

LIMERICK CITY
REFERENC



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CITY SCHOOLS IN CRISIS MEETING; MINISTER ACTS

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A LIMERICK crisis meeting was held in Dublin yesterday between Department of Education officials and representatives of city second level to try to avert last years chaotic scenes which caused havoc among parents.

And while it looks certain that the majority of primary school children will not have to sit an assessment test this year, it was confirmed today that despite yesterday's meeting there is another crisis looming regarding entry to secondary schools in the city.

Education Minister Niamh Breathnach is so concerned that she summoned school representatives to meet with Department officials in Dublin yesterday.

"We have not done our finals sums, but yes it does appear that we have more applications than places," confirmed Thomas Hardy, spokesperson for the principals and vice principals association in Limerick.

He also revealed that students will be offered places in the various schools early next month.

"What we have to do is to ensure that the disgraceful scenes of last year, don't occur again," said junior Justice minister Willie O'Dea, who revealed that the trustees of all the secondary schools had a meeting in Dublin yesterday with Department officials.

February 1 was the deadline for application to

schools, but with St Enda's and Crescent Comprehensive operating their own enrolment procedures the situation is even more confused for the 2,000 of so pupils this year.

Mr Hardy confirmed that his association had met and it was felt that generally there would be no assessment test and that schools would use other criteria for enrolment purposes. However, he said, that there was the possibility that one or two schools might decide to go down this road.

The other criteria for assessment, Mr Hardy said, could include such factors as location, tradition (sisters and brothers in the school), while certain secondary schools will have a quota for some satellite primary schools.

"I am delighted that the meeting in Dublin took place yesterday and I just hope that it can help head off the disgraceful situation we had last year," said Minister O'Dea.

He said that the department were not against assessment, once the pupils had been guaranteed a place in the school. "Assessment

can be used for grading of classes," he pointed out.

"The minister does not want to use the big stick and she wants to use the powers of persuasion if at all possible," he added.



STRIKE ACTION LOOMING AT

