



Educate Together Second-Level Project

Educate Together Second-level News Vol. 2, Issue 4 – Jan / Feb 2010

Information Session - Sat 27 Feb



Following the successful launch of the ***Taking the Next Step – a Blueprint for Educate Together second-level schools*** last summer, we are planning an information session on the morning of **Saturday 27 February** in the Clarion Hotel, IFSC, Dublin.

Fiona Richardson, author of the Blueprint will help us guide the discussions and John Holohan, Educate Together's new Communications Manager will talk to us about lobbying and campaigning.

While there are many active start-up groups busy campaigning around the country, some parents have approached us saying that they do not feel as knowledgeable talking about certain aspects of the project. For example:

- *how will Educate Together schools be different from other schools?*
 - *how will students be assessed?*
 - *what kind of teachers will work in the schools?*
- ...and so on.

We would like to explore these questions further with working group members and other interested people in order to develop the knowledge, understanding and confidence to support start-up groups around the country in their advocacy and lobbying work.

Following this session we hope to re-establish working groups to help in the detailed planning for the first school. If you are interested in the second-level project and would like to know more, then please come to this event.

To confirm your place, contact us on 01 429 2500, or email: secondlevel@educatetogether.ie.

IBEC joins Advisory Panel

We are delighted to welcome Barry O'Brien of IBM Ireland to our Second-Level Advisory Panel as IBEC's representative.

Paul Rowe, Educate Together CEO and Emer Nowlan, Second-level Project Manager, met with Tony Donohue Head of Education, Social and Innovation Policy in IBEC in December. The meeting was very positive and confirmed that the aims of the Educate Together second-level project are very much supported by current views in the business and industry sector on the direction second-level education should be taking.

Barry O'Brien is responsible for Government Affairs at IBM Ireland. He has been active in education policy for several years, most recently as a member of the ICT in Schools Advisory Group. This group was put together at the request of the Minister for Education and recently published a report making a series of recommendations on the ICT

investment decisions necessary to have an enduring and sustainable impact in school classrooms.

Click [here](#) for a link to the "Smart Schools = Smart Economy" report.

Minister says Educate Together “will do an exceptionally good job” at second-level

During a Dáil debate on 28 January, Fine Gael Deputy Brian Hayes once again raised the thorny issue of Educate Together’s application to be a patron of second-level schools. Asked why it was taking the Department of Education more than two years to make a decision on the application, Minister for Education Batt O’Keeffe replied that Educate Together “does a very fine job as patron of primary schools,” but that “it is not a simple matter to give new patronage at second-level.”

For the first time, the Minister suggested that legal issues could also be contributing to the delay, saying: “There is no provision in the Education Act 1998 for a new patron or for the recognition of a new patron.”

Pressed by Deputy Hayes on whether the Minister or officials in the Department of Education were holding the application back, the Minister responded: “Educate Together is held in very high esteem in my Department. We take its applications very seriously and we know if it is appointed as a patron it will do an exceptionally good job.” He also assured the Deputy that all relevant issues have now been considered, including the legal aspects, and that he hopes to bring it to Cabinet “shortly.”

Click [here](#) for a link to the debate (listed under ‘Priority Questions’ → ‘Schools Patronage’)

“Light and Giving” event in Lucan



On 21 December 5 Educate Together schools in the Lucan area came together in Griffeen Valley ETNS for a seasonal celebration of Light and Giving.

Pupils from each school performed songs, dances and displayed their artwork as part of their learning about different winter festivals.

The event was organised by Griffeen Valley PTA and the Lucan Task Force, who are campaigning for an Educate Together second-level school in Lucan.

Read the Irish Times article [here](#).

Swords Action Group get out and about



During the first weekend in February, and following on from the successful launch of its *Expression of Interest* campaign, Swords Educate Together Secondary Action Group (SETSAG), hosted a public information/consultation weekend in the Pavillions Shopping Centre.

Over 3 days group members distributed leaflets to local shoppers, and collected over 400 signatures in support of their campaign for an Educate Together second-level school in the area. The level of interest from the public was fantastic, with people particularly keen to obtain copies of Educate Together's *Blueprint for an Educate Together Second-level School*.

The SETSAG group has stepped up its activities in recent months, and is currently working on its application to the Department of Education and Science for an Educate Together second level school, to be located on a 14 acre reserved secondary school site in the Oldtown/Mooretown area.

Upcoming events for the group include: lobbying local politicians, meeting new parents in Swords and Thornleigh Educate Together National Schools, organising more public meetings and continuing their *Expression of Interest* campaign.

For further information email info@setsecondary.org or keep up to date with their events at: www.setsecondary.org

Educate Together and Bridge to College (B2C) to collaborate



Photo provided by Clare Mulvany

Following a productive meeting in B2C's innovative learning space on 3 February, there are plans for a joint workshop to share ideas and generate new ones.

This will be a joint initiative between Educate Together's Second-Level Project and the Bridge 2 College Programme (B2C) at Trinity College, Dublin to explore innovative teaching and learning approaches in 1st Year Junior Cycle.

The aim of the workshop is to explore some of the practical implications in developing a framework for 1st Year Junior Cycle that promotes collaborative learning, project and topic-based learning, key skills, etc.

Bridge 2 College (B2C) is interested in exploring innovative and more integrated approaches to teaching and learning in the Junior Cycle - along the same lines as outlined in Educate Together's Blueprint.

Practical topics for the workshop will include timetables, teachers' schedules, teacher education, resources and curriculum themes.

For more information on the Bridge to College programme (B2C) go to: <http://www.suas.ie/b2c.html>.



Photo provided by Clare Mulvany

Destinations research completed

In 2008 we surveyed Educate Together primary schools to discover the destination schools of 6th Class pupils that year. We were keen to establish whether there was a pattern of Educate Together pupils choosing particular types of post-primary school, and also, as has been reported anecdotally, whether pupils from some Educate Together schools have experienced difficulties in accessing post-primary places in particular areas.

We are very grateful to the principals, teachers and administrative staff of the schools that participated in the piloting and completion of this research. We were absolutely delighted to achieve a 100% response rate. The work put in by schools in completing the survey and offering opinions is what makes this a solid and valuable research. The full report will be launched in the coming weeks.

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Contact: secondlevel@educatetogether.ie