

# PACCS

## N.E.P.S. review.

### SURVEY RESULTS

GERARD HORGAN

May 2004

#### Preamble /Foreword

PACCS National Executive instigated a national review, of the National Educational Psychological Services, to ascertain the up to date position on delivery of the service within our sector. At the end of January 2004 all 90-school principles were sent the enclosed snap survey containing eight questions. (Page 2). Provisional results were presented at PACCS ADC in Limerick on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March by which time 57 school principles had responded. Owing to postal disputes in areas of the country April 15<sup>th</sup> was chosen as a final date for inclusion of delayed responses of which there were 6 (six).

#### METHADODOLOGY.

All questionnaires contain a PACCS regional marking code numbered 1 to 7.

Question 2 is included to afford a comparative study for disadvantage and non-disadvantaged.

Question 4 & 5 give the actual service being delivered

Question 6 will give the number of students requiring the service.

Question 8 affords principles the opportunity to express suggestions for improvement of the existing service.

#### NEPS Review – Snap survey

Name of school (optional).....Regional Code.....

1. Total no of students.....
2. School classification. Disadvantaged Yes..... NO.....
- 3 Do you feel your school should be classified Disadvantaged? Yes.... No....
4. Total number of days allocated to your school by NEPS per year .... days
5. Estimated no. of students that may be assessed under the present system in the school year ?.....
6. What percentage of students in your school require the service of NEPS?.  
Under 5% 5-10% 10-15% 15-20% 20-30% >30%
7. Does the present NEPS model address the need of students in your school?  
YES..... NO.....

In your opinion what suggestions would you make to improve the existing NEPS system.

.....  
 .....  
 .....

Thank you for your assistance. Please return to: Gerard Horgan,

President

PACCS,

'Ailsa Craig ',  
 Knockaneleigh,  
 Aherla, Co. Cork.

ALL 90 SCHOOL C & C PRINCIPLES SURVEYED

\*\*\*\*\*

70% RESPONSE

(63 SCHOOLS)

\*\*\*\*\*

Q 1. Total no of students 37,643

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Q 2. School classification

Disadvantaged. 32 = 50.8%

Non- disadvantaged 31 = 49.2%

Q 3. Do you feel your school should be classified disadvantaged

YES 45 = 71%

NO 18 = 29%

Note 42% of non disadvantaged schools believe their schools should be classified Disadvantaged. Further investigation required.

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Q. 4. TOTAL NUMBER OF DAYS ALLOCATED TO SCHOOL BY NEPS PER YEAR?



Q 4	DAYS	DIS	NON	TOTAL
	0	1	2	3
	1 TO 2	7	4	11
	2 TO 3	6	2	8
	3 TO 4	2	8	10
	5 TO 6	2	6	8
	6 TO 8	3	1	4
	9 TO 10	1	2	3
	12	1	0	1
	20 TO 25	1	0	1
	TOTAL	24	25	49
	NOTES*	3	1	4
	?	2	3	5
	N/A	1	0	1
	No Reply	0	2	2
	Unknown	2		2
	Total	32	31	63

Notes: include special agreement (not declared), By request, on request (number of days not declared) and under negotiation.

? include Psychiatrist visits regularly (insufficient information), NEPS psychiatrist will not declare detail for response, psychiatrist on sick leave.

PAGE 4. ( CHART 4a)

Q5. ESTIMATED number of students that may be assessed under the present system in the school year ?

Q 5.	Students	DIS	NON	TOTAL
	0	1	0	1
	1	1	0	1
	1 TO 2	6	6	12
	2 TO 3	3	5	8
	3 TO 4	3	6	9
	5 TO 6	6	3	9
	6 TO 8	3	2	5
	9 TO 10	3	2	5
	12	0	1	1
	12 TO 15	3	2	5
	TOTAL	29	27	56
	NOTES*	2	4	6
	NR	1	0	1
	TOTAL	32	31	63

Notes: include by & on request (no numbers declared), Agreement private assessment (no numbers declared), in discussions, seeking fund for private assessment.

(CHART 5a)

Q 6. What percentage of students in your school requires the services of NEPS?.

DIS.                  NON                  TTL

< 5%	3	6	9
5-10%	15	15	30
10-15%	5	7	12
15-20%	2	2	4
20-30%	5	1	6
> 30%	2	0	2
	32	31	63

(chart 6a)

Q 7. Does the present NEPS model address the needs of students in your school ?.

