



Children enjoying the 'One World Festival' at Skerries Educate Together National School

ETSN

School Newsletter

SUMMER
2011

Educate Together at the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism

A three-day public session of the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism was held at the Department of Education on 22, 23 and 24 June 2011. The Forum, established by the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn TD, is seeking to enable greater pluralism in the governance of schools.

Parents, patrons, teachers and school communities were asked to submit their views on the need for diversity and how the transfer of patronage might be managed. An advisory group will consider these submissions, and report back to the Minister in the Autumn. Educate Together, as the representative body for multi-denominational schools and those campaigning for them, made a detailed submission to the Forum.

[View submission here.](#)

In its submission, Educate Together proposed the following key elements to the Forum:

- Register of Parental School Preference

The introduction of an independent local body that maintains a register of the school type preference of parents of pre-school children and has

authority to call patrons and managers of schools in their area to discuss and act to ensure that local school provision is matched as closely as possible to community demand.

- Introduce effective regulation of patrons of schools

The privileges granted to patrons of schools under the Education Act (1998) should be balanced by a set of regulations that ensure appropriate accountability to the public for the exercise of these powers and the considerable amount of State funds that flow to the patron's schools. Included in these should be an obligation to make available to other educational uses, any education facilities that are under-utilised or vacant that have been funded by or grant aided by the State.

- Introduce an agreed, supported procedure for the transformation of patronage of schools

As Irish society continues on its generation on generation change of parental preference for schools, there will be increasing demand for change of school types in communities. It is essential that an agreed procedure for transformation of school patronage emerges and that this procedure is actively supported by the State. This

process should be driven in the first instance by existing demand and the register of parental preference detailed above.

- Provision of Educate Together model schools in all areas of the country

Genuine choice of school type that is compatible with the constitutional and human rights of all families can only be achieved if an equality-based school such as that provided in the Educate Together model is available in all areas of the country. This is also the only way in which the State can discharge its obligation to provide for the education of all children in the country and to do so without religious discrimination.

Educate Together's submission argued that the State should allow the timely processing of the many applications for new Educate Together schools that are currently lodged with the Department of Education and Skills.

Paul Rowe (Chief Executive), Emer Nowlan (Head of Education & Network Development) and Deirdre O'Donoghue (Head of Leadership & Governance) represented Educate Together at the public session of the Forum.

Skerries Educate Together 'One World Festival'



GEAR UP FOR SUMMER WITH EDUCATE TOGETHER!

Calling All Parents!

As the school year comes to a close, we have launched three new summer campaigns for Educate Together parents. Check them out on our website, educatetogether.ie

Summer Resource for Parents

As the term winds down with children coming home full of stories of assessments and school tours, parents' minds start to focus even more sharply upon the months ahead.

With this in mind, Educate Together has put together a summer resource for parents that will inspire ideas for activities in the home and activities around Ireland. It's full of tips, activities, events and entertainment ideas to keep the kids active, amused and happy over the holidays.

Just log on to educatetogether.ie and let us help you gear up for a great summer ahead!



Volunteer of the Year

You know who they are, working behind the scenes, getting things done. Log on to educatetogether.ie to reward and recognise a volunteer you know who has made a big difference to your school. Nominations are open throughout the summer, and at the end of the year Educate Together will hold a Volunteer of the Year Award event.

Share Your Memories

Educate Together's Photo Gallery - *do you remember the time when...*

The Educate Together Photo Gallery is now open! We've got over 30 years worth of great pictures to upload, come take a look!

Log on to educatetogether.ie to reconnect with your Educate Together friends and parents. Share your memories, find photos, tag yourself and upload more. Have fun!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations and a fond farewell to Helen from Limerick School Project, Gerard from Swords Educate Together and Réamonn from Gaelscoil an Ghoirt Álainn on their upcoming retirement.

Wishing you all the best for the future!

Educate Together Day - October 28th 2011

Last year on October 25th, €15,000 was raised by Educate Together schools doing things like: sponsored swims, bake sales, stationery cycles and coin trails to name a few. All the money raised went to the recruitment of Boards of Management for 2011.

