



NEWS RELEASE (TEMPLATE)

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Local Secondary Schools Celebrate Shared Education Week

Two local secondary schools will this week celebrate the success of their partnership as part of Northern Ireland's first ever Shared Education Week. The Principals of Ballybay High School and St Augustine's College formed the Ballybay Shared Education Partnership in 2015. Since then over 1,000 local pupils have enjoyed shared education lessons together.

Shared Education Week takes place from Monday 8th to Friday 12th of October 2018. It is an opportunity for all schools to celebrate and share the success of their Shared Education partnerships. The theme for the week is: Sharing the Present - Shaping the Future.

Mr Alan Other, Principal of Ballybay High School said:

"As teachers we take pride in our pupils achievements and educational attainment. Our Shared Education partnership with St Augustin's College has enabled us to offer all pupils the opportunity to learn together within the curriculum. We've been able to increase subject choices at GCSE and A levels and staff too have benefited through shared Professional Learning Development. While we've increased joint planning, working, training and governance, we've maintained the ethos and values of our respective schools."

The local Shared Education partnership is part of the Shared Education Signature Programme. This innovative programme is jointly funded by the Executive Office, the Department of Education and The Atlantic Philanthropies.

Mrs Ann Other, Principal of St Augustine's College said:

"We began our partnership with joint events focused on sharing after school activities, things like the joint schools' sports day and Christmas concerts. We established the Joint Student Council and pupils were supportive of proposals to share subjects and classes within the curriculum. Over time our partnership has grown and evolved from early tentative steps to where we are today. The real beneficiaries are the pupils who learn to appreciate difference and diversity."

Brendan McAnother, Head boy at St Augustine's, speaking on behalf of pupils said:

"I'm a final year student and I study Spanish along with Sciences. Spanish only became available after GCSE because of the Shared Education programme. On our own we would never have had the numbers to justify employing a Spanish teacher. But it's not just in subject choice that I've gained. I've learned alongside pupils from the other community helping me to understand and respect difference, be that in religion, politics or race."

Pamela Smyth, Chair of the Joint Student Council said,

"As pupils we are involved in the planning and evaluation of our Shared Education through a joint School Council. Pupils elected from each school have a voice in school improvement and Shared Education. We meet at least 4 times a year and meetings are chaired on a rotational basis. I've learned that we succeed best when we speak with one voice. This often means we have to compromise. If only adults in our community would do the same."

The Ballybay Shared Education partnership will be hosting a series of events in the two schools for pupils, parents and the local community. For details of dates and times of events please visit: (enter website)

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Notes for Editors

1. Mr Alan Other, MSc, BA, PGCE is the Principal of Ballybay High School and has been in post for 8 years. He was previously Vice-Principal of Bloomfield Collegiate, Belfast.
2. Mrs Anne Other, MA, BSc is principal of St Augustine's College, Ballybay. She has been principal since September 2000 and was previously Vice-principal in the school.
3. The Ballybay Shared Education Partnership is one of a number of partnerships supported by the Shared Education Signature Programme (SESP). Further information on Shared Education and the SESP is available on the Department of Education's website: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/topics/schools-and-infrastructure/shared-education>
4. As of March 2018, there were over 59,000 pupils involved in Shared Education across 583 schools.
5. Shared Education Week will take place from Monday 8th to Friday 12th October 2018. Schools can register their interest in the week, obtain further information on events, and download free school resources at www.sharededucationweek.org
6. Shared Education Week is being organised by the Shared Education Learning Forum (SELF) in partnership with key organisations involved in delivering and promoting Shared Education, good relations and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. These include: Department of Education, Education Authority, Community Relations Council, Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), C2K, Community Relations in Schools (CRIS), Queen's University Belfast and Fermanagh Trust.

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