

An Chomhairle
Mhúinteoireachta

The Teaching Council



Pilot BEACONS Event

North East Inner City Dublin

13/14 November 2019



BEACONS

Bringing Education Alive for our
Communities On a National Scale

Participating Partners

Larkin Community College, Marino College Secondary School, Mount Carmel Secondary School, O'Connell Secondary School, Belvedere College S.J., Central Model Senior School, Scoil Chaoimhín Primary School, Rutland National School, Neighbourhood Youth Project 1 (NYP1), Lourdes Youth and Community Services (LYCS), and Poet in Residence Poetry Ireland.

With the Teaching Council & Burren College of Art.

**Report written by Martin Hawkes
from the Burren College of Art.**



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Communities On a National Scale

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Purpose

This, the third pilot BEACONS event in the unfolding vision of the Director of the Teaching Council to catalyse a conversation process among parents, teachers and students in their local areas to allow them say what's important about the future of education in a safe, inclusive, inspirational way. The hoped-for fruits included tapping the insights, hopes and aspiration of diverse participants that might help shape education at a local level, while developing the BEACONS template and feeding insights into a national conversation.

Participants

The event was coordinated and hosted with great heart by Máire O' Higgins, Chaplain and Assistant Principal of Larkin Community College CDETB, in conjunction with principals of three primary and five secondary schools in the North East Inner City. It started with an ice-breaker session in Larkin College on Thursday 13th from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm, followed by a full school-day at the Jesuit Chapel on Gardiner Street on Friday 14th from 9am to 3pm.

The participants from the various partners included 10 from Larkin Community College (+ 6 helpers), 6 from Marino College Secondary School, 1 from Belvedere College S.J., 1 from O'Connell Secondary School, 8 from Scoil Chaoimhín Primary School, 3 from Rutland National School, 6 from Central Model Senior School, 6 from the Neighbourhood Youth Project (NYP1), 2 from Lourdes Youth and Community Services, together with participants from the Teaching Council, Burren College of Art, National Parents Council Primary (NPC-P) and Dublin West Education Centre (DWECC). The participants included 10 primary students, 11 second-level students, 4 from NYP1, 5 principals, 5 teachers, 6 parents, and 11 observers including Poetry Ireland's poet in residence and artist in residence at Dublin City University. Máirín Ní Chéileachair, Director of DWECC, provided the efficient administrative back-up. Chris Chapman was the facilitator as part of the Burren College of Art team.

This Report

What follows is (i) a summary of the main themes emerging from this third BEACONS event; (ii) a report on what participants had to say; (iii) reflections from the Director of the Teaching Council and (iv) the harvest of documents from which the report derives.

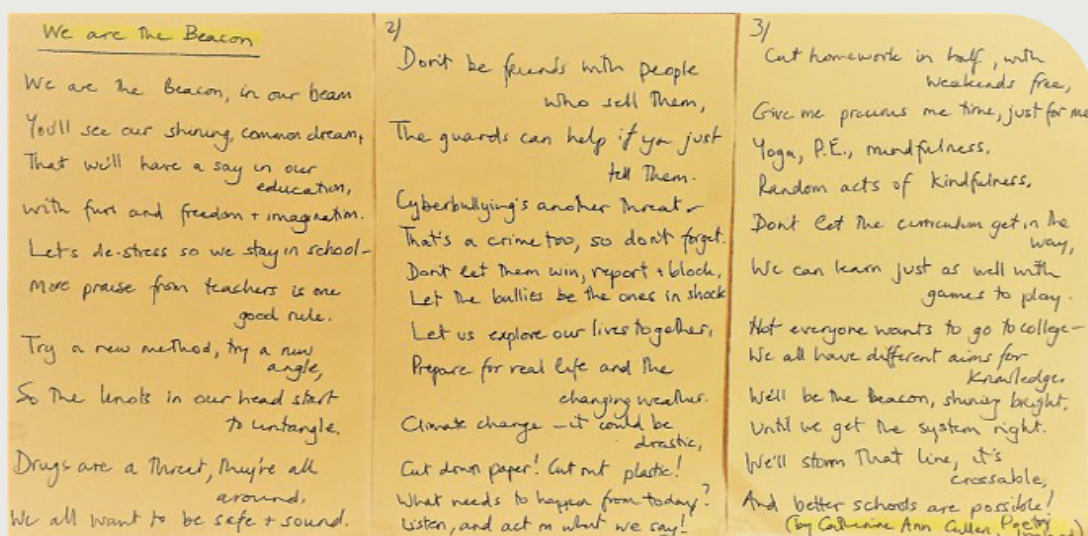


**Tapping the
insights, hopes
and aspiration of
diverse participants
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shape education
at a local level.**

Summary of the Main Themes

- Stress was a pervading theme not just for students, both primary and secondary, but many teachers and principals felt overwhelmed by conflicting demands, tick-the-box exercises and the pace of change;
- As a counter-part to stress there was an emphasis on coping mechanisms and the need to cultivate purpose, creativity and resilience in students;
- For primary-school students the shadow of the second-level exam system began to build anticipatory anxiety – could we focus more on the now?
- For second-level students the notion that fourteen years of education was reduced to a fortnight of exams made no sense – continuous assessment was essential;
- Many students looked for a more meaningful curriculum that prepared for real life after school – more practical and experiential classes and flipping the classroom;
- Students were looking for a more positive, creative and engaging pedagogy to keep them in the system as well as less homework and more praise, trust and a sense of belonging;
- Lack of teachers was highlighted as a very serious problem at present – could schools cooperate more to help alleviate the problem?
- Climate change, environmental degradation and the threat of extinction were a background reality for many students with calls for bans on plastic, reduction in paper use and making ecology a subject in the curriculum;
- Drugs and social media/cyber-bullying were existential realities that students needed support to deal with;
- There were voices seeking more connection to nature, more mindfulness and yoga;
- Student voice needs to be heard – we are the ones in the classroom – why not BEACONS within schools? Can we have more interaction between schools?
- ‘Will anything change?’ was a recurring challenge to all within the system.

Themes were captured magically in poetry by Catherine Anne Cullen of Poetry Ireland.



'We are the Beacon'

Opening – Ice-breaker – at Larkin College

Participants were welcomed warmly to Larkin College by Chaplain, Máire O'Higgins, who said twenty nationalities would be represented at the event. Words of welcome were also added by fifth-year student, Samsara Silinga and by the Director of the Teaching Council, Tomás Ó Ruairc.

Chris Chapman (facilitator) said the precursor to BEACONS was a concern with greater creativity which was intimately connected with wellbeing, inclusion, purpose and much else. The BEACONS process allowed for exploration of all these themes and for change to happen locally and nationally.



What you'd like others to understand of your experience /what are you curious about?

(Discussion in Constituency groups)

Secondary School Students

What people need to understand about education is:

- School is a stressful mess;
- School is a must; even if you don't want to go to school, you still have to because of social pressure;
- School needs more financial support;
- It's constant competition;
- It's not fun to sit in a chair for 8 hours a day; the bell decides what we have to do. WE ARE NOT DEPRESSED, WE ARE OPPRESSED;
- 14 years of studying, but only 2 weeks matters; it determines the rest of your life;
- We're treated like kids, but expected to act like adults;
- Private schools are prioritised over public schools;
- Teachers should compromise with students;
- The lack of teachers is disgraceful;
- They are preparing us for our careers (in Larkin senior cycle), not for life – we should be taught things we need in society (taxes etc.).