This year the date is **October 28th**, it is the last day before the Halloween Break. Posters and packs will be sent out to schools in September. We would love as many schools as possible to get involved and celebrate Educate Together in costume with a fun event and to raise money to support their boards of management. For more information, visit our Educate Together Day page [here](#).



Join me on
October 28th for
the Educate
Together Day

Support your
school by
supporting
Educate
Together



Update: Ethos Self-evaluation

Five schools have completed the ethos self-evaluation process rolled out by Educate Together since March. They are: Tralee ETNS, Wicklow ETNS, Donabate / Portrane ETNS, Dublin 7 ETNS and Skerries ETNS.

In each school a committee organised the distribution of written questionnaires to members of the Board and staff and also to parents and pupils. Educate Together provided a draft of the questionnaires to schools, who adopted them as they saw fit. In many cases the questionnaires were translated into different languages. The committee then collated the results, providing invaluable information for the school on the perspectives of the different partners on the ethos of the school. The questionnaires were then complemented by focus group sessions with the different partners, facilitated by Molly O' Duffy, Ethos Development Officer, or Fionnuala Ward, Primary Education Officer. These meetings were generally lively events, and served to delve further into replies to the questionnaires or raise issues that had not been included.

All five Boards of Management now have a complete snapshot of the state of the ethos in their school and will take action on the basis of the findings. Niamh Mc Guirk, teacher rep. on the Board of Management of Donabate/ Portrane ETNS comments that "the process was really constructive and reflective. It raised awareness of positive elements of our ethos that we had taken for granted, and identified areas to focus on for the year ahead. It was wonderful that all members of the school community had a voice. It created a buzz around ethos in the school".

There is huge interest in taking part in this process next year. Schools that would like to explore the possibility of participating can contact Molly O' Duffy, Ethos Development Officer, at molly.oduffy@educatetogether.ie or at **01-4292500**.

Ardee Educate Together has the Fit Factor!

Ardee Educate Together NS is celebrating after being crowned the winning school for the Lidl Fit Factor competition.

Pupils from Ardee Educate Together descended on to Dublin Zoo for the grand finale prize giving ceremony of the Lidl Fit Factor on Wednesday 25th May. The finale marked a nail-biting end to the national primary school competition aimed at 3rd and 4th classes to promote healthy eating and physical activity in a programme created by Lidl and the Irish Heart Foundation.

Over 20,000 pupils across Ireland took part in the competition, which also saw Gorey Educate Together NS representing the Southeast as a finalist.

The competition asked schools to submit creative projects expressing what they had learned during the course of the four week long fun and educational programme.

Ardee Educate Together clinched 1st place overall and scooped €6,000 in sports equipment vouchers for their school. Ardee Educate Together's creative entry amazed the celebrity judging panel made up of Kevin McLaughlin, Ireland and Leinster Rugby, Lar Corbett from the Tipperary hurling team as well as broadcaster Sinead Kennedy.

Congratulations to Ardee Educate Together, and to fellow finalist school Gorey Educate Together!

Online Summer Courses 2011

We are running two online summer courses this summer:

A new online course, involving a closer examination of the *Ethics and the Environment* and the *Equality and Justice* strands entitled *Making a Difference* has been made available during the summer period. This course has been designed by teachers from five Educate Together schools and covers the following topics: Climate Change; People Who Make A Difference; Diversity and Identity; Democracy and Activism and Resources and Equality. It is a fantastic course focussed on actively addressing social justice issues with a really great balance of adult discussion and debate on live issues along with practical suggestions as to how these issues can be applied to classroom situations.

We're also running our online course from last year; *An Introduction to Educate Together and the Learn Together Curriculum*, which proved to be a great success, with a huge take-up. The course looks at the history and background to Educate Together and incorporates an overview of all four strands of the Learn Together curriculum, once again with classroom practicalities in mind. Both courses are available until August 26th and come highly-recommended - please feel free to sign up! For more information on the summer courses and to sign up, visit our summer course page [here](#).

