



Spiritan Education Trust Board of Director's Meeting Monday 20th February 2023

Special Education Update

- A comprehensive training programme for all new staff will commence on Feb 20th in preparation for receiving students on a date yet to be confirmed but probably late April.
- 24 families have now been offered places and as acceptances are received, work will commence on assessing individual student needs and accessing appropriate supports from the DES and NCSE.
- Once students are enrolled, we will establish a BoM which will engage with the SET executive as other school boards do.
- Last minute problems have delayed the opening of the modular building by 1 week but we have arranged to conduct staff training in a nearby hotel. The expense incurred in this will be borne by the building contractors.
- A recent meeting with DES officials in Tullamore has clarified that the building project in Templeogue will be delivered through the ADAPT Programme (Accelerated Delivery of Architectural Planning and Tendering). This is a change from the original proposal which was that SET would be responsible for managing all the finances associated with this project through a devolved grant. I welcome this decision as it ensures that the DES will be responsible for managing the finances (at least 70 Million) but the control and responsibility for delivery of the new building on the Templeogue campus remains with the Spiritan Education Trust. This will allow us to plan with our design team for as much integration between the schools as possible in the context of good educational practice.
- Over recent months I have sensed less enthusiasm in the Department for the Blackrock Proposal. This is due to the intense negative media focus on Blackrock College. The Assistant Secretary General told me that in the current climate, state funding will not be available to Blackrock College. However, in the last couple of weeks I have engaged with the Assistant Sec. general on this

topic again and I think it may be possible to reanimate this proposal. I hope to have further news on this over the coming months.

- The modular building for Templeogue College as opposed to the one for Libermann school will be in place shortly with a view to commencing special classes in September '23. Discussions with the Department in relation to special classes on other Spiritan campuses are ongoing and there does not seem to be any reluctance on the part of the Department to fund such developments.
- I have avoided reporting on the minutiae of our work- fire certs, insurance, planning permission, disability access, traffic flows, etc but I am available at any time should anyone wish to discuss any issues with me.