Others want

- More woodwork and art; less business – it's just maths;
- More coding and robotics (only once a week);
- Longer breaks, more lunch time;
- School should be more fun – children drop out because of all the work they get;
- Learn own language rather than foreign languages;
- More nature things like the chickens.

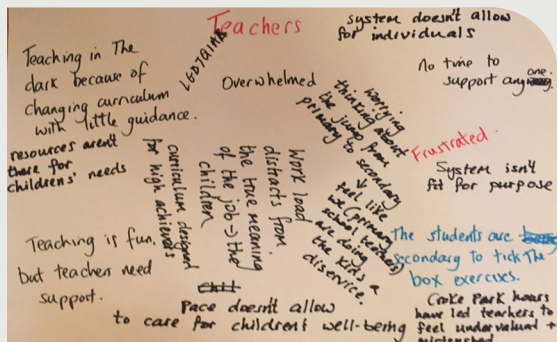
Principals

- Allow us to do our jobs - we have huge work load with too many interruptions and firefighting;
- Diverse initiatives - hard to prioritise and focus on one thing;
- Sleepless nights – huge pressure of high expectations from stakeholders to solve all the problems;
- Thinking of others and their feelings;
- On positive side there is the reward of interacting with students and colleagues;
- The social part of the job is great and it's a privilege to be a principal;
- It's interesting and stimulating and we make a difference;
- If we're parents this takes priority and guides us.

Primary Students

- Stressful; nerve-racking; boring (sometimes); very worrying; pressure; disgraceful (homework);
- sometimes exceptional; very encouraging; accepting;
- Knowledgeable; powerful.

Teachers



Parents

- I need help with the English language;
- A kind school, kind teachers helped me choose to send my daughter here;
- More of my people are in the school community (Mauritius/Georgia);
- I like having a uniform;
- Education is good here – homework amount is good; in my country you spend the whole evening doing homework;
- Irish education system is much less stressful than Mauritius/Georgia; children here play and have time in the evening;
- My daughter would like to do a modern language such as French in the primary school;
- I would love music, piano lessons, instruments in school – where child could choose an instrument;
- We love living close to the school – less pick-ups;
- Give the 800 homeless a 'home' to do homework.

Observers/'Leaders' – what we're curious about

- Knowing more about the NYP1 (Neighbour Youth Project) programme with its 'meitheal' and sharing information and based on support from family – joining the dots of services for students needing support;
- The wrap-around services available at primary school break down at second level; the system needs to be inclusive of all from the ground up
- Why so much educational budget devoted to special needs education and suggestion that the budget is not applied to those with most needs - it's keeping mainstream kids fitting into the system!
- Why do you – teachers/children – come to school?
- Parents – what do you want for/from your children at school?
- What does school/system/school communities need to be, to be inclusive for all - particularly in relation to managing challenging behaviour?
- In the past week, what has each group heard from the other groups and how have you heard from them e.g. children from parents/teachers, teachers from parents/children etc.?
- What's the function of education in the classroom?
- How can we better support children with an SNA transitioning to secondary school?
- Why lunch-time so stressful for many, particularly those who are struggling at school?



What surprised us?

What surprised you – what would you like to discuss more?

(Collective Comments)

- Parents identifying with their nationality – belonging is important;
- Student: ‘We learn about the past – but not the future and climate change’;
- Subjects in school need to have more relevance;
- I’m fidgety – how to make space for kids like me?

Stress

- How teachers feel stressed; How many primary students are under stress;
- Student: ‘I didn’t realize how much work principals and teachers do – it’s mad’;
- I’m disappointed that we don’t know each other’s stories of stress – I’d like to draw and imagine the school we want’;
- There’s anxiety and negative expectations in primary school about secondary school before students even get there – and then two weeks pressure at the end;
- Teachers: ‘What specifically is causing stress in primary school children?’ Student: ‘My auntie told me about second level stress which caused me to stress further.’ ‘There’s the stress in 5th/6th class about going to secondary and knowing there’s much more home-work’;
- Students in secondary get more stressed and leave – what can we do to keep them in school? We should be preparing students for life after school;
- Two weeks of exams determine your future instead of continuous assessment;
- There’s anticipatory stress at each level; second level is more stressful than college;
- There’s the stress of doing bad even when told it doesn’t matter;
- Chris: Stress is to be heard from all tables; some of the sources of stress come from outside the school; The more they say don’t worry, the more we worry’;

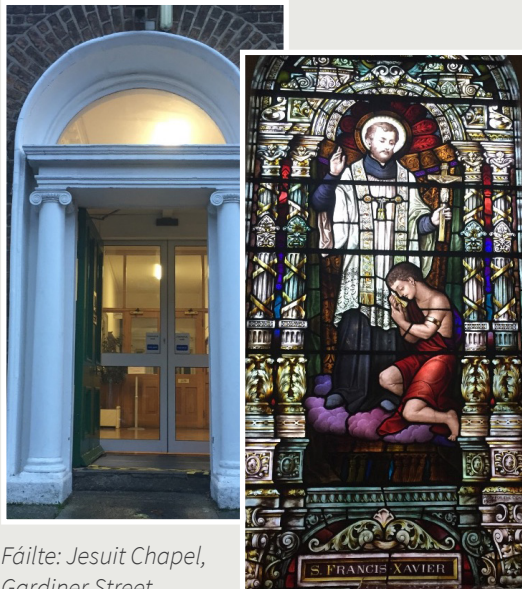
Coping capacity

- Everyone has stress – we need coping capacity;
- With the decline in church influence, schools need to pay attention to helping students find the purpose and meaning in life that can support resilience;
- What can we do as teachers to facilitate creativity for each learner – making sure the ‘why’ question is answered?
- Ciarán Benson says that to be human is to be creative – this is not reflected in our school system; Ken Robinson speaks of finding your purpose, your talents and your tribe and being ‘in your element’;
- My son found his tribe and his passion in college and wants to save the planet; he and you will save education and the planet because of your purpose;
- If your preferences don’t work out find another route;
- There’s need for strategy to deal with stress – it’s part of life;
- We need to live in the moment instead of lying in bed ‘bigging it up’;
- Is this going to change anything or are we here for the sake of our health?

Concluding Comment of opening Evening from Director of the Teaching Council

I’m astounded at what others feel; the emotional resonance is phenomenal. I’m hearing of stress, negativity, sleepless nights, kind teachers and others not so kind. Change can happen if we want it to. What could each one of us do in the next week of something that we love? We are connected to the policy space. Together we can influence and evolve the system.

