution by school sector



Bar Chart 6(b) : Proportion of parents paying the contribution by school sector (where the school receives a contribution)



Bar Chart 6(c) : Proportion of parents paying the contribution in DEIS and non-DEIS secondary schools (where the school receives a contribution)

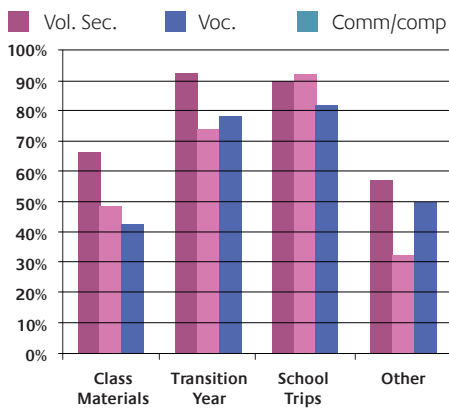


Almost 45% of voluntary secondary schools are much more likely to use the parental contribution to pay for school secretarial services compared with only 16% of ETBs and 13% of community/comprehensive schools. They are also more likely to use the contribution to pay for school security (31%) compared with vocational schools (5%) and community/comprehensive schools (3%).

Only 29% of voluntary secondary schools are likely to use the parental contribution to pay for school trips compared 70% of ETBs and 74% of community/comprehensive schools.

Two-thirds of voluntary secondary schools have no choice but to charge for class materials compared to just under half of ETBs and 43% of community/comprehensive schools.

Bar Chart 6(d) : Proportion of schools charging for activities by school sector



Fundraising

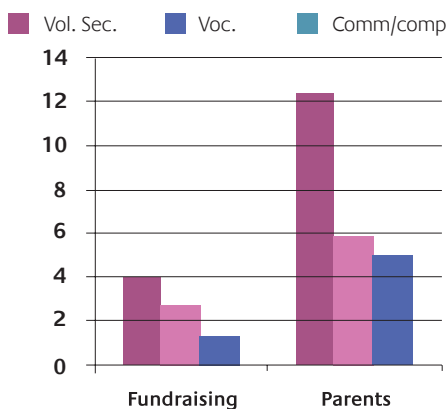
Important in generating resources for a specific purpose e.g. sports facilities, tours abroad or buying a school bus, but becoming more important in terms of generating additional funds to run the school.

“We have to be creative and people like myself have to discover other sources of funding...We wouldn’t be able to balance our books without the money that’s coming in.” Trustee 4

“It cuts back on an awful lot of what you can do because...where else can you get funding if the amount you’re getting from the Department is going down all the time...If you’re not getting voluntary donations from parents, you just don’t have any leeway.”

Educational Stakeholder 1

Bar Chart 6(e) : Average % of total funding from fund-raising and parental contribution within each school sector



Voluntary secondary schools are much more dependent on fundraising and parental contributions than any other school type. More than 12% of their income comes from this source compared to just 5% in community/comprehensive schools.

Expenditure in schools

There are clear differences in expenditure priorities depending on school type. Most important and three most important item(s) of expenditure (See bar chart 6(f))

Voluntary secondary schools are much less likely to mention teaching materials than other types of school (4% compared with 21%) and more likely to mention building maintenance (49% compared with 39%).

“A lot of voluntary secondary schools are in old buildings, that are difficult and expensive to maintain... So in that sense, there are probably outgoings that there mightn’t be in a ETB school...” Educational Stakeholder 7

The impact of Cost vs Funding available

- The majority of schools have been forced to charge students for activities
- More than one-third of schools have dropped one or more subjects
- 10% of schools have dropped the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme
- 6% have dropped Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
- 3% have discontinued Transition Year
- 18% of principals have asked Trustees or another external body for money
- 7% have increased the parental voluntary contribution

Historically, voluntary secondary schools were able to pay some teachers from their own funds. This is no longer possible.

“I think the voluntary secondary schools are hit harder because they relied on having income of their own to pay a teacher a few extra hours, or privately pay a teacher for a few hours a week.” Trustee 6

Hardship Fund

32% of schools have increased their hardship fund. These schools are more likely to be voluntary secondary schools.

