



ETSN

School Newsletter

**MARCH
2011**

Educate Together welcomes Patronage Forum

Educate Together has hailed the announcement by Ruairi Quinn, Minister for Education and Skills, of a National Forum on Patronage in Primary Education as a positive step for Irish education. The Forum will invite consultation from parents as well as patron bodies and other interested stakeholders.

Commenting on the Minister's announcement Paul Rowe Educate Together CEO said 'We congratulate the Minister for taking this step. This is a long-overdue initiative which we hope will accelerate the process of meeting the needs of parents seeking Educate Together schools. We wish the new expert group every success in their work and look forward to positively contributing to the process'.

Educate Together currently has 70 applications to open primary schools nationwide lodged with the Department. Paul Rowe again 'The importance of this new process and its urgency cannot be understated.

Increased diversity in primary school choice has been a long-standing issue in Irish education. Over the past three years, the previous administration held back the progress of recognition of new Educate Together schools and refused to hold a national forum on patronage. We currently have 20 priority applications ready to go, some of which could open in September if given the go-ahead.

We are seeing increasing numbers of school start up groups in areas where the Department of Education is resistant to opening up new schools. In most cases, this is because of the existence of vacant educational space. This creates a real problem for parents who cannot access the type of education they want in the area where they live. All school patrons are aware of this issue and are seeking constructive solutions. I hope the National Forum will facilitate and help progress the positive initiatives already underway and help deliver a primary education system that truly

reflects the rights of all parents and children.'

Submission to the U.N.

Educate Together has submitted a report to the United Nations Human Rights Council in relation to Ireland's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) that is to take place in October this year. This work maintains the profile of the case successfully taken by Educate Together to the UN International Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in 2005 in relation to Irish families having access to multi-denominational schools. This case is made under the provisions for the right of freedom of expression and also access to education. It is anticipated that the Universal Periodic Review process in October will again re-iterate a recommendation to the Irish state to increase the number of such schools.

We have several great events for all sectors of the Educate Together community coming up over the next few months. Why not check out the events section on our website or the events on our facebook page?



National Children's Strategy Consultation week

As you may well be aware the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, under new Minister Frances Fitzgerald, is kicking off the National Children's Strategy with a school's consultation process. They have mailed every school in the country with a questionnaire that is aimed at 8-12 year olds at Primary Level. The questionnaire contains questions about what's good, what's not so good and what they would change about being a child or young person in Ireland today. These questions were developed by children and young people themselves. The aim is to get to know the issues of real importance to children and young people all over the country to feed into the new strategy. The Department is working with a research team in Trinity College who will collate the results and publish them.

Educate Together welcomes this initiative as it gives our children a real opportunity to contribute to the development of government policy that will directly affect them. We hope you all get involved and Educate Together National Office would be very interested in the insights your students have.

National Gifted Education Awareness Day

This Friday, April 8th is National Gifted Education Awareness Day (NGEAD), promoting awareness among teachers of the presence of Exceptionally Able children in Irish schools and to develop their awareness of the challenges and myths surrounding Exceptionally Able children. The next day is the first EU Talent Day, a day used to celebrate all talent; sporting, music and artistic. NGEAD will involve a posting to every school of a poster and a brochure of information. This has the potential to raise achievement for all students, not just those considered 'gifted'. For more info about National Gifted Education Awareness Day visit www.giftedandtalented.ie

POSITION VACANT

Principal

Swords Educate Together N.S.

Swords Educate Together National School (SETNS), Roll Number 20145 O, invites applications for the position of Principal Teacher commencing 1st September 2011. SETNS is a vibrant multi-denominational school under the patronage of Educate Together.

As a developing school with a teaching staff of 23, an expected enrolment of 456 by next September and a permanent building in progress the school is looking for someone with the energy and enthusiasm for this role. An ability to work with the whole school community and excellent communication and team working skills are essential.

Please send your letter of application and curriculum vitae including details of referees, in an envelope marked 'application', to: The Chairperson, SETNS, Applewood, Swords, Co. Dublin. Closing date for receipt of applications is 5pm on Friday 22nd April 2011.

The role description is also available online here <http://tinyurl.com/ETvacancies>

NEW SCHOOLS

In the last issue we delivered the good news of three new Educate Together schools, Mulhuddart and West Blanchardstown (opening this September) and Ashbourne (opening September 2012). The pre-enrolment list is now open for the school in Mulhuddart (Powerstown) and a recent meeting in West Blanchardstown gave more information to the parents there. Parents can also pre-enrol their child for the new school in Ashbourne. For more information on either school please contact the RDO team on 01 4294500.

