



Educate Together Second-Level Project

Educate Together Second-level News Vol. 2, Issue 5 – March 2010

Breakthrough for Lucan parents - Patronage of proposed second-level school under review

Educate Together has welcomed last week's indication from the Department of Education and Science that the patronage of the proposed new second-level school in Lucan is now under review. The current patronage, allocated to the VEC, has been withdrawn. Educate Paul Rowe, Educate Together CEO said:

'This is a most welcome development. The Department plans to conduct a review as part of a broader review of second level patronage. It is our hope that the expressed preference of a substantial number of Lucan parents for an Educate Together second level school will be a decisive factor in this review.'

Educate Together runs 5 primary schools in the locality which will turn out 300 new second level pupils a year when at full capacity. The vast majority of these parents want their children to continue their education within the Educate Together ethos and local parent action groups have been lobbying to this end since 2002.

Chair of the group Carol Dunne said *'We are absolutely delighted. We have fought so long to be heard. Even after the original announcement of VEC patronage we didn't give up. We will continue to keep active until an Educate Together second level school has been formally confirmed in Lucan'*.

Second-level Information Session well-attended and productive

Include photo from website

Saturday 27 February's second-level information session at the Kilmainham Hilton Hotel was a great success. More than 50 people came along to discuss the details of what an Educate Together second-level school will be like, and to find out more about what they can do at local level to make their aspirations for a second-level Educate Together school a reality.

Fiona Richardson, author of *Taking the Next Step: A Blueprint for Educate Together Second-level Schools*, presented some of its main ideas and noted that the curricular and assessment approaches that are planned in the Blueprint reflect best international practice - and are themselves reflected in the NCCA's latest proposals for the reform of the current Junior Cycle.

Emer Nowlan, Second-level Project Manager, answered people's questions on how Educate Together schools will differ from existing models. John Holohan, Educate Together's new Communications Manager, briefed participants on how the communications function in the national office can support parents in their campaigns, and also offered tips on engaging with local media and public representatives.

We were particularly pleased that representatives from the Irish Secondary Students Union, the National Parents Council Post-primary), the Parents Association of Community & Comprehensive Schools and the National Association for Principals and Deputy Principals participated in the workshops.

The presentations and other material from the day are available to download from our website www.educatetogether.ie

Working Group Meeting on 17th April

Following on from our second-level information session, we asked interested participants to sign up for one of our re-formed working groups. We have just scheduled our first working group meeting for Saturday 17 April (venue and time to be confirmed), and have allocated people to the following working groups:

1) *Management, Curriculum, Teaching and Learning* (which will focus

on timetabling, recruitment policies, integrated curriculum, assessment etc.)

2) *Campus and Built Environment*

These groups will explore the practical issues that need to be addressed in developing a second-level Educate Together school. We also hope to re-establish a group to work towards developing the Ethical Education programme for second-level.

Representatives from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) will also be at the meeting to talk to working group members about the NCCA's recent publication: *Innovation and identity: New Ideas for Junior Cycle*. (note link)

Educate Together meet with DES officials

In February, Educate Together had two meetings with officials from the Department of Education and Science (DES) to discuss issues around our application to be a patron of an Educate Together second-level school.

On 15 February, Educate Together representatives met with Brigid McManus, Secretary General of the DES. At this meeting the Secretary General conceded that there was no basis for the Department's stipulation that Educate Together should register as a second-level patron, and that applications submitted for schools should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. However, she also indicated that no applications for new post-primary schools would be processed until a review of the procedures for recognizing new post-primary schools had been completed and considered by government.

A further meeting was held two weeks later when Paul Rowe, CEO and Emer Nowlan, second-level Project Manager met with the Department's Assistant Secretary Seán O'Foghlú. The purpose of this meeting was for the Department to hear any suggestions we had on how Educate Together second-level schools might be facilitated within the context of any proposals for future post-primary provision.

Bridge 2 College collaborative workshop

Add photo of B2C (on website page)

A collaborative workshop between Educate Together and Bridge 2

College (B2C) took place on Wed 17 February in Oriel House, B2C's location near Trinity College, Dublin. The workshop provided a great opportunity for people with an interest in developing an innovative approach to second-level education to come together to share ideas. It was extremely productive, with many interesting ideas being put forward, exploring the development of an integrated cross-curricular programme for the Junior Cycle based on collaborative and project-based learning. We look forward to further collaboration with B2C in the future.

For more about B2C see: <http://www.suas.ie/b2c.html>

Destinations Research to be presented at ESAI conference Sat 26 March

In 2008 we surveyed Educate Together primary schools to discover the destination schools of 6th Class pupils that year. In particular we were interested in finding out whether there was a pattern of Educate Together pupils choosing particular post-primary schools.

Emer Nowlan, Second-level Project Manager, and Ann Ryan, Second-level Education Officer will present the findings of *Where to Next? Post-primary Destinations of Educate Together Pupils* at this year's Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI) conference on Saturday 26 March at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dundalk. For more about the conference see: <http://www.esai.ie/conference>

The research findings indicate the importance of local factors in determining post-primary destinations for Educate Together pupils. No clear national trends emerged and the full range of school types (Community, Comprehensive, VEC and Voluntary Secondary) were included in the most selected second-level destinations. The complete report on this research will be available in the next few weeks.

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