Reduced funding is reducing services

Bar Chart 6(f) : The most important use of parental money and the three most subsidised uses

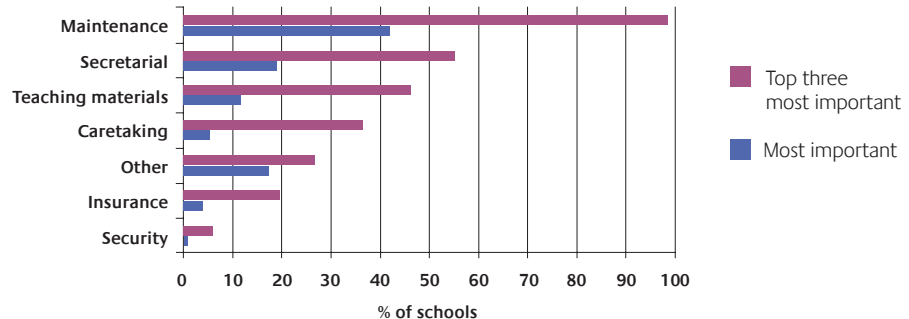


Fig. 17 : Funding of Irish Second-Level Schools

	Voluntary Secondary Schools	Vocational Schools	Community Colleges	Community Schools	Comprehensive Schools
Government funding for day-to day and recurring expenses	Allocation of a per capita grant to schools. Under the School Support Services Initiative, all second level schools receive an additional per capita grant per pupil to supplement the costs of essential services such as secretarial and caretaking. Teachers' salaries are paid by The Department of Education and Skills (DES).	Block grant from the government which covers pay and non-pay. Schools under the auspices of the Education Trust Boards are funded on a historic cost basis. The allocation for an individual school within the envelope for a given Education Trust Board is determined in accordance with the school's needs and the Education Trust Board's priorities and policies.	Block grant from the government which covers pay and non-pay. Schools under the auspices of the Education Trust Board are funded on a historic cost basis. The allocation for an individual school within the envelope for a given Education Trust Board is determined in accordance with the school's needs and the Education Trust Board priorities and policies.	Funded on an annual budget basis through a process of negotiation. Teachers' salaries paid directly by The Department of Education and Skills (DES).	Funded on an annual budget basis through a process of negotiation.
Funding of trusteeship function and funding of management	No state funding for trustee function. Instead, funding is based on investments of money donated by religious orders. Licence fees charged by the trusts/religious orders used to part-fund trusteeship costs – taken from capitation fees. Each school, from capitation fees, pays a contribution to fund the JMB office.	Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of ETBs are paid directly by the committees which employ them. At least some elements of the trusteeship function of ETBs (formerly VEC) are funded through the block grant. The state also funds the local ETB Education Offices and Chaplains. ETB members/ councillors manage the schools and receive expenses to attend meetings.	Similar practices as in vocational schools.	Direct budgetary funding from (DES). There is no funding available from DES for the trusteeship of community schools.	Direct budgetary funding from DES for the day-to-day running of the schools. No funding available from DES for the trusteeship of comprehensive schools.

Fig. 17 : Funding of Irish Second-Level Schools (continued)

	Voluntary Secondary Schools	Vocational Schools	Community Colleges	Community Schools	Comprehensive Schools
Ownership of buildings and land	<p>Privately owned.</p> <p>Four secondary schools are owned by the Minister for Education and Skills and are controlled/managed by Boards of Management.</p> <p>All capital costs were borne by the owners (religious orders, dioceses, private individuals) until 1964. Sites were provided by the religious order. 100% of capital costs are now borne by the State.</p>	<p>Owned by the State and vested in ETB (formerly VEC) Bodies under the 2013 Act.</p> <p>100% of capital costs are borne by the State.</p>	<p>College usually owned by the ETB (formerly VEC). In amalgamations, would normally be a lease agreement.</p>	<p>Community Schools are owned by the Minister for Education who vests the ownership in religious and ETB (formerly VEC) trustees. Thus, the school is not owned outright by either a religious order or ETB (formerly VEC). There are 78 such schools (excluding the 14 comprehensive schools) with more at planning or construction stages. 100% of capital costs are provided by the State less a nominal amount paid by the ETB (formerly VEC) and religious trustees. Historically there was a contribution from voluntary trustees but this is no longer the case.</p>	<p>School owned by the Minister for Education who vests ownership in the religious order/Bishop and ETB (formerly VEC) Trustee.</p> <p>100% of capital costs are borne by the State.</p>