Thursday 14th November 2019

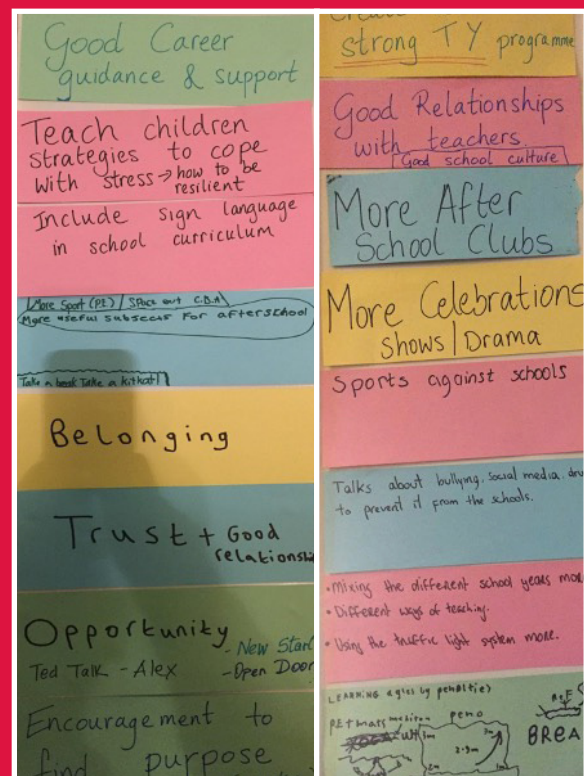


Fáilte: Jesuit Chapel,
Gardiner Street

Moving to the Jesuit Chapel in Gardiner Street for the Thursday sessions, participants were welcomed by Fr Gerry Clarke SJ. Máire pointed to the magnificent Harry Clarke and Evie Hone stained glass windows – and students from the Central Model School claimed Harry as one of their own.

Chris reprised four things he drew from the conversations on the opening evening: (i) The ‘why’ questions of purpose and feeling better for being heard; (ii) Conversations lead to better relationships and better coping; (iii) Conversations make for wiser decisions in schools and (iv) the results will feed forward into the national conversation.

Appreciative Enquiry into Good Education Experiences – Easy Wins (Groups of 3/4)



Appreciative Enquiry – what else was good?

In open discussion, other points were shared about what was good and what might be better:

- Need to teach about how to cope with stress and be resilient;
- More school support;
- More celebration and shows - more Christmas plays and Halloween events;
- Great school culture; more eco-friendly schools; more sport – less CBAs;
- Encouragement about finding purpose; good career guidance and support;
- Strong TY very important; sign-language in Irish;
- More talks about bullying/drugs/social media;
- Meeting like-minded people; meeting other schools through sport;
- More mixing between the school years;
- More mindfulness; new homework.



Sos Beag



Open Space – Participants host Conversations on 14 Subjects they care about

First Round	Second Round
A - Stress	A - Stress + coping strategies
B - Homework	B - New Subjects
C - Teaching methods	C - Mixed Gender Schools +’s and -’s
D - Climate Change	D - Guidance for life after school
E- Tests	E- Books + iPads
F - Pure Education	F - Drugs + Social Media Danger
G - How to make schools more creative?	G - Role of Healthy Living in Education

1. Stress (in 6th class)

- **Actions/suggestions:** A homework club for all-Irish schools; a math club; information about topics causing stress such as struggling with Irish spellings;
- Talking together about stress;
- Optional mindfulness session at lunch-time and after school hours;
- You can colour; keep a diary/journal; me time;
- Talk about it; write about it; me time; give it time.

2. Home Work

- **Positives:** working independently; exercise for the mind; you can figure out different ways to do things; connection with home;
- **Negatives:** takes too much time; too much pressure; no choice! Should be optional.
- **Suggestions:** Primary: have no homework at all – keep it very easy. Secondary: half or less homework; no homework at the week-end; more time to do their work.

3. Teaching Methods

- **Variety of Teaching Methods:** Power points; books + notes; practice exercises; traffic light system; brain-storm – mind-maps, not using google;
- Science practical experiments; maths using sport – learning angles through taking penalties; learning Irish by rote through music/rap and conversation Irish;
- Studying past papers (e.g. English) – becoming accustomed to putting the questions into own words;
- **Actions/suggestions:** Each teacher should offer a variety of teaching methods in class – a preferred method may emerge
- Suggested methods: games; challenge questioning from teacher; ipads;
- Flipping the classroom.

4. Climate Change

- **Current Reality:** It's our future – the ice-caps are melting; people are losing their homes because of rising sea levels; we're dying earlier than we should be; we're facing extinction; Ireland is worst in Europe; adults should wake up to climate change; our home is burning – wake up.
- **Actions:** Educate about climate change – make it a subject in school with future focus; ban single-use plastics; turn off the lights when you leave the room; recycle; Larkin has closed-loop aquaponics system; schools should grow more plants; cut down on use of paper; more climate strikes. More Generally: bring own bag to shop; build more windmills; use electricity more wisely; be more self-sustaining; eat less meat; more care to prevent wild fires;

5. Tests

- What's the benefit of testing? Look at alternatives;
- For whom and for what are they?
- Continuous assessment introduced into JC – needs to be built into SC;
- Assessment in practical subjects – project work; life skills (e.g. driving) and how to assess.

6. Pure Education

- **Current Challenges:** Too much emphasis on final tests; some things are unnecessary; teachers could teach at a slower pace; difficult to remember more content; too much pressure on students to support each other;
- Feels awkward when you have a new teacher – lack of continuity, students don't know where they stand; I don't like it – the lack of staffing;
- Need more learning support – the positive thing about primary;
- I come to school for my friends; CBAs are a good thing – less pressure in 3rd/6th year;
- Teachers should put themselves in students' shoes; teachers can be more strict in secondary – can be a shock when you transition to secondary school;

- **Actions/suggestions:** Extra support for students, particularly during exams; teach about life after school (tax, first-aid skills etc.); all subjects should be a choice; teachers should slow down to the pace of learners; ipads to reduce need for books; shouldn't have to learn a language at exam level.

7. How to make Schools more creative

- **Definition** of creativity in education: fun; freedom to do what you want to do; being able to use your imagination; showing off your talents; doing something different; getting opinions of everyone in education;
- **Obstacles:** The demands of the education system are preventing us from being our best creative self; the curriculum gets in the way of real creative expression – need more space for it; testing gets in the way of creativity;
- **Actions/suggestions:** Playing games with each topic at least once a week e.g. Kahoot; do more art such as drawing, painting; celebrate the seasons; show off students, teachers, and staff's talents; celebrate writers' birthdays; book club, movie club etc; more presentations and projects; creative partnerships in school such as artist in residence.



Conversations in full flow

8. Stress & Coping Strategies

- **Actions/suggestions;** Help us with home-work; organise grinds; do a homework club;
- Talk about subject choices; support our family at school meetings;
- If you could have a school counsellor to talk about your problems and feelings; talk about more things other than school e.g. if you want to talk about social media safety;
- Another day like today;
- If we have problems at home we can go out and get ice-cream to clear your head;
- Go on outings more; go on trips with other schools to make new friends;
- Do dance clubs or football or other clubs.