YES	DIS	NON	TOTAL
	7	10	17
NO.	22	20	42
Other :			
No Reply	2	1	3
??	1		1
TOTAL	32	31	63

YES 17 = 27%  
 NO 42 = 67%  
 OTHER 4 = 6%

100%

(CHART 7a)

Q 8. In your opinion what suggestions would you make to improve the existing National Psychological system?

( OVER ALL 144 COMMENTS /SUGGESTIONS )

MAJOR SUGGESTIONS.

Additional psychologists on the ground.\*\*\*\*

Reduce pressure.

Fewer schools to service.

Smaller area.

Base psychologists in the area they serve. (travelling time)

Psychologists more readily available to schools.

Increased time made available to schools/staff. \*\*\*\*

Consistent follow-up service.

More streamlined support service for schools.

### STUDENTS

More pupil assessments. \*\*\*\*

Reduce time frame it takes to assess students. \*\*\*\*

Reduce bureaucracy.

Need for psychologists to have on going contact with students after assessment.

### GENERAL

Regular and routine visits to schools. ( 1 day a month/ weekly)

Formal contact with school management /Resource/  
Guidance teams.

Improve communication- responses. (re. Making arrangements)

Consultation rather than administration.

Member of care team rather than evaluator of needs.

Support for behavioural and learning work. (separate staff for each)

Advisory role for BOM's re students with behavioural problems.

Up to date information on schools and students changing requirements.

Advisory role to guidance counsellors/Remedial/Resource and L support teams.

### Programmes/strategies.

Design programme for intervention – not just Educational

## Assessments

Design strategies for continued service in the following situations :

- sick leave \*\*\*\*
- maternity leave \*\*\*\*

Appoint psychologists to school clusters.

Broaden the cluster service recently set up for guidance councillors ( v. helpful)

### Training of school staff / Teacher training colleges

Training + in service for whole school staff by NEPS personnel.

Greater access for staff days/ meetings.

Teacher training colleges allocate more time to train teachers for special needs.

### Primary – Post Primary systems.

No break in support system between Primary and Second level.\*\*\*\*

Proper system in primary automatic transfer to pp and involvement of special needs, Remedial, Resource staff in periodic assessments in co-operation with psychologist acting as a mentor.

### Other suggestions no order of preference.

More visits so psychologists could work with parents.

Continue scheme of outside testing for psychological reports.  
time consuming for NEPS psychologists.

NEPS wind it up, allocate funding to schools to get private assessments.

Concentrate service more on disadvantaged schools.

Re-assessment service for students entering the senior cycle formalised into the system.

Parents should be allowed have their children assessed privately and then re-embursed by the DOE.

### Other suggestions no order of preference. ( ctd. )

Dept. allocate resource hours in a realistic way for students who have been assessed with learning / behavioural problems.

Accept evidence provided by remedial/resource/learning support teachers in applications for resources.

Remove exam work ( RACE) from NEPS.

Greater awareness for parents of the limited support available.

End of survey results.

#### Foot note

Many respondents acknowledged and recorded positive comments on individual named psychologists who in their opinion went beyond the call of duty.

### CONCLUSION

PACCS acknowledge the positive response by school Principals to this survey. The balance of responses (almost 50/50) affords a clear and defined picture to emerge from both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged school classification types. Comparative studies have shed light on some interesting facts. Further in depth analysis is required.

Results to question 4 indicate that 59% (29schools) of respondents, who were able to give a reply, have been allocated between 1 and 4 days per year.

Results to question 5 show that nearly 70% (39 schools) estimate that the number of student assessments carried out in the school year, ranges from 1 to 6 students per school, with one third of this group falling in the 1 to 2 students per school bracket.

Question 6, to which all responded, shows that two thirds of principals indicated that the number of students requiring the services of NEPS fall into the categories of 5-15 %. (47.6% in the 5-10% and 19% in the 10-15% categories)  
This crudely equates to 2,237 students requiring a service in these two categories alone. Comparisons between Q6 results and Q 4 & 5 results indicate a difficulty with the service being supplied and with the needs for service.

Not surprisingly the response to Q7 shows 27% satisfied with the present NEPS model. However 67% state that the present NEPS model does not address the needs of students.

On a very positive note 144 comments /suggestions have been made and it is hope that the areas identified by principals will receive the urgent attention they require.

A copy of this report is been forwarded to NEPS, the Minister of Education, and our management body ACCS.

GERARD HORGAN.

