

Fair funding of schools is back on the agenda as discussions ahead of budget 2015 get under way. I have been fighting to protect the rights of children who attend fee-paying schools, and the economic choices of their parents, since I was elected to Dáil Éireann in 2011.

To give you an idea of some of my work to date in this area:

In October 2012, I led the political campaign to protect fee-paying schools when they were further targeted for Budget2013. (Read my statement here: [here](#)). My main argument at the time, based on figures supplied to me by the schools' Joint Managerial Board (JMB), was that the state did not subsidise fee-paying schools – in fact it was the other way around, with parents of children in fee-paying schools in fact saving the state money.

I made these arguments in the Dáil in a special debate (watch [here](#)) and also on RTE News.

On the Public Accounts Committee, in February 2013, I investigated the possible exposure to the state of the change in policy from the Department with its Secretary General – you can watch the discussion [here](#).

In March 2013, following misleading reports from the Department, again attacking fee-paying schools, I wrote the following opinion piece which was published in the Irish Times and sought to address both the financial argument and the 'ideological' one – you can read it [here](#).

These arguments, together with the efforts and support of the JMB and parents like you, have gained traction, and since 2013 there have been no further changes in the pupil-teacher ratio. And there will be no more.

While it is probably too soon in terms of our financial health as a country to reverse the negative trend of previous budgets, in advance of the summer recess I received assurances that, as in 2014, in Budget2015 there will be no further discrimination against children in fee-paying schools by unfairly targeting the pupil-teacher ratio.

Things can always change of course, and assurances are not always honoured, but I will be keeping the pressure on, as always, right up until Budget day.