

*Dé Céadaoin, 6 Bealtaine, 2009*  
*Wednesday, 6th May, 2009*

2.30 p.m.

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**GNÓ COMHALTAÍ PRÍOBHÁIDEACHA**  
**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

*Fógra i dtaobh leasú ar Thairsceint : Notice of Amendment to Motion*

69. “That Dáil Éireann:

- noting with concern the unacceptable attack on the education of 534 children nationally by the withdrawal of 128 classes for children with mild general learning disabilities;
- acknowledging the pressure on existing infrastructure for special needs education in this country due to a delay in rolling out the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004;
- considering the minimal savings involved in withdrawing the classes and the potential cost implications the decision will ultimately have in terms of greater demands on special needs resources in mainstream schools;
- noting the lack of consultation by the Minister for Education and Science with the National Council for Special Education and all of the education partners prior to making this decision;

calls on the Government to immediately reverse the decision to suppress 128 special classes for children with mild general learning disabilities;

demands that the classes due to be cut continue in their existing form for the coming school year 2009/2010;

calls on the Minister for Education and Science to initiate a review of the number of classes in this area involving a thorough dialogue with education stakeholders and crucially the parents of those children affected before arriving at a decision to either merge or amalgamate these classes, based on falling numbers and educational best practice; and

ensures that the conclusions of this review are made effective from September 2010.” — *Brian Hayes, Enda Kenny, Bernard Allen, James Bannon, Seán Barrett, Pat Breen, Richard Bruton, Ulick Burke, Catherine Byrne, Joe Carey, Deirdre Clune, Paul Connaughton, Noel J. Coonan, Simon Coveney, Seymour Crawford, Michael Creed, Lucinda Creighton, Michael D'Arcy, John Deasy, Jimmy Deenihan, Andrew Doyle, Bernard J. Durkan, Damien English, Olwyn Enright, Frank Feighan, Charles Flanagan, Terence Flanagan, Tom Hayes, Phil Hogan, Paul Kehoe, Pádraic McCormack, Shane McEntee, Dinny McGinley, Joe McHugh, Olivia Mitchell, Denis Naughten, Dan Neville, Michael Noonan, Kieran O'Donnell, Fergus O'Dowd, Jim O'Keeffe,*

*John O'Mahony, John Perry, James Reilly, Michael Ring, Alan Shatter, Tom Sheahan, P. J. Sheehan, David Stanton, Billy Timmins, Leo Varadkar.*

*Leasú:*

*Amendment:*

1. To delete all words after “Dáil Éireann” and substitute the following:

“recognising that:

- since 1998 major improvements have been made to the range of supports available for children with special educational needs;
- investment in supports for special needs has more than doubled in the last five years to over €1 billion this year;
- there are over 8,000 resource and learning support teachers in our schools;
- children in the 128 mild general learning disabilities classes will receive learning supports through the general allocation model;
- in total there are now about 19,000 teachers and special needs assistants working with children with special needs in our schools;
- the inclusion of students with special educational needs in mainstream schools is a national and international development that is supported in national legislation and in statements, reports and conventions that have emanated from such international bodies as the United Nations and the Council of Europe; and
- improved collaboration between the education and health sectors has been prioritised, with the appointment of a Minister of State with that specific responsibility;

supports the Government’s determination, in a difficult budgetary environment, to prioritise investment for children with special educational needs by:

- ensuring that teaching and care supports are available to children with special needs so that they can continue to access an education that is appropriate to their needs;
- increasing the number of Education Psychologists to provide support to every school in the country;
- enhancing the capacity of the National Council for Special Education to co-ordinate the provision of services to children with special educational needs; and
- funding the provision of expert support, professional development and training opportunities in special education for principals, class and subject teachers, special class teachers, learning support and resource teachers and special needs assistants.”

— *An tAire Oideachais agus Eolaíochta.*