

Statement on Gorey Second-level Decision

Board of directors of Educate Together November 24 2010

The board of directors of Educate Together today held an exceptional meeting to consider the announcement on November 16 of the Tánaiste's decision to award the patronage of the new second-level school in Gorey to Co. Wexford VEC.

The board heard and considered reports from the CEO, the Legal Affairs Sub-Committee and the National Office Communications Team and has issued the following statement:

"The board is concerned about a number of aspects of the process implemented by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) to make recommendations to the Tánaiste in relation to the patronage of the new second-level school in Gorey. It has instructed the CEO to consult with other independent patrons of schools on this matter and engage with the relevant authorities in the DES to see if constructive proposals can be agreed for future applications. In the light of the current political instability, the board also instructed the CEO to discuss its concerns both with the Tánaiste and with education spokespersons of current opposition political parties.

"Educate Together is seeking consensus amongst education partners to find an equitable approach to the selection of patrons for new schools and, in particular, a path that responds appropriately to diverse parental preferences. It is continuing to press that any future patron selection process must include both transparency and fairness as fundamental elements.

"The board has also instructed the CEO to engage with the DES to elicit their plans to provide for the lawful preference of the parents of 957 children who have formally chosen the Educate Together model for their children's second-level education in Gorey.

"In reviewing the work carried out on this application, the board would like to congratulate the Gorey Educate Together Second-level Campaign and its committee, the board, staff, children and supporters of Gorey Educate Together National School, the National Office project team and all the supporters who contributed to this impressive and professional application.

"The recording of 957 preferences for an Educate Together second-level school in an area with just one newly established Educate Together primary school - in the face of a heavily State-financed publicity campaign for a more familiar school type - demonstrates clearly the broad and powerful appeal of the Educate Together second-level model. The achievement of a 97% mark awarded by a Department of Education and Skills panel on the technical criteria provides

clear evidence of official recognition of Educate Together's fitness and competence to operate second-level schools.

"The board would also like to specifically thank all the public representatives in Co. Wexford who supported our application, as well as Nicholas Sweetman, retired principal of Gorey Community School, for his ongoing support and advice.

"The board reiterates its commitment to implement the decisions of Educate Together's general meetings to open second-level schools of the model detailed in "A Blueprint For Educate Together Second-level Schools". It calls on all members of Educate Together to attend a General Members Meeting in Dublin on December 11 to further discuss its active plans for second-level education. Finally, it has formally established a 'Second-level Fighting Fund' to support these efforts."

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