

# **Educate Together Second-level News**

## **Vol. 2, Issue 6 – April 2010**

### ***Aim High Dinner on Sat 29 May***

The trek towards achieving an Educate Together Second-level school seems at times like scaling Everest. But we have high ambitions for our education system and aim to achieve them.

So on the anniversary of Hillary and Tensing topping the world, join us at Dublin's highest point to support our final push to the summit - Educate Together's first Second-level school.

May 29th 2010, 7.30pm. Guinness Storehouse. Tickets €100. Contact [fundraising@educatetogether.ie](mailto:fundraising@educatetogether.ie) for more information

### **Working Groups meet to build on Blueprint**

On Saturday 17 April, working group members met in the Clarion Hotel in the IFSC, Dublin, to discuss and plan a programme of work for the remainder of 2010.

At the meeting, John Halbert and Susan Dennison from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) gave working group members a preview of the Junior Cycle review process based on its report: *Innovation and Identity: New Ideas for Junior Cycle*. This report presents great ideas for Junior Cycle reform and John and Susan told us about the consultation process which is now beginning. (see [http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum\\_and\\_Assessment/Post-Primary\\_Education/Junior\\_Cycle/Junior\\_cycle\\_developments/](http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Post-Primary_Education/Junior_Cycle/Junior_cycle_developments/) for more information)

Commenting on the NCCA Junior Cycle review, Brendan Tangney from Trinity said “The beauty of the Educate Together second-level project is that because you are starting with a blank slate you can implement these reforms straight away. You have your parents and students fully on board and have shown through your Blueprint that you are ready to take a fresh and innovative approach to second-level education”

John Lawlor from the Bridge to College initiative also presented how B2C's group-based, technology-mediated model of learning could be integrated into the cross-curricular approach to Junior Cycle outlined in Educate Together's Blueprint for second-level schools.

At the well-attended meeting, the following working groups discussed their terms of reference and started to plan tasks to work on in the coming months.

- Campus and Built Environment
- Ethical Education Curriculum
- Leadership, Management and Structure
- Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

The meeting was interesting and constructive, and it was very encouraging to have such a positive response from volunteers.

## **NCCA Junior Cycle Review**

Educate Together were delighted to participate in Wed 21 April's launch of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)'s consultation process on the Junior Cycle.

The ideas being put forward by the NCCA in *Identity and Innovation: New Ideas for Junior Cycle* are in keeping with our own plans for second-level schools, published in our Blueprint last year.

At the launch, Tánaiste and Minister for Education and Skills, Mary Coughlan stated:

*“Our learners need to be flexible, adaptable, resilient and competent if they are to participate successfully in society and be enabled as independent learners throughout the whole of their lives. They need to develop critical thinking skills and move away from the trend towards rote learning.”*

Critical thinking and lifelong learning skills are at the core of Educate Together's Blueprint for second-level education. Emer Nowlan, Head of Education and Network Development said:

“We are very encouraged that the Minister is prioritising Junior Cycle reform. Our Blueprint identifies this as a key stage for the

development of important lifelong learning and critical thinking skills.”

## **Second-level Information Events**

### **- Drogheda**

During the weekend of 24 and 25 April, Drogheda's Educate Together Secondary School Action Group held a very successful Information and Expression of Interest event in Scotch Hall.

In just two days over 200 people signed a petition calling on the government to put procedures in place for the recognition of new schools, and to sanction the application to open an Educate Together second-level school in Drogheda and 250 expressions of interest were collected.

For more information on the Drogheda Action Group's campaign, go to [www.droghedaetss.com](http://www.droghedaetss.com).

### **- Lucan**

On Thursday 29 April at 7.30pm a panel from Educate Together will host an information seminar for parents in the Lucan area who would like to know more about what Educate Together can offer at second-level. This event will be held in Griffeen Valley ETNS.

Our team will explain why we feel our Blueprint represents the future of second-level education in Ireland.

In a landmark decision in March of this year, the Department of Education and Science reversed a decision they had made to designate a proposed new post-primary school for Lucan as a VEC Community College, pending a review. For more information about the Lucan Task force's campaign, go to:

<http://www.lucanet2.com/>

### **- Gorey**

A similar information session will also be held in Gorey on Wed 12 May in the Amber Springs Hotel at 8pm. In December 2008, the Gorey group collected over 1,400 signatures supporting the campaign to have Educate Together recognized as a patron of second-level schools and In July 2009 the Gorey Town Council passed a motion supporting this campaign.

For more information about the Gorey campaign group see <http://www.et2ndlevelgorey.com/>

## **Charter for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning in Trinity's Science Gallery**

Paul Rowe, CEO, and Emer Nowlan, Head of Education and Network Development, attended this stimulating event in the Science Gallery in Trinity on Thursday 22 April. Second-level students from around the country were invited to the Science Gallery to talk about their ideas for reform of the education system. Paul and Emer were among the educational management and policy “experts” who were invited to help the students turn their ideas into a Charter.

For more information see: <http://www.sciencegallery.com/charter21>

## **Brendan Tangney joins Advisory Panel**

We are delighted that Brendan Tangney, a senior lecturer in Trinity College Dublin, has agreed to join our Second-level Advisory panel. He is a co-director of Trinity's Centre for Research in IT in Education, an initiative of which (in collaboration with the NGO SUAS and Trinity's Access Program) is the Bridge to College project.

This project is working with second-level schools to develop a group-based, project oriented, technology-mediated model for learning, and Educate Together second-level project is working with them to develop this work. Brendan also brings his experience as Chair of the Board of Governors of the John Scottus School to the panel.

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