

December 21st 2011

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Dear Members of NKETS School Community,

As you are aware, the Executive Committee has been considering a request from the Department of Education to expand our school. We have consulted the school community for your views on the proposal, and have received valuable inputs from parents, staff, students and the Board of Management, as well as from Educate Together. We have also had extensive and detailed discussions with the Department of Education, culminating in a lengthy meeting yesterday between a delegation of Department officials and representatives of NKETS Executive and the Board of Management.

Having exhaustively examined all the facts and perspectives on the proposal, we are pleased to let you know that the Executive has voted unanimously in favour of the expansion of NKETS. The Executive is fully satisfied that, as a point of principle, increasing the availability of primary school places based on an Educate Together model is something that we should proactively aspire to, and is in line with the school purpose and ethos. We also see it as important for our school to respond positively to what is a clearly-identified need in the Celbridge area. Furthermore, we are convinced that an expansion to a 2-stream school gives us a significant opportunity to further enhance our school, building on and strengthening what is a highly-cherished school ethos.

We are conscious that this decision brings with it a number of challenges. During the consultation process we received a range of submissions; while a small number were against the expansion, the majority were supportive of the proposal. A number of important concerns were highlighted, including the need to preserve the current school ethos and intimacy, the need to ensure a quality building, the need to ensure that an expansion becomes an integral part of the existing school building rather than a stand-alone building, the need to minimise the impact of an expansion on recreational spaces, and the need to deal with serious issues of traffic management and car parking.

We have examined all of these issues and more in our detailed technical discussions with the Department, and we are satisfied with their commitment to addressing all of these issues to our satisfaction. Importantly, the Department has now revised its timeline, and aims to complete the expansion for September 2013 rather than September 2012 as we had previously been advised. This gives us a much more realistic time frame in which to proceed with the expansion.

The Department will now proceed to develop a detailed Brief in consultation with NKETS. Our understanding is that the new extension will be a high-specification 2-storey development that will be fully integrated into our existing school building, minimising the encroachment onto our recreational and parking spaces. Design and technical specifications are set out in Department of Education documents, and offer us a clear understanding of the accommodation, services and facilities that will be provided in the context of the expansion. However, detailed plans can

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only be finalised out once the Department appoints a Design Team. Likewise, precise details regarding a solution to the traffic and parking issues can only be worked out following a detailed assessment of the options by engineers and traffic management specialists.

On the important issue of preserving and enhancing our school ethos and intimate character, the Executive is satisfied that this is not determined by the number of classrooms in the school, but by the way in which our ethos is understood and lived out on a day to day basis. We believe that the intimacy of the school must be maintained by a focussed effort by all concerned - the Executive, the parents, staff and the Board of Management, and will be a key feature of our School Ethos Initiative in 2012.

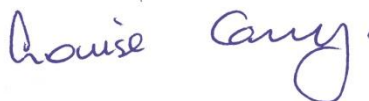
As we have already indicated, we intend to hold an information meeting at the earliest practicable opportunity to brief you more extensively on the plans. In the meantime, we will continue to liaise with the Department and with other authorities to advance the process. We thank you for your support during our consultation process, and look forward to engaging with you over the coming months as we progress with this exciting development.

Yours sincerely,

NKETS Executive Committee



Paula Carroll



Louise Corry



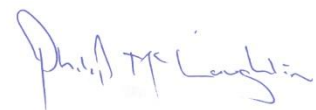
Michael Costello



Aisling Gallagher



Paula Martin



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