9. New Subjects

- Self-defence classes; first-aid (secondary; driving lessons (senior level); money management; how to run a house; learn about what's relevant today; yoga; silent lunches;
- Arts: - dance, acting, music etc; optional language subjects;
- Flipping the classroom – teaching social media to adults;
- Chemistry, biology and coding in primary;
- **Actions/suggestions:** children need to be listened to and their suggestions acted on; get schools to sign petitions; run BEACONS events inside schools; take the emphasis away from the exams and the points system; be able to have a back-up class when a teacher is not in to practice one of your preferred subjects.

10. Mixed vs single-gender Education

Merits of single-gender: girls study better; less distractions; don't have to worry about teenagers getting into relationships too young;

Draw-backs of single-gender: It doesn't prepare you for the real world where men and women are together; it makes it difficult for those who are in single-gender schools to interact with others; it creates division; it creates false image of the other gender; you only see the world in one way;

Conclusion: STOP SEPARATING KIDS; LET THEM EXPLORE LIFE TOGETHER; PREPARE FOR REAL LIFE

11. Guidance for Life after School

- **Actions/Suggestions:** Classes dedicated to careers;
- Guidance counsellors for dealing with stress and anxiety as well as jobs/careers;
- Get inspirational speakers to talk of their careers;
- Work experience for younger kids as well – and summer experience;
- More PLC courses to help transition to Further Education;
- Make school less stressful so that more students stay in school;
- More praise from teachers.

12. Books vs ipads

- **For ipads:** Cheaper; less weight; better for the environment; saves time when getting the books; easier communication between teacher and student (google classroom); easier research. Draw-backs: eye-strain; easier to break; run out of battery; more distracting.
- **For Books:** better for your eye-sight; less distracting; don't run out of batteries. Draw-backs: heavier; they can get wet and rip; you can forget them; paper waste; they can be distracting; they are expensive.
- **Suggestions:** Limit the amount of printing/use of paper – fined if pass limit; use paper tablets; try not to get distracted with ipad.

13. Drugs and Social Media

- Social media carries suicide risk - how to stop cyber-bullying;
- Drugs cause addiction and damage to children's minds – how are they sold to under-age children?
- Don't do drugs; don't be a drug dealer; stop your friends from doing drugs; don't go near drugs – they can cause permanent trauma. Drugs can get you jailed.
- **Actions/Suggestion:** We need to stop people selling and doing drugs; don't be friends with drug dealers; if you see someone selling drugs tell the garda; don't get into drugs



Healthy living should be a formal part of the curriculum.

14. Healthy Living in Education

- **Actions/suggestions:** Healthy living should be formal part of the curriculum;
- Stress-management – friends-for-life programme; mindfulness – sos; living in the moment vs getting worried about the future; yoga; learn why sleep is important;
- More sports days; physically active – mixed-age exercise sessions; more active trips – Santry walking groups; more expert coaches;
- Teach healthy eating – learn about fruit/vegetables; start cooking in school; growing food; healthier lunches;
- Encourage less screen time;

What is relevant and can be done in my School Context?



Time to pay attention to what young people are saying

Marino College Secondary School – respect and kindness

- How to motivate those not going to school? We work with Business in the Community – but we still fail some kids;
- Must follow curriculum – but can we be more creative?
- More praise for all the students; more speakers who inspire the students;
- Every class should start with ‘why’ questions: “We are going to learn this...” And explain why it’s important;
- What might we do with free-classes (absent teachers) to make more motivating?
- Homework club; extracurricular activities – basketball, dance, football etc.
- Keep ipad system;
- Flip classroom.

Scoil Chaoimhín Primary School

- ipads to focus work;
- Hot food; school pet;
- More football;
- Principal: do arts project with secondary school.

Central Model Senior School

- Culture day;
- Eco-friendly lunch break;
- More research – dangers of the real world;
- Climate-change as a subject;
- Relaxation.

Larkin Community College – ‘best school’

- Improve relationships between teachers and students – trust;
- Help students learn study skills; more teachers;
- Cut out plastic as much as possible;
- Suitable stools in science, art, woodwork and home-economics rooms;
- Cut down on amount of books students carry;
- Principal: there is honesty in the exchanges and all issues can be resolved e.g. elimination of plastic bottles about to be implemented.

Observers – NYP1

- We're blown away – what will education be like in 10 years;
- Thanks to those like Tomás who put out the BEACONS call;
- And thanks to Burren College of Art – the best results come out of creative space.

Potential for collaborative Links between Schools

- TY students could help in primary schools;
- Primary school kids could go to secondary schools and make friends;
- Every school is good at something – why not share best practice?
- Ennistymon have instituted dialogue café between teachers and students – why not host in different schools;
- Sports days could bring schools together;
- Given teacher shortage why not share teachers – there's a new DES circular on the subject but no one has availed of this yet!

Discussion - what needs to be said to the larger system?

- Actually listen to the kids – the ones who are in school;
- Fix education such that it's as envisaged in the 'pure education' discussion;
- Don't be afraid to be bold/courageous!
- Have more of this programme – review;
- Second level is too reliant on the role of the Principal – they need to be supported and attended to – they determine what happens;
- The shortage of teachers is a huge issue;
- Whole system is underfunded and DES follows patron agenda rather than the needs of the child;
- Schools should cooperate more – e.g. in sharing teachers.

Final Comments

- **Parent:** I dreaded coming – now I'm delighted I came;
- **Teachers:** I feel proud of all the children – mine in particular – and it's good to know the secondary schools they'll be going to;
- **Principal:** It's a privilege to be principal of Larkin; I'm proud of the kids, their insight, empathy, perceptiveness as to how things work – and the school community. It's been an invaluable experience. Other Principal: Thanks for the opportunity to participate;
- **Students:** It's great to hear other ideas – connecting the dots and making one big picture; thanks; looking to next 30 years what big changes will happen?
- **Tomás (Teaching Council):** Let us explore our voice together; I'm blown away by student empathy. I'm proud of the teachers – co-equals with students – who carry on in spite of nebulous initiatives. Thanks to the principals for leading and to Fr Gerry for hosting. A lot can be done in a local context. Students are saying something must change – Ennistymon students wanted accountability for commitments to change and this will happen at a review next week. There will be a review of all BEACONS to date in December. We would like every school to learn how to host BEACONS events – looking for EU funding. The world is changed one conversation at a time. The Teaching Council is listening. Finally thanks to Máire for all the work in the background.
- **Máire (Larkin):** In 'Death of a Salesman' Willie Loman's widow says 'people need to pay attention' (Willie committed suicide). We need to pay attention to the voice of students – they're demanding answers and are fearful that nothing will change. We need to pay attention.

Evaluation of BEACONS Event

What worked well?

