Dear all,

Welcome to the September Teacher Newsletter, with lots of news to impart!

Three new schools opened this year:
Rochestown ETNS, Cork
Firhouse ETNS, Dublin
Portobello ETNS, Dublin

Congratulations to principals, managers, staff, pupils and parents of all three schools!

The second-level project is moving apace with the recruitment of the principal of Hansfield Educate Together Secondary School.

Best of luck to all for the new school year!

David Rudisha, Olympic 800m Gold Medallist and World Record Holder, visiting Galway ETNS

Certificate in Ethical and Multi-denominational Education

A reminder that our postgraduate Certificate in Ethical and Multi-denominational Education, run in association with St Patrick’s College of Education, will begin once again in October. This is a blended course, involving online and weekend seminars and is eligible for the Teacher Fee Refund scheme.

For further information feel free to call on 01 429 2500 or visit our website: http://www.educatetogether.ie/support/postgraduate-certificate

Learn Together Resource Library

We are now well and truly settled into our new offices at Hogan Place, just behind Merrion Square. The resource library is now open for business! This library is neither complete nor definitive but is a good indication of what’s out there in relation to the Learn Together. Individuals or groups are welcome. Booking will be necessary but we’ll leave you alone to read and browse and throw in some tea / coffee and chocolate biscuits for good measure!
September is drawing to a close and it is hard to believe that our first month as a new school is almost finished! It’s been a very busy few weeks and I have learnt an awful lot – probably more than the Junior Infants who started with us!

I am extremely proud to be principal of a new Educate Together school in Rochestown, Cork. This area has been in need of choice in the provision of primary education for a number of years and I am sure our school will grow rapidly. I admire the Educate Together model hugely for supporting local communities as they seek to establish schools based on their ethos. We have an excellent start-up group who welcomed me warmly since I was appointed. It was wonderful to have them present at the very first day of school on the 29th of August when they could see the realisation of a number of years of hard work.

Since my appointment in March I have been extremely fortunate in the support I have received from family, friends and colleagues. I am especially grateful to the members of the Educate Together community who have provided ideas, encouragement and reassurance! I particularly want to thank our school manager, Niall Wall, national office, and the principals I have met since June (including the other newly appointed principals Collette Dunne and Dermot Stanley) for being valuable sounding boards during the start-up process. We were very fortunate in our school to appoint an outstanding teacher, Noirín Moore, who has helped to create a caring and nurturing learning environment in our school.

The main area in which I have experienced frustration is enrolments. We have had a number of families who were enrolled in two or three schools around the area, which led to problems in determining how many pupils we would have starting with us on our first day. This has proved problematic when engaging with the Department of Education and Skills regarding staff appointments and resources. I am sure that every school across the country is experiencing these same difficulties. We as a school community, and particularly our new Board of Management, will need to examine Minister Quinn’s recommendations on the development of enrolment policy carefully in the coming months.

Overall, I am delighted, and a little relieved(!), that the start-up process has gone so smoothly. I love arriving at school every morning and greeting the pupils. I understand how fortunate I am to be entrusted with their education and I look forward to being part of a team that provides them with wonderful opportunities to learn and develop in the months and years ahead.
Visits to Schools

We’re really keen on having as much communication as possible with teachers in Educate Together schools. In the past, national office staff have visited Ashbourne, Le Chéile, Ardee, Aston Village, Carrigaline, Kilcolgan and Claregalway. These are purely social visits, with the emphasis on tea and talk. Wherever possible, we bring along the resource library for people to browse through at their leisure. This term we’ve already called into Navan and Powerstown. If you’d like us to visit your school, just let us know...

Rathfarnham ETNS Senior Infants had Emma O’Driscoll from RTE come to visit and they sang their hearts out!

Educate Together is in the process of finalising lessons on Responsible Pet Ownership. These lessons were developed in association with Dogs Trust Ireland, the ISPCA and DoneDeal Foundation PetAware project.

A HISTORY OF IRELAND IN 100 OBJECTS

Educate Together is delighted to have been involved in and supported the development of lessons on A History of Ireland in 100 Objects. This is an initiative of The Royal Irish Academy, The National Museum of Ireland and The Irish Times.

Both sets of lessons will be launched in coming weeks.
Wanted: Course Designers / Presenters

We are always on the look out for presenters / course designers on the Learn Together. This time around we’re especially keen on locating people outside of Dublin. But no matter where you live, feel free to send in a CV to teachereducation@educatetogether.ie

The first task of any day is to log all the office post and check phone messages and emails. Admin act as the switchboard and monitor the general email account. Answering phones and emails is the core or spine of our work, in that is runs through the day and goes on in conjunction with whatever else we may be working on. Queries are answered on the spot, if possible, or forwarded to a relevant member of staff. Very often people ring us here when they should really be ringing schools with specific inquiries.

Mailouts (such as the one you’re reading!), or organising material for public meetings or new school campaigns can take up a lot of time. We make arrangements for staff who need to travel to seminars, school openings or training sessions, as well as booking meeting rooms for events such as the Principals’ Conference. We also administer the summer CPD courses i.e. we record payments, send out passwords, issue certificates etc.

On top of this Jessica looks after Paul (our CEO)’s diary which as far as I can gather is like a cross between Tetris and octopus-wrestling. She co-ordinates different meetings and arranges Paul’s travel and accommodation needs when attending conferences, meetings, school openings and other events.

As well as this we take part in groups that are working on distinct projects, such as the opening of new second-level schools or funding campaigns. This means we get to operate outside of a rigid Admin role and get to utilise other skills & strengths.

Jarlath Costello

An entirely un-staged photo of Jessica and Jarlath at work.