Two Educate Together Schools have the Fit Factor!

Two Educate Together National Schools are celebrating after being shortlisted for the Lidl Fit Factor competition.

Gorey Educate Together NS was chosen as Southeast finalist and Ardee Educate Together NS was chosen as Northeast Finalist.

Over 20,000 pupils across Ireland took part in the competition and now Educate Together pupils make up two of just four schools going into the national finals.

The Lidl Fit Factor is run in conjunction with the Irish Heart Foundation and promotes healthy eating and physical activity.

An exciting time now lies ahead for the regional winners as they go head-to-head to be crowned the 'Lidl Fit Factor Champions' and to win the amazing first prize of €5,000 worth of sports equipment vouchers as well as runners up prizes of €3,000 and €2,000 worth of sports equipment vouchers! But they need your help! All you have to do to help either school win the top prize is to visit www.fitfactor.ie and follow the link to register your vote. Voting closes at 9am on Tuesday 3 May.

The overall winners will be chosen by the number of votes they get and the decision of the independent judging panel of Kevin McLaughlin, Ireland and Leinster rugby star, Lar Corbett from the Tipperary hurling team and Sinead Kennedy RTE presenter.

So get voting and good luck to Gorey and Ardee!

Are you using our Ning network? It's a bespoke, online social space for the Educate Together community. For more information or to request membership email aoife.murray@educatetogether.ie

Flex your Fundraising Muscles for Educate Together!

ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT DOING A CHARITY RUN THIS YEAR?

FLEX your FUNDRAISING MUSCLES!



Charity No: CHY 11816

Why not run for Educate Together and be a part of the development & reform of Irish Education?

Contact
Masina Johnston to:

- Get registered,
- Get a t-shirt &
- Be a part of the change!

01 429 2500
0879766651
fundraising@educatetogether.ie

Flex those muscles with one of these great runs...

Great Ireland Run
Date: April 10, 2011
Time: 13:00
Location: Phoenix Park
Race Distance: 10km
Men and women welcome

Flora Women's Mini Marathon
Date: June 6th, 2011
Time: 15:00
Location: Fitzwilliam Square
Race Distance: 10km
Women only

Call & find out about lots more events nationwide



We launched our 'Flex your Fundraising Muscles for Educate Together' campaign last month, encouraging people to run for Educate Together in one (or more) of the multitude of charity races each year. We have our first runners doing the Great Ireland Run this weekend (10th April) and we wish them the very best!

Our Flora Women's Mini Marathon team is building into a nice group including National Office staff, teachers and parents. We are hoping to encourage as many people as we can to sign up so we can create a really strong visual force on the day. With the change of Minister and a general positive swing in the public mood for choice in schools this is the time for us to be seen.

There are so many more events right around the country so email fundraising@educatetogether.ie if you would like to 'Flex your Fundraising Muscles'!

Redeployment Panel Information

The Department of Education and Skills have sent on the list of teachers on the Educate Together Main Redeployment Panel. Contrary to the much larger numbers being expected there are only 4 teachers listed. There may be additional teachers added at a later date.

There are currently 52 Permanent vacancies in the Educate Together network. When further posts are sanctioned (either permanent or fixed term) schools have 5 days to inform the panel operator (Louise Daly) of these posts.

The contact details of teachers on the panel have been sent to schools. The DES have not indicated when they will be releasing the Supplementary Panel.

Please see Circular [0019/2011](#) for more information.

SNA Appointment Changes

Circular 0021/2011 - Educational Qualifications for Appointment as Special Needs Assistant in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools

The minimum educational requirements for the appointment of Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) have been amended. With effect from September 2011 the minimum required standard of education for appointment to the post of SNA is:

1. A FETAC level 3 major qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications OR
2. A minimum of three grade Ds in the Junior Certificate, OR
3. Equivalent.

Any questions regarding the level of learning or recognition of qualifications should be addressed to the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland at www.nfq.ie.

Schools must still comply with other employment criteria as outlined in Circular 03/03.

All SNAs who meet the amended requirements will now progress on the incremental scale for SNAs from 1st September 2011. Schools should inform the DES that current SNAs meet the requirements before September so that their salary will reflect the increment. The previous educational requirements for SNAs was a grade D in Irish, English and Maths in the Junior Certificate or the Day Vocational Certificate Examination or in an examination of equivalent standard. The new requirements make it easier for candidates who may not have been educated in Ireland.