- Meeting new people and making connections – I like the way everyone talked;
- The huge energy of the day; the Larkin library; openness and honesty of teachers; powerful voices of young people;
- Inclusivity, hope and reassurance;
- Hearing children and young peoples' ideas; I like hearing other people's opinions and the things we could change; getting to make suggestions;
- Trusting atmosphere; I like that we had a voice for education;
- I liked that people listened to us; that it's a judgment-free zone; students have similar worries – not alone; the fact students were getting their voice heard; I like that we were able to speak out and vent about things we need to change in school;
- Switching tables and talking; I like the way everyone talked; I like that we talked about a lot of subjects;
- I liked doing ideas for school (improvement); 'We are fixing education'.
- I like the mixture of primary and secondary school students along with teachers and principals all coming together;
- The Freddo bars

What didn't work well/What I didn't like

- I didn't like the way there were only 4 schools – I think there should be more;
- The fudge sweets; the time; we've been sitting for too long even though we had breaks; I think the event was a little too long to keep the children's attention;
- Didn't like how repetitive the activities are; sessions could be shorter;
- I didn't like that we had only 8 hours for this event; Too long, not focused enough; people's ideas are great but when they become unfocused it gets boring;
- The venue being cold and hard to find; I'd have liked different food; better food/sweets; I didn't like the venue and food;
- Nothing – it works really well because it is simple;
- There's nothing I didn't like.

What I would change about this Event

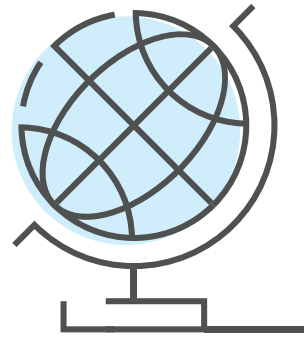
- I would have liked more interaction between students and teachers; more people/students attend this event; would have liked some of my learners to be here;
- More structured individual school discussion;
- More interaction with different schools;
- More talking from the children; more child-friendly activities; more breaks;
- Should be in a bigger place; more lighting; change to a brighter and more spacious area; the venue because it was cold; room too cold; change locations – bigger/more open;
- More food; plan out the event better beforehand;
- I would like to change nothing.

What I would like more of

- More time to discuss similar thoughts that come up – less time jumping to different topics; more time for conversations; more time to connect everyone's ideas; time to talk in the groups; I would have liked more time to discuss issues with other schools;
- More talks, like once a month with other schools; I would have liked more schools to be involved; more parents to attend; more mixing with people;
- I would like more events like this; BEACONS nationwide;
- More events like this; I would like more time to talk about this stuff because it actually felt nice talking about something which we can't talk about in school because I'm shy;

MH

18.11.19



**I would like
more events like
this; BEACONS
nationwide.**

Reflection from the Director of the Teaching Council



Tomás Ó Ruairc
Director of the Teaching Council

Each BEACONS event has inspired and amazed and humbled, in each case for reasons that are both the same across the board and that are unique to that community.

From the Thursday evening in Larkin Community college, to all day on the Friday in the Jesuit chapel on Gardiner Street, I was anchored in my deepest joy and awe at our shared humanity by the contributions from all voices.

We had the children and young people who shone a warm and inclusive sense of empathy to the visitors, clearly stating that to label us as “others” was not a nice term. We were in fact to be known as “leaders”!

We had a mother talk of her own sense of being petrified at coming to the event, not knowing what lay in store, but so glad that she came.

We had teachers and principals who conveyed to me a profound sense of courage as they confessed to their own sense of uncertainty at what lay ahead in BEACONS – but still coming because they care so much for their students and community.

I remember from my studies in UCD that the number three is a very powerful one in oral culture and folklore. I think that it is no accident that three communities from across the country have lit beacons for all other communities to be drawn towards – to listen, to be inspired, and to craft their own stories around teaching and learning with all voices.

The Sharing Learning Day in the Teaching Council on Friday 13 December promises to be an exciting opportunity for Larkin and its community to share your powerful stories with Ennistymon, Baltinglass and many other people.

My fervent wish is that you all receive the praise and thanks which you so richly deserve.

John O'Donohue, in his Easter homily at Cormcroe Abbey, said that *“we were sent here to find the light of Easter in our hearts. And when we find it we are meant to give it away generously.”*

Thank you for igniting your own lights and for agreeing to share them with so many others.

Le mórbhuíochas,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tomás Ó Ruairc'.

Tomás Ó Ruairc
Director (CEO)
Teaching Council
25 November 2019

Harvest of BEACONS Documents

Opening: The Words we want in the Conversation



strong T Y programme

Good Relationships
with teachers.
[Good school culture]

More After
School Clubs

More Celebrations
shows / Drama

Sports against schools

Talks about bullying, social media, drugs
to prevent it from the schools.

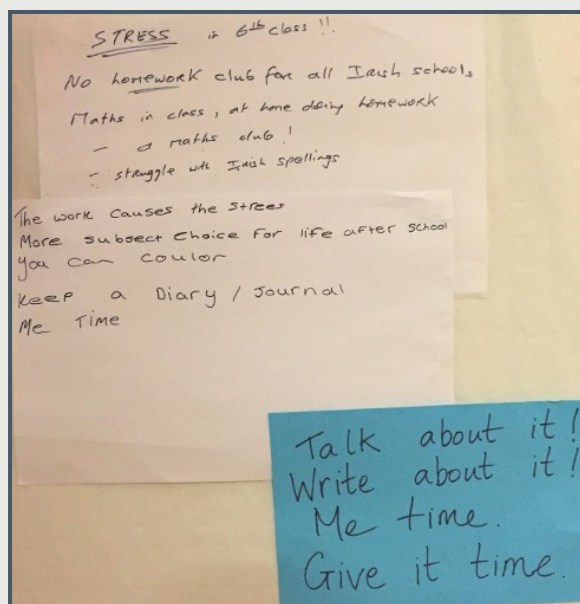
- Mixing the different school years more
- Different ways of teaching.
- Using the traffic light system more.

LEARNING again by penalties

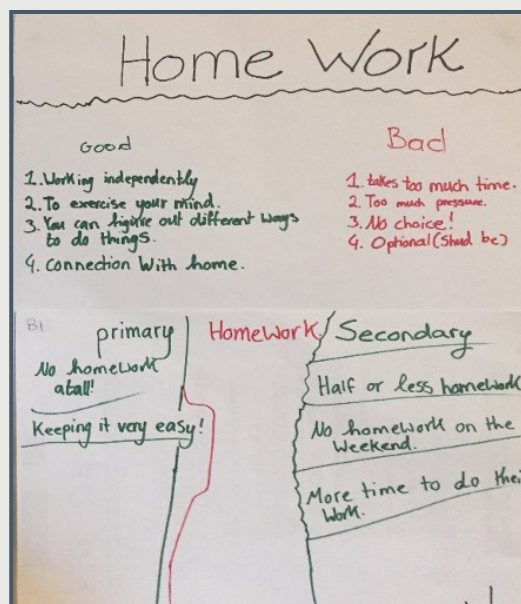
PE + mats + music - peno
2.5m
2m
1m
BREA