Findings

- The broad range of second-level schools in Ireland reflects parental demand.
- Parents of children in both faith-based and State schools value the choice that is provided and want this diversity to continue.
- That a significant gap of circa 30% has developed between the funding of faith-schools and State schools.
- Enrolment levels at second-level schools are projected to increase by 31-34% by 2021.
- It confirms the need for greater transparency in the funding of second-level governance and running costs.
- The State does not fund the trusteeship function for voluntary second-level schools, as legislated for in the Education Act 1998.

What do the research findings mean?

There is a funding imbalance across the second-level sector which requires rebalance to ensure there is equity of provision for faith-based schools representing 58% of the total secondary school population and to ensure the provision of choice for parents and their families.

Funding:

The State provides denominational schools with two-thirds funding towards their base operating costs for the provision of secondary education within the free education scheme. State cut-backs over recent years have increased the pressure on boards of management when balancing their books and have forced them to charge parents for certain basic items. It has also forced them to invite parents to increase, if possible, their voluntary contributions. Fund raising activities have also been forced on schools. In effect, parents are being required to bridge the funding gap.

Governance:

Boards of Management and principals are vastly under-supported in their roles. There is an urgent need to provide additional training and other supports to ensure that there is a full understanding of governance requirements.

Trusteeship:

The Education Trust Companies in fulfilling their role as Trustees and undertaking their statutory duties provide a valuable professional support to their schools at an annual cost of approximately €25 per student. Historically, many of the supports were provided free by the religious and other volunteers who gave of their time. While the number of active religious is in significant decline, their voluntary contribution is now performed by paid professionals. This change has greatly increased the cost of fulfilling the statutory obligations inherent in trusteeship.

Poor investment returns and the drop in value of property have adversely impacted on the income of Trusts and the gap between the licence fee income from schools and the cost of funding Trusteeship is widening.



Unless the gap is filled, Trusts may be faced with a situation whereby they may no longer be able to continue to operate. To date, the State has not contributed towards funding the cost of trusteeship of faith-based schools. Trusts are no longer in a position to carry these costs exclusively.

Funding Models in Other Countries:

The findings of the ESRI study raises many issues for consideration by the stakeholders of faith-schools, including finding equitable and sustainable funding models to ensure the continuity of their schools in providing choice in local communities throughout Ireland.

The ESRI report states that in order to optimise resources, decisions have to be made about whether the voluntary secondary school sector should be governed by a number of trust companies or one representative body;

- **This is a question for the trustees of faith-schools**

The ERSI study also demonstrates how the three main second-level school sectors in the State are funded differently, both for day-to-day/operational purposes as well as at governance/trusteeship levels.

The report offers examples of how denominational/faith-schools are funded in other countries/jurisdictions e.g.

