

WHY EDUCATE TOGETHER SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS? KEY ISSUES

- **PARENTS SHOULD BE CONSULTED IN SCHOOL PLANNING – THIS ENHANCES EDUCATIONAL QUALITY**
- **THESE SCHOOLS WILL PIONEER A RANGE OF INNOVATIONS WHICH ARE VITAL TO IRELAND’S ECONOMIC RECOVERY**
- **EDUCATE TOGETHER SCHOOLS OFFER INCOMPARABLE VALUE FOR MONEY TO THE STATE**

PARENTAL RIGHTS - Parents have a constitutional right to choose the type of education they want for their children. 18,000 Educate Together parents have been campaigning for Educate Together second-level schools for a number of years but they are being ignored. This is a wasted opportunity for the State to capitalize on important voluntary and community initiative.

“The availability of choice for students and parents is a powerful stimulus for improving the quality of school and educational outcomes. It is also necessary to ensure that the school system caters for different needs, choices and aptitudes”.
Don Thornhill, former Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science speaking at the MacGill Summer School in July 2009

AVAILABILITY OF MULTI-DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOLS – 75% of the second-level schools in Ireland operate under direct religious management structures. Of the remainder many, due to historical tradition, have either an explicit or a de facto religious ethos. While there is now a move to take a particular type of secular approach in some new “non-designated” VEC community colleges, these schools have a radically different ethos to that which Educate Together schools must, under their Charter, operate. This ethos is based on a participatory democratic approach to management and is deliberately defined as multi-denominational rather than non-denominational.

EDUCATE TOGETHER’S UNIQUE, SUCCESSFUL, POPULAR, EQUALITY-BASED MODEL IS CURRENTLY NOT AVAILABLE AT SECOND-LEVEL

EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION – The *Blueprint for Educate Together Schools*, which was launched in 2009, is overwhelmingly supported by educationalists,

business leaders, parents and students. It shows how, by integrating 21st century teaching and learning strategies comprehensively and purposefully into the curriculum Educate Together second-level schools will nurture critical thinkers, problem solvers, effective communicators, creators and innovators.

AT SECOND-LEVEL EDUCATE TOGETHER WILL PIONEER A RANGE OF INNOVATIONS WHICH ARE VITAL TO IRELAND'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY

The Blueprint for Educate Together Second Level Schools is a visionary and exciting plan for a new development in Irish education. It is firmly based on research and on innovative thinking from major Irish and international policy documents and educational research.

Professor Sheelagh Drudy, Chair of Education, UCD

COST - The State will need to provide a significant number of new multi-denominational or non-denominational second-level schools in the next 20 years. An article in the Sunday Independent last summer pointed out that the administrative overhead of the 33 VECs in the country ranges from €300.00 to over €1,000.00 per student. The amount of Educate Together's administrative overhead which the State funds currently amounts to €12.50 per student. The organisation supplements this effectively by capitalizing on voluntary and community initiative, revenue-generating projects and private fund-raising.

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BACKGROUND

Educate Together is a recognised patron body and the fastest growing provider of primary school education in Ireland today. It operates schools based on the delivery of equality of access and esteem to children irrespective of their social, cultural or religious backgrounds.

Set up in the 1970s by volunteers and educationalists, it now operates 56 primary schools throughout the country, with 2 more due to open in 2010. It has applied to open a further 40 primary and its first secondary schools in the next few years. It is an independent educational charity that is supported by small government grants and extensive private fundraising.

See www.educatetogether.ie for further information.