Appreciative Enquiry: Good Educational Experiences and how to Scale them

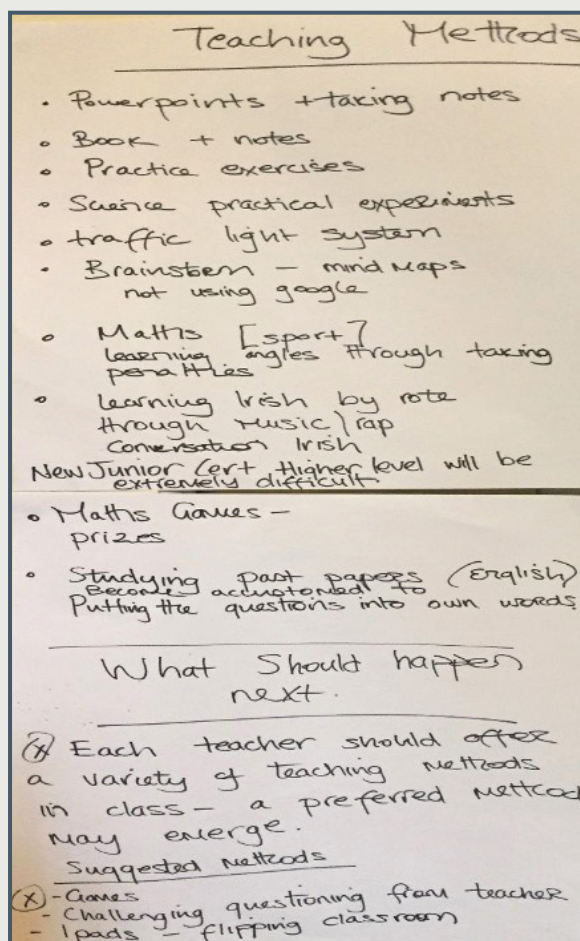
Stress



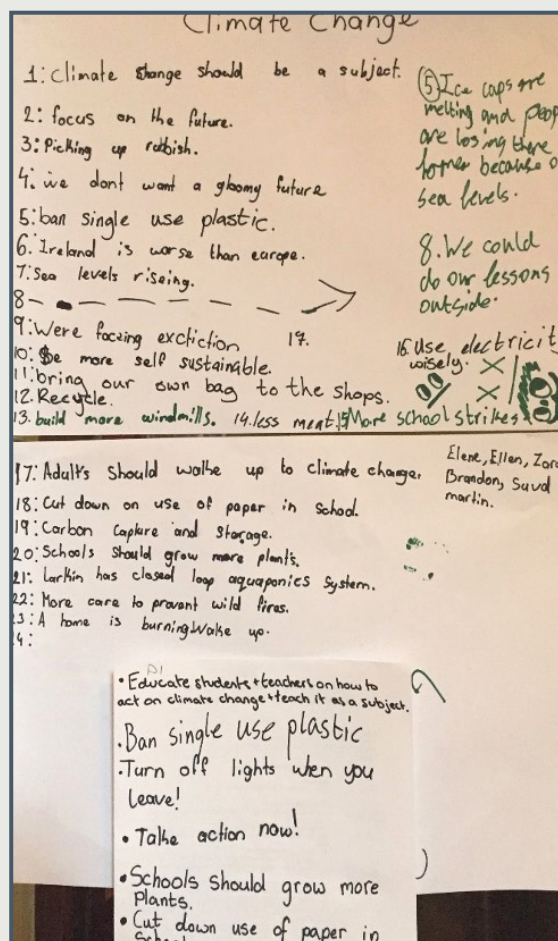
Home Work



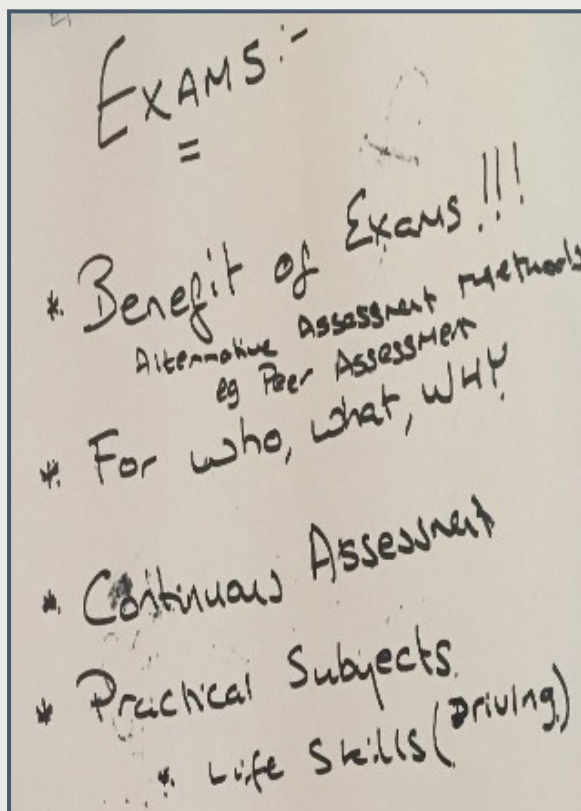
Teaching Methods



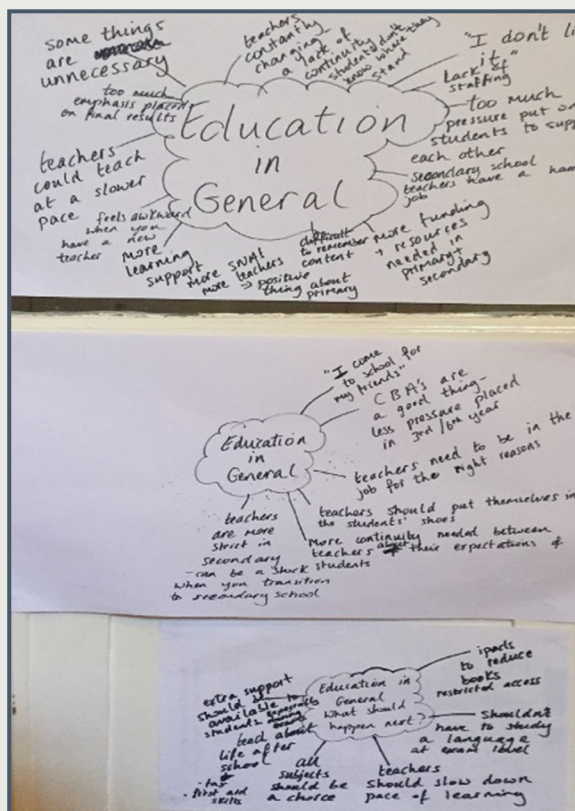
Climate Change



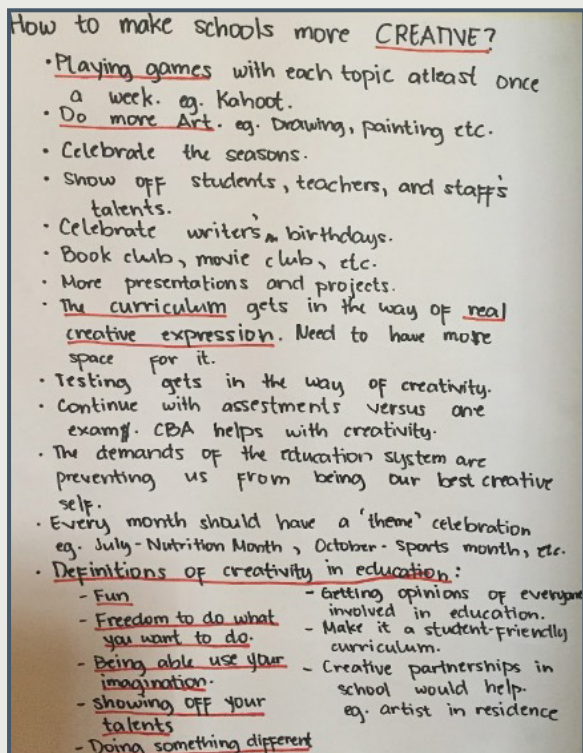
Tests



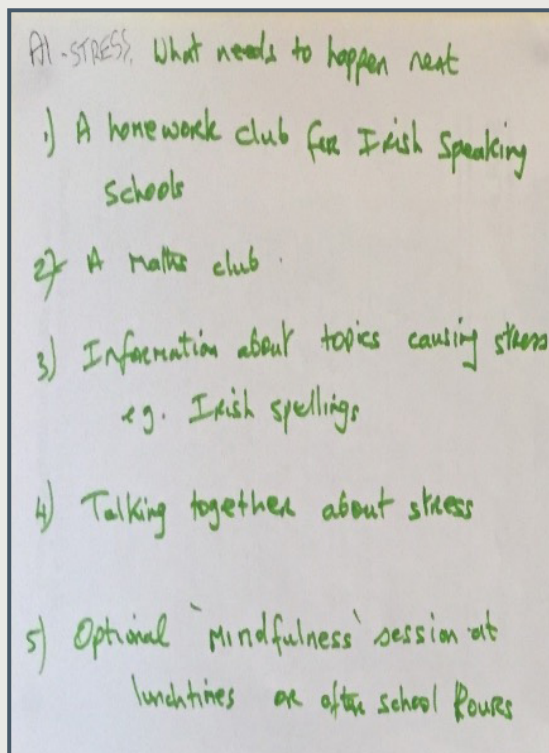
Pure Education



Make School More Creative



Stress and Coping



New Subjects

New Subjects.

- ① Self Defence classes.
- ② First Aid (Secondary)
- ③ Driving Lessons (Senior Level)
- ④ Optional Language Subjects.
- ⑤ Dance, Acting, Music (ARTS)
- ⑥ Money Management.
- ⑦ How to run a house.
- ⑧ Chemistry (Primary) (Biology in primary)
- ⑨ Coding (Primary)
- ⑩ Yoga
- ⑪ Silent Lunch.
- ⑫ Flipping the classroom (Teaching Social media to Adults)
- ⑬ To learn about what's relevant today.
- ⑭ MMA, MMA, Boxing.

P.S Bags are too heavy.

What needs to happen next:

- ① Children need to be listened to and acted on.
- ② Get schools to sign petitions.
- ③ Run beacon events inside of schools.
- ④ Take the emphasis away from the exams and points system.
- ⑤ Be able to back up class when a teacher is not in to practice 1 of your preferred subjects.

Single vs Mixed-gender Schools

Mixed Gender Schools / Separated Schools

Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For separated schools, girls study better. • Less distractions for separated schools. • For Mixed schools, they can depend on each other. • For separated schools, you oversee parents don't have to worry about teenagers getting into relationships too young. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It does not prepare you for the real world, where men and women are together. • It makes it difficult for those who are in separated school to interact with the others. • It creates division (separated schools). • It creates false ^{false} image of the other gender. • For separated schools, you only see the war in one way.

STOP SEPARATING KIDS
LET THEM EXPLORE LIFE TOGETHER AND PREPARE FOR REAL LIFE.

Guidance - Life after School

• Extra support (Relax) School

• inspirational Speakers

• career classes

