

## **New direction for education sector**

**Ailbhe Kenny**

The education sector has come under the spotlight in the past week with significant announcements in relation to Educate Together schools and the Higher Education Strategy coming within days of each other.

Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn, TD spoke earlier today at the Royal Irish Academy about the future of higher education in Ireland and outlined the government objectives in this area, saying that we are at a “crossroads”.

The first item on today’s agenda was the need to meet future demands. It is estimated that demand will increase by 72 percent over the next two decades and the Minister responded to this saying that it is an “immediate priority”. He also outlined his concerns in various areas such as the CAO points system and is seeking “radically new approaches and alternatives to the current arrangements.”

The quality of the student experience was also of high priority, with the Minister discussing the need for more preparation and inductions for students transferring from second to third level education. According to the Minister this would lead to “improved retention rates and better equipped graduates.”

Mr Quinn went on to discuss funding and said that the Higher Education Authority will be carrying out research in the area on how to best continue to provide for the increasing demand. The Minister promised students during his campaign that no further fees would be imposed.

Adapted from: *Public Affairs Ireland Journal* 76. May 30<sup>th</sup> 2011. <https://www.pai.ie/728-new-direction-for-education-sector/>. (Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019).

This comes just days after the announcement on May 28 that Educate Together second level schools will be formally recognised by the Government. Educate Together, which has 58 primary level schools, is a multi-denominational and first applied to become a second level body in 2007.