Top Tip for Principals:

Planning on making any improvements to school buildings over the summer? Be sure to check with Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) to see if your school is eligible for grants. More info [here](#).



Ardee Educate Together pupils, from left, Liam Russell, Ted Johnston, Hope O'Neill and Caoimhe Houilan pictured with Kevin McLaughlin, the professional Irish Rugby player and TV Presenter Sinead Kennedy after winning the All Ireland Lidl Fit Factor Competition

Educate Together Founder Member Awarded Honorary Degree

Micheal Johnston, one of the founder members of the Dalkey School Project and the Educate Together movement, has been honoured with an Honorary Degree from Trinity College.

A former journalist with RTÉ, Micheal Johnston, together with Áine Hyland and Desmond Green, co-ordinated the first parent campaign for multi-denominational education in Ireland. Their campaign through the mid seventies faced considerable opposition and was seen as radical or even subversive in some quarters.

Their efforts however, successfully attracted the support of Jack Lynch who honoured a pre-election commitment with the opening of the Dalkey School Project in 1978. This school then proved the catalyst for a number of new multi-denominational schools and the founding of the Educate Together patron body in the following years.

Micheal Johnston has remained an active member of the Educate Together movement throughout his life. He is still involved in education and is the current Chair of the Board of Newpark Comprehensive School. The awards ceremony took place in Trinity College Examination's Hall on Friday July 1st at 3pm.



Techwatch

Schools are a constant target for sales teams trying to pitch the latest and greatest products. Annoying as this may be, sometimes you can come across some real innovations that could make life easier. ETSN has started this column to flag to you some of the new innovations that are out there that may be of interest. We are not endorsing anything, just providing information - you can decide for yourself if you want to follow up.

Aladdin Schools

Aladdin Schools is a student information management system that is purpose built to meet the needs of Irish Primary Schools. Its web based interface is simple to use allowing Principals, Secretaries, Teachers and Parents immediate access to student records and information, thereby greatly increasing efficiencies and supporting collaborative learning. The Aladdin system is easy to use; there's no software to install, or equipment to buy - if you can browse the internet you can use Aladdin to provide secure access to student information. See www.aladdinschools.com for more and Educate Together schools can avail of a 20% discount on the Aladdin system.

Edubills

EduBills is a secure online payment system for school books and other school expenses. It allows parents to order their school's entire school book list online along with the option of paying any other payment request from the school such as book rentals, arts and crafts, stationery, photocopying, tours, sports and so on. Also the school book supplier refunds the school a % of the revenue from all book sales.

With Edubills.ie, the school secretary can publish any online payment request whenever the need arises. Edubills.ie are offering the system free (with free lifetime license) to the first 100 Irish schools who adopt the online payments system. See www.edubills.ie - type in "example" under school code and hit "next" for a demo.

NEW PRINCIPALS

Fiona Rushe, Swords ETNS

Fiona comes to this position from Rathbeggan National School, Dunshaughlin County Meath where she has been on secondment to the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) as DEIS advisor with responsibility for supporting implementation of literacy and numeracy programmes in school and whole school planning. She has been a teacher for 15 years and has recently completed a Masters in Educational Research Studies from TCD.

Helena Regan, Powerstown ETNS

Helena Regan has just been appointed as Principal of Powerstown Educate Together, a new school opening in Tyrellstown this September. Helena was Deputy Principal of Thornleigh ETNS in Swords.

Matthew Wallen, Limerick School Project

Limerick School Project are delighted with the announcement of their new Principal, Matthew Wallen. Matthew has worked in Limerick School Project since 2003. Prior to this he taught for eight years in the United States where he was born, grew up and was educated. The holder of Master of Arts Degree in English Language Teaching, Matthew has just successfully completed a Doctorate in Education and Applied Linguistics.

Fergal Collins, Blanchardstown West ETNS

Fergal is certainly no stranger to Blanchardstown, as he has taught in the area since 1989. Following a number of years teaching in St. Francis Xavier's Senior School in Roselawn, he had been the Deputy Principal in Tyrrelstown Educate Together since it opened in 2005.