• Work experience for younger kids

• upscaling furniture / clothes

• Summer experience

• plc's in careers

• outside of school support

• Guidance concilers for Stress & Anxiety for job forces

• Guidance for Stress kids

Team: D

Guidance for Life After School

- De-Stress so that students stay in school
- Have Inspirational Speakers
- Dedicated Career Classes
- PLC course to help transition to further Education
- More Praise! from teachers.

Phones/Social Media

Advantages	Dis-advantages
<p><u>IPads</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cheap - Less weight - Saves time when getting the books (never forget books) - Easier communication between teacher and student (google classroom) - Easier research <p><u>Books</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It's better for your eyesight. - Less distracting - Doesn't run out of battery. 	<p><u>IPads</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eye strain - Easier to break/break - Runs out of battery. - More distracting <p><u>Books</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heavier - They can get wet and not - You can forget them. - Paper waste - They can be distracting - They are expensive.

What's next?

- Limit the amount of printing/using paper. If they pass the limit you are fine.
- Use paper tablets.
- Please stop using paper
- Try not to get distracted with roads

Drugs & Social Media

You can die ~~How to stop cyber bullying~~
How to stop cyber bullying
 cyber bullying

- Block them ^{drugs can get you in time}
- Report them ^{drugs can damage children's mind.}
- How to get jobs in social media ^{Social media is a risk of drugs}

- Drugs addiction
- How do drugs get sold to under aged children
- The drug unit goes to a school and teaches kids dangers of drugs.
- put your account on private
- Don't add them back
- Don't do drugs!
- Don't be a drug dealer
- Stop your Friends from drugs.
- Don't go beside drugs.
- There can be permanent trauma from use of drugs.

We need to stop people selling drugs and doing drugs.

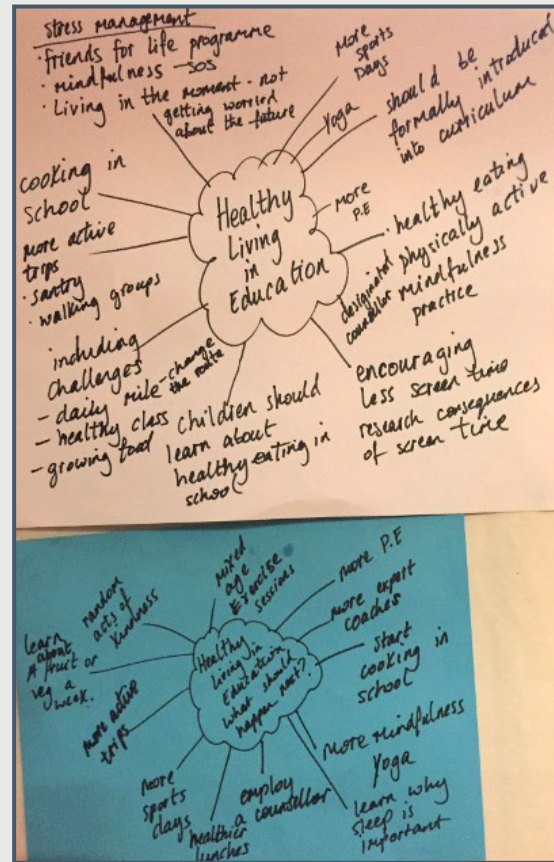
Don't be friends with drug dealers.

if you see a someone selling drugs tell the guards.