All enquiries regarding this circular should be emailed to: teachersna@education.gov.ie

Rates of Pay

Circular 0016/2011

The DES have issued a circular on the Revised Rates of Pay in respect of Supervision/ substitution for the 2010/2011 school year.

Please see the DES website for more details.

For further information please contact Schools Division Financial at ccfinancial@education.gov.ie

EAL SUPPORT

The application form for EAL support is now available on the Department of Education website. For those who are having trouble finding it (and it is difficult to find!) the following directions might help. On the homepage click on 'Educational Personnel' on the top bar. Then click on 'Primary' in the left margin. Then click on 'Teacher Allocations'. It is currently the first form available year along with the Circular 15/2009 which is relevant also.

ASSESSMENT OF NEED

Circular 00/20- The Assessment of Need process under the Disability Act 2005

Under the provisions of part 2 of the Disability Act 2005 parents may apply for an assessment of need if they are of the opinion that their child may have a disability as defined in the Act. This Circular outlines the process involved in gaining an assessment of need for child who is under the age of five. The process is initiated by the parents or guardians in all cases. If a child presents as having learning, behavioural, emotional or social difficulties in school and hasn't already been assessed the principal could inform the parents of the assessment of need process. Assessment Officers will carry out the assessments and sometimes will also be in contact with the relevant SENO who will be able to inform them of the educational services which will be available to the child. When a child has been assessed as having high incidence special needs as set out in DES Circular 02/05 schools should support the child through the General Allocation Model. If it is evident from the reports supplied/ assessment of need process that the child meets the criteria for additional resources under the DES criteria for low incidence need, the principal may make an application to the SENO in the normal way.

SCHOOL BOOKS

Circular 0023/2011 - Allocations to schools for books

The DES expects payments to be made to schools in April to provide assistance for books. The DES will be urging schools to put in place book rental schemes as these are the most effective means of lowering costs for all parents.

The additional funding per capita will be:

- Allocation to DEIS schools for books: €21
- Allocation to non DEIS schools for books €11

For further information please contact Schools Division Financial at ccfinancial@education.gov.ie

Employment Assistance Service

Employee Assistance Service is extended to Retirees for up to 6 months following Retirement

The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is a free and confidential counselling and support service for teachers, Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) and their family members to provide them with assistance in coping with a variety of issues. The service has recently been extended to include access for retired teachers and SNAs for up to six months following retirement. Teachers/SNAs may experience a mix of emotions when retiring and having access to the EAS during the weeks and months following retirement will help with the adjustment.

What kind of services are available?

- Telephone Counselling – single sessions or short term structured counselling
- Face to Face counselling – up to six counselling sessions

Counselling is provided on issues such as health, relationships, addictions, bereavement, stress, conflict, critical incident and trauma.

How do I contact the service?

It couldn't be simpler. The EAS is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year through: Freephone 1800 411 057 or Email : eas@vhics.ie

For additional information on the EAS just click on to the Department of Education and Skills Website, www.education.ie and follow the link provided.

Ethos Conference

Teachers and members of Boards of Management are invited to attend an Ethos Conference on Saturday 9th April (previously 26th March) from 10 a.m. to 3.30 p.m., at the Clarion Hotel, IFSC.

Those attending the conference will hear a presentation from Dr. Philomena Donnelly of St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, who has developed the Ethics and Education course that is being offered to students in St. Pats for the first time this year as an alternative to Religious Education. This is a historic development and Philomena was instrumental in bringing about this choice for students. She will speak on Teacher Education and the Second Republic.

There will also be presentations from Fionnuala Ward, Education Officer, on the Learn Together Programme and Molly O' Duffy, Ethos Development Officer, on the ethos self-evaluation tool which will be used by up to 12 schools this year to assess their implementation of the Educate Together ethos. Molly will also give a presentation on Equality and Inclusion in Schools.

The Conference provides teachers with an opportunity to share their experiences of teaching the Learn Together Programme. Board members will have time to confer on case studies of "ethos issues", discussing how they have or might resolve them.

Lunch (soup and sandwiches) will be provided and tea, coffee and pastries will be provided at 10 a.m., so come early! Please RSVP to Seonaid at 01-4292500 or info@educatetogether.ie. For more info check out <http://tinyurl.com/EthosConference>.

This is a very exciting conference and we look forward to seeing you there. The event is free to teachers and Board members in Educate Together schools, but there will be an opportunity for participants to make a small donation on the day to off-set the cost of refreshments.

Many thanks to all the school principals who expressed an interest in a network wide Educate Together homework journal for all schools. We now have 31 of our schools on board. Once a decision has been made as to printing supplier schools will again be hearing from Communications Officer Aoife regarding personalised content from schools.

