Your Voice in Education – What Matters to You?
Wednesday 18 January 2023

Participating Schools:
- Coláiste Gleann Lí, Tralee
- Killarney Community College
- Coláiste na Ríochta, Listowel

Purpose of Event
The purpose of the event was to have open and inclusive conversations on issues surrounding education for the local community.

This event was part of a pilot study project supported by the European Commission in collaboration with the Teaching Council, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and a range of education stakeholders in Ireland.

The project as a whole aims to uncover ways in which local school community engagement can contribute meaningfully to national education policy development in Ireland.

The project team has partnered with the Burren College of Art (BCA) and the Centre for Effective Services (CES) to facilitate and evaluate the events.

The event was supported by Kerry Education and Training Board who co-ordinated involvement of local school communities.

The following summary shares highlights from the discussions that took place.

> We don't have many occasions in schools where school management, student representatives, parent representatives and teacher representatives actually meet in person for a prolonged period of time to discuss what works well and what needs to be improved in schools and in education in general.

What are you looking forward to at the event?

Having an opportunity to be part of the future of education

Collaborative approach

Hearing other people's views on education in Ireland and their experience

Diversity & Inclusion
What could work better?

More diverse teachers. Non-white, non-catholic.

More cultures represented in curriculums

Students need to be able to see teachers that look and sound like them so they are not afraid to become a teacher in the future

Not a lot has changed for Travellers

Culture Clubs in schools representing all cultures to increase awareness and understanding

More resources

What most needs talking about in Irish Education?

aditional needs in class
professional supports
supports for students   supports
student mental wellfair   traveller inclusion
traveller ed   exams focus not good   student support and care
the busy busy school day   resources for schools   services co
standards   care   teachers   reform   student support
community   about   senior cycle reform   sen provision
wellbeing   Irish   free education   diversity
transition year   levels
students   support   the leaving certificate   books   mental health
mental health awareness   isit being taught properl
understand others   helping students   professional support   other cultures
costs of supplies etc   collaboration with agenci
mental health supports   learning more than exam
understanding additional

Diversity & Inclusion
What is working well?

So many more supports than in the past.

The possibility of being yourself in a safe environment.

Many students from diverse backgrounds

More awareness of multicultural education, and the needs of others. But still a long way to go!

Special classes where teachers can help you with homework

Wellbeing
What is working well?

Teachers seem to really care about the whole child

Positive school culture, positive relationships

Teachers finding time to talk with students

Being able to foster a caring relationship with students as opposed to academic focus

Wellbeing
What could work better?

Having teachers to go to if you're struggling with mental health and knowing they care and will help

Alternative for PE to include all students

More Creative Options – outdoor creative options

Young relatable 'counsellor' type people available to talk to

What messages do we most want to send to those in charge of Education in Ireland?

Senior cycle needs to be more about new ways of learning and less on rote learning

More funding needs to be available to deal with our mental health crisis.

More teamwork so classmates can communicate more and no one will feel excluded or left out

Total reform is needed from primary to college/university in order to unlock everyone's potential

What messages do we most want to send to those in charge of Education in Ireland? *(contd.)*

Traveller Culture needs to be included in the curriculum

We need to have conversations in school, at home, at government level about what we value and why.

Not all pressure on one final exam, need to change to relieve pressure on students

If there was one thing you could change in the Irish Education System, what would it be?

School should be more enjoyable and less stressful

The amount of subjects – should be changed to cross curricular style subjects

Disabilities such as dyslexia should not be exempt

More time for informal learning to explore contemporary trends emerging in local areas/communities

Celebrate all student achievements