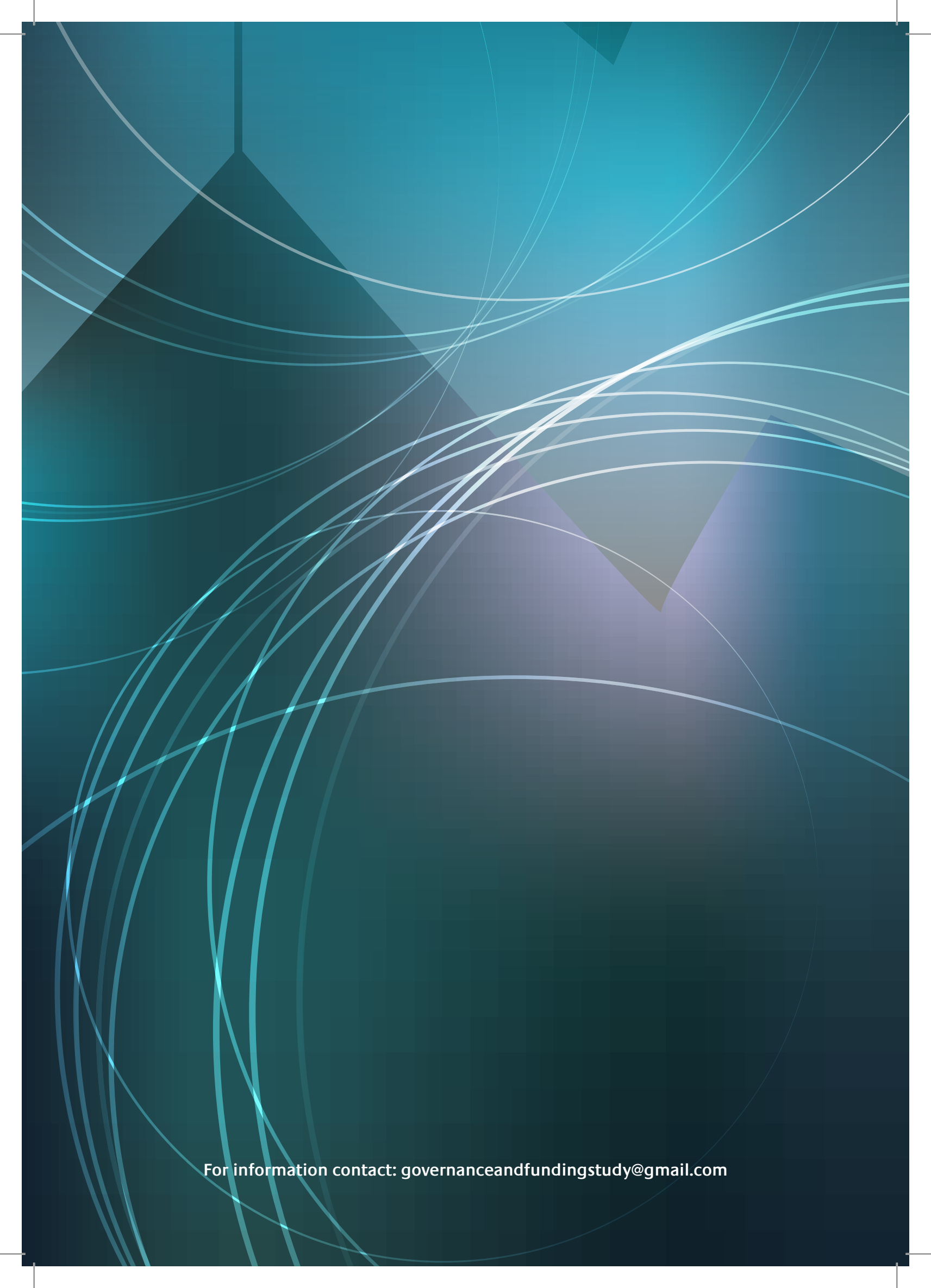
- State funding of all Dutch schools are on an equal footing since 1917. Funding given to a central denominational body (Protestant, Catholic, Islam etc.) with State control of all aspects; property handed over to State; little autonomy at school level (Netherlands).
- 100% State funding with guarantees for the ethos/faith aspect; property ownership handed over to the State (Scotland, Northern Ireland)
- 100% State funding of all aspects except ethos/religious curriculum, which is funded by the Catholic Church. Property owned by/transferred to the State. (Ontario, Canada and similarly for Protestant Church schools in Quebec, Canada, since 1867).

Next Steps:

The respective stakeholders in Ireland will have to resolve the following questions:

1. **What steps should be taken to ensure a more transparent, equitable and sustainable funding of the *day-to-day* operations of the various sectors of second-level education in Ireland?**
2. **What aspects of the models adopted elsewhere in the world best fit the Irish education system?**
3. **How will the future cost of Trusteeship (administrative, governance and ethos aspects) of faith-schools be met?**



The background is a dark teal color with a gradient. It features several overlapping geometric shapes, including triangles and a large circle. Overlaid on these are numerous thin, light-colored lines that curve and flow across the page, creating a sense of movement and complexity.

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