National Youth Entrepreneurship Conference

Join the Facebook debate!



The Ryan Academy is organising a Conference on Delivering a National Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy. The Taoiseach will be the keynote speaker, his first appearance at Dublin Castle, on April 15th. It is about how we can create an education system that encourages entrepreneurship in Ireland-there are already great Irish examples. It is about forming a long term solution, not a short term complaint. Educate Together supporters are being asked to contribute to the debate by suggesting topics for the workshops. Check out the info on our facebook page and get into the spirit of entrepreneurship. We want your thoughts and ideas. Your input will be recorded and reported back to the Ryan Academy and your ideas could help form part of future ideas in this arena!

The conference itself will be chaired by Dr Chris Horn and speakers include **Caroline McHale - National Coordinator for Business and Enterprise, Department of Education and Skills.** **Simone Baldassarri - Policy Officer, DG Enterprise and Industry, European Commission, Brussels (TBC)** **Trine Fuglsang - Specialist Advisor Education, Danish Enterprise and Construction Authority.**

The workshops will follow the speaker presentations. You can join the debate on Educate Together's Facebook page or find out more about the conference on the website <http://educationentrepreneur.yolasite.com/>

Educate Together's Breakfast Briefing



Ian Herlihy of Mason Hayes & Curran, ET CEO Paul Rowe, Gareth Morgan of Google, Fiona O'Carroll of HMH, Paul Sweetman of ICT Ireland, ET's Head of Education & Network Development Emer Nowlan, former head of DCU Ferdinand von Prondzynski and Fintan Murphy of Damson Technologies

On Wednesday 9th March we held a very successful Breakfast Briefing at Mason Hayes + Curran. The purpose of the briefing was to let the ICT sector know about our plans for second-level and ask them to support, engage and contribute to the debate on the innovation of curriculum. The briefing was a precursor to the Re-imagining Learning Conference we are holding in May.

EASTER CAMP

Up to 25 Educate Together students will have the opportunity to participate in a unique learning experience during the 2011 Easter holidays. From Wednesday 27 – Friday 29 April 2011, they will work collaboratively on projects from different curricular areas, using integrated approaches to learning.

The Easter Camp will take place at Bridge2College, Trinity College, Dublin 2 and is open to students from current Educate Together 6th Classes, and to graduates of Educate Together primary schools who are in 1st Year at second-level (2010/11 school year).

Educate Together school principals have been invited to nominate students from their schools to take part; parents are also able to apply on behalf of their child(ren).

The cost for the Easter Camp will be €10 per student.

To apply for a place on the Easter Camp, please visit our [website](#).

VIDEO COMPETITION

Calling all budding junior film makers! The Plural+ Youth video festival aims to be an empowering tool for young people to speak out about what they think of migration and diversity, using their own views and voices. Participants must be aged 9-25 years and must submit a short video (1-5) minutes on the subject of diversity. Shortlisted film makers are invited to the award ceremony in New York and are in with the chance to win \$1,000. More information is available at www.unaoc.org/pluralplus

MOTIONS SUBMITTED

PERMANENT SCHOOL
BUILDINGS

SUPPORTING SCHOOLS

SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANTS

ADMISSIONS POLICY

ETHICAL EDUCATION
CURRICULUM

REVIEW OF 4 PRINCIPLES AND
CHARTER

QUORUM FOR THE AGM

FUNDING OF EDUCATE
TOGETHER

MEMBERSHIP OF EDUCATE
TOGETHER

AGM

Gorey Educate Together N.S. May 28th

Anticipation is building for the AGM, taking place this year at Gorey Educate Together N.S. All schools will have received a letter detailing several motions, ranging in topic from permanent school buildings to funding the organisation. All amendments to these motions must be returned to National Office no later than this Friday April 9th.

In addition, there are a number of vacancies on the Board of Directors so we are seeking nominations for the positions of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Company Secretary. If you know of anyone within your school network or in the wider community who would be interested in serving on the Board for a three-year term of office, please bring this to their attention and considered nominating them before April 9th.

Educate Together members are welcome to submit suggestions for afternoon session for the day and the final agenda for the meeting will be circulated on May 6th. In addition, look out for info regarding your voting card. Each school's Board of Management Chair must sign an indemnity, giving voting authority to a particular person. Please bear in mind that your school's vote is only valid if subs have been paid.

The Annual Report for 2011 is compiled before the AGM and will be distributed and discussed on the day.

The AGM gives every member of the Educate Together community the opportunity to be instrumental in the development and improvement of the organisation. Please RSVP to agm@educatetogether.ie. We look forward to seeing you there!

