



Educate Together Second - Level Project

Educate Together Second-level News - Vol. 2, Issue 1 – September 2009

Welcome to the new academic year and to Volume 2 of Educate Together Second-level News. Emer Nowlan, Second-level Project Manager returned from maternity leave in June and it has been a busy summer.

Blueprint Launched

On June 19th, *Taking the Next Step – A Blueprint for Educate Together Second-level Schools* was launched in the Morrison Hotel, Dublin. The Blueprint shows how, by integrating 21st century teaching and learning strategies comprehensively and purposefully into the curriculum, and by assessing not only what students learn but how they learn, Educate Together second-level schools will nurture critical thinkers, problem solvers, effective communicators, creators and innovators.

Picture of Paul, Lord Mayor Emer Costello and Aine Hyland at launch – with caption

Picture of John White, ASTI and Clive Byrne, NAPD at launch – with caption

The launch was attended by many colleagues and supporters from Partner organizations, as well as by parents from working groups and start-up groups around the country. Speaking at the event Professor Aine Hyland called the Blueprint “both visionary and realistic”. Professor Hyland said that the Blueprint provided a compelling case for the recognition of Educate Together, arguing “there is no excuse any more for the Department’s prevarication”.

There was widespread national and local coverage of the launch, including articles in all three national newspapers and the RTE television and radio news. The response to the Blueprint has been overwhelming with a great deal of interest and support coming from educationalists in particular.

Read what others have said about the Blueprint [here](#)

Download *Taking the Next Step* [here](#)

Download press release [here](#)

MOVING ON....

Second-level Education Officer, Fiona Richardson, having completed the Blueprint, will now be returning to her position in the National Behavioural Support Services from where she was seconded. Fiona did an outstanding job of producing the Blueprint. We wish her all the best in her return to the NBSS and hope she will keep in touch with the project.

Picture of Fiona and Niall Crowley at launch (I think there is one) with caption

Minister O’Keeffe promises to consider patronage registration “over the summer”

We are looking forward to the end of the Oireachtas summer recess with anticipation. At a meeting with Educate Together representatives in June, Minister O’Keeffe gave a commitment to

consider the application to register Educate Together as a patron of second-level schools. The previous Minister was first advised in December 2007 of Educate Together's intention to open second-level schools. A formal application was submitted in March 2008 and the response since then has been that the matter is "under consideration". However, having the personal assurance of the Minister that he will consider the application in a specified timeframe is encouraging.

As the summer recess comes to an end, we are asking supporters to write to the Minister to urge him to register Educate Together as a second-level patron and to grant the three applications to open schools that have been submitted – in Waterford, Gorey and Lucan. If you would like to write to the Minister there is a sample letter [here](#) which you can download and send.

Educate Together meets the Irish Secondary Students Union

A meeting took place in June between Paul Rowe, CEO, and Emer Nowlan, Second-level Project Manager of Educate Together and Leanne Caulfield, President, and Niall Dennehy, General Secretary of the Irish Secondary Students Union. The meeting was friendly and productive.

The Students Union representatives offered valuable feedback on the Blueprint for Educate Together schools. The student representatives welcomed the document, saying "in this plan we see students as valued key stakeholders in their school communities and for the first time as initiators and architects of their own learning". Educate Together were delighted to accept an invitation to participate in the Union's new Monitoring Panel.

Gorey Council Passes Motion to Support Educate Together as Second-level Patron

The start-up group in Gorey have been actively lobbying their local representatives during the summer - and with great success. In July the Gorey Town Council passed a motion to support Educate Together in its campaign to be recognised as a patron of second-level schools. Cllr Angie Dooley, who proposed the motion, referred to the success of Gorey Educate NS, which has grown to an enrolment of 250 in the four years since it was founded.

Gorey ETNS moved into its permanent building last year on a site which it shares with the local Gaelscoil. A post-primary school is also planned for the adjoining site in the coming years. In January the local group gathered over 1,000 signatures in support of Educate Together's registration as a post-primary patron and earlier this year Educate Together lodged an application on behalf of local parents to open an Educate Together post-primary school in Gorey in 2012.

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