Don't get into drugs

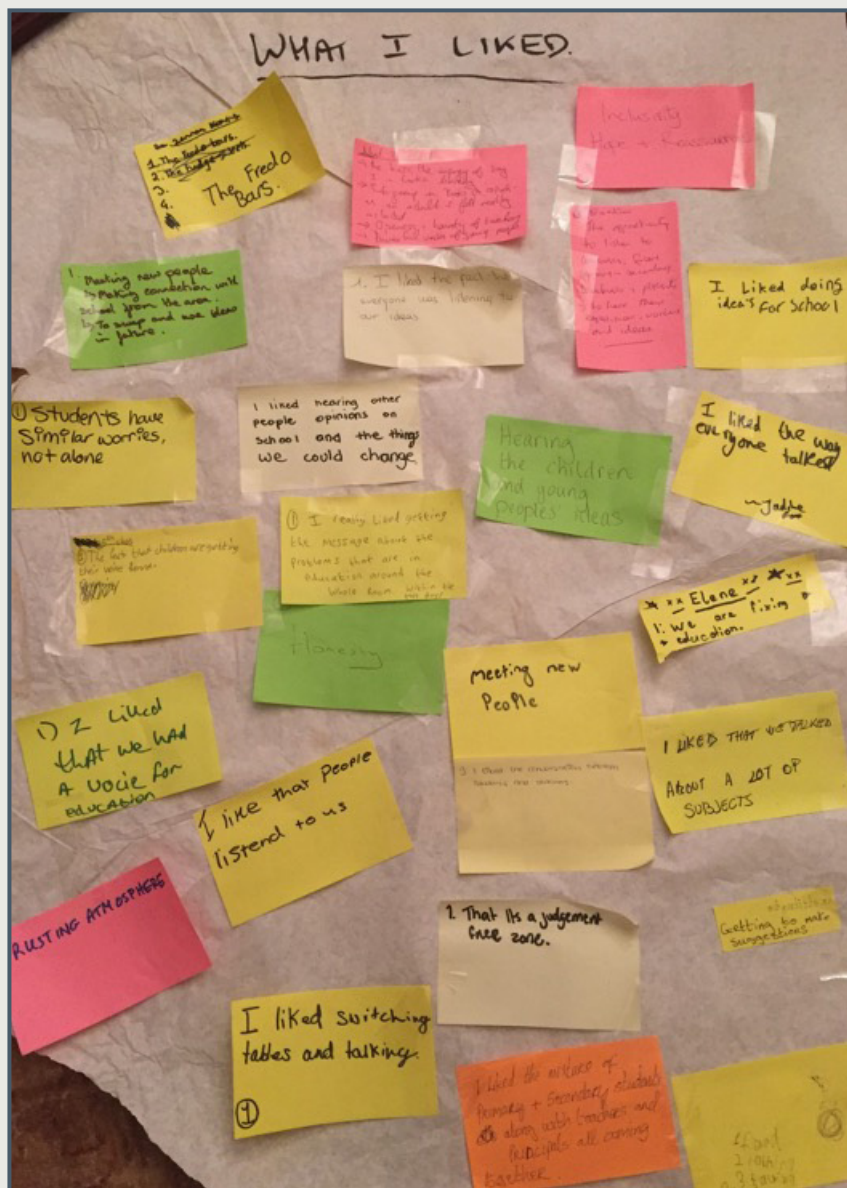
Beating Beating

Healthy Living in Education

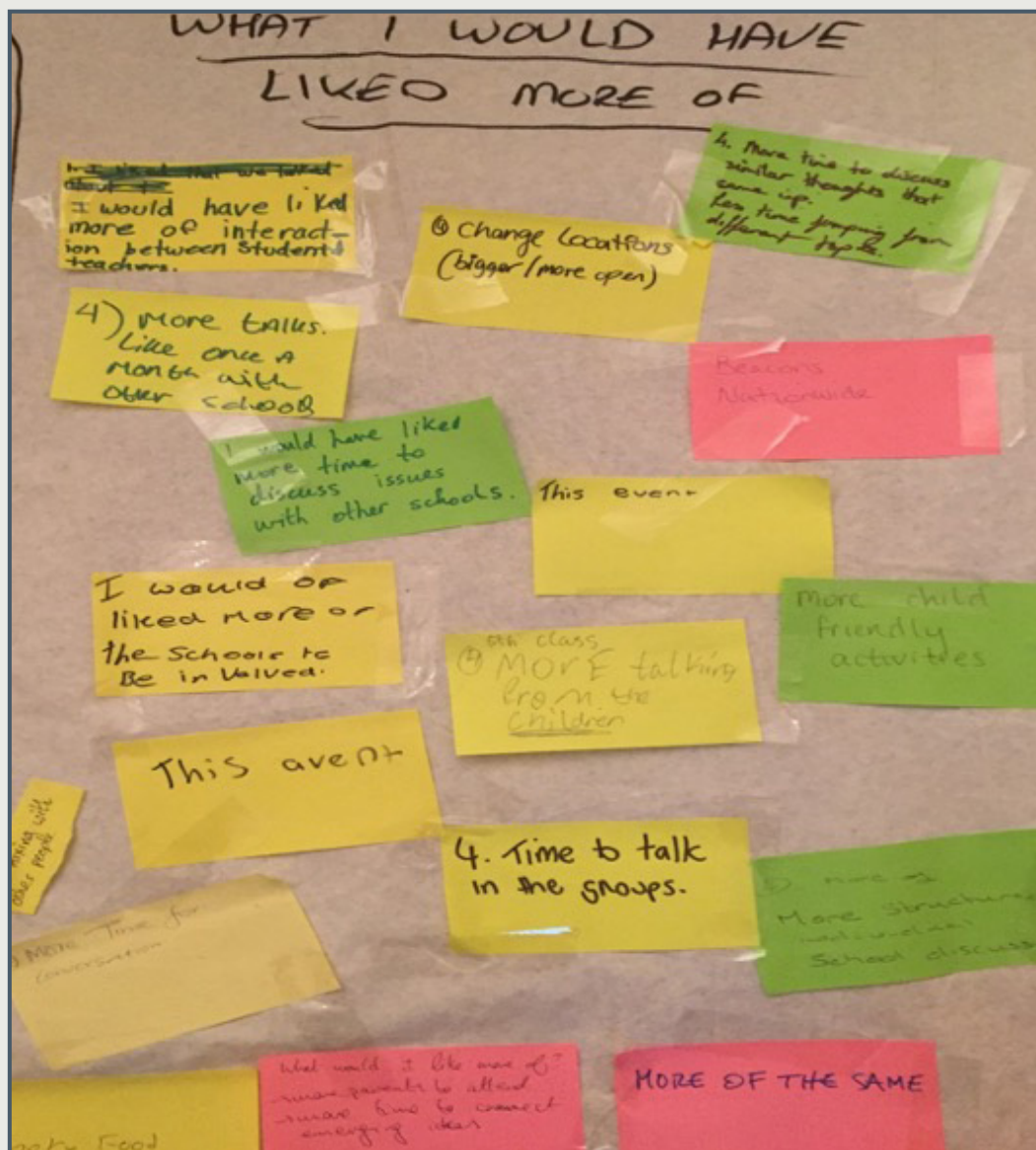


Evaluation* of BEACONS Event

What worked well/I liked



What I'd like more of







BEACONS

Bringing Education Alive for our
Communities On a National Scale

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