Re-imagining Learning

Given Educate Together's status as a Second level patron and current calls for change at second-level that are coming from across the educational and political spectrum Educate Together is hosting a conference entitled "Re-imagining learning: Curriculum integration in the early secondary years. In partnership with the NCCA and the University of Limerick, the two-day conference is taking place at the Limerick Strand Hotel on May 13th and 14th.

Emer Nowlan, Educate Together's Head of Education and Network Development says "The time for reform and innovation in Irish education is now. The need to improve second-level schooling, in particular, is widely accepted by business leaders, educationalists and social activists. The only question that remains is how. Most commentators agree on the broad direction in which the system needs to move: a more relevant, applied and integrated curriculum, a more learner-centred approach, greater emphasis on critical thinking, communicating and other 21st century skills and, crucially, integrating ICT into the educational process at every level."

Releasing the full potential of ICT in education requires much more than simply providing schools with equipment. It is about how learners and teachers think and work; how schools are designed and how they operate; how content is accessed and critically analysed; how the curriculum is planned and delivered; how learning is assessed; how innovation is nurtured, and much more. Plans are underway for the first Educate Together second-level school. This provides a unique opportunity for Irish society to pioneer important innovations in a 'clean slate' environment. As Educate Together extends its learner-centred and democratic ethos into second-level education, we want to ensure that this opportunity is fully exploited.

The conference will explore pertinent issues in second level education and will ask where we should go from here and how we should do it. Come along and take part in this vital conversation about how we want our schools to be. Tickets are now available at <http://reimagininglearning.eventbrite.com> and start at €79. Saturday's programme will include examples and workshops that will be of particular interest to teachers.

Speakers confirmed to date include:

Dr Candy Beal, University of North Carolina.

Dr Jim Gleeson, University of Limerick.

John Lawlor, Bridge21 (Trinity College Dublin and Suas).

John Hammond, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

Prof John Portelli, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Dr Emer Smyth, Economic and Social Research Institute.



Pupils at Wexford Educate Together N.S. celebrate the beautiful Spring weather!

Regional news from our RDOs

Niall Wall- Southern Ireland



One of the "Group of 12" schools that opened in 2008, **Wexford Educate Together N.S.** has blossomed into a successful school full of character, humour and happy learning. Now with an enrolment of 61 pupils, the staff of Wexford ETNS includes three classroom teachers, along with learning, language and EAL support, and of course the ever

bubbly school secretary Leanne! The school is set to grow by at least a full class per year for the foreseeable future and has forged strong community links in Wexford.

Says Board of Management Chairperson, Gillian Hayes, "the secret to our success is simple, its down to the hard work and commitment of the whole school community and we are fortunate to have so many positive people who give so much with such a good heart. From staff to parents to children we are unified in a common purpose of providing the best educational opportunities for our children", Gillian added.

The staff are led by principal Maria Redmond, who previously taught in Bray School Project and who hails from nearby Enniscorthy. "Despite the challenges of being involved in a developing school, it is a joy to come to work every morning" says Maria. "The atmosphere is wonderful and there is always a sense of unity of purpose and an expectation of success which makes the hours and days pass with ease". Maria again "With our new premises here in Whitemill we have a bright airy building with plenty of space both inside and out for all our activities and critically we have room for the ongoing expansion that we are experiencing."

Happy and exciting days indeed for Educate Together in Wexford Town.

Amy Mulvihill- South Leinster



Newbridge Educate Together N.S. was very busy this month celebrating Seachtain Na Gaeilge with lots of exciting events and activities.

The festivities kicked off on March 14th with a Céilí in Gaelscoil Chill Dara. The two schools share a beautiful campus on the edge of the

Curragh in Kildare. This was the second year that all classes, from junior infants to sixth class attended and danced with their counterparts in the Gaelscoil.

The junior infants of Newbridge Educate Together have also invited the Gaelscoil junior infants over to their school to share some of their favourite poems.

The pupils of Newbridge Educate Together also went on a local trail across the Curragh. They explored the history of the Curragh, visiting the old military graveyard and the famous Donnelly's Hollow. They then completed their questionnaires, as gaeilge, to see what local history experts they had become!

The celebrations were finished off with Tráth na gCeist in the Halla Glas. Children from first class to sixth class took part in the quiz and great craic was had by all.

CONTACT US

Do you have some great news from your school or start-up group? Why not shout about it and let everyone know?

Email: aoife.murray@educatetogether.ie

Call: 01 4292500

Find us on Facebook!