



(File image)

# Major education proposal for Mayo county town is moving forward



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AN application is ready to be submitted to the Department of Education for a new gaelcholáiste in Castlebar.

The vision is to provide an immersive second-level Irish-medium school.

Two of the people behind the campaign, Emer Mayock and Frainc Ó Clochartaigh, updated local councillors at their monthly district meeting and received their full support.

The school will start with an intake of first years, building to a full school over six years.

Any suggestion by the department to co-exist beside an existing secondary school will be resisted, the meeting heard.

Westport.

Mr. Ó Clochartaigh explained how the idea stemmed from there being the existing gaelscoil, Scoil Raifteiri, which has been providing an excellent standard of education for 40 years.

However, there is no follow on option for second-level and the point was made that 90% of young people will lose what they have garnered by the time they reach Junior Cert.

Ms. Mayock said there is huge support for the school and they are at a stage where an application is to be submitted to the department.

All members voiced support for the gaelcholáiste, offering accessible, immersive Irish language education.

Cathaoirleach Councillor Al McDonnell said the attitude towards the Irish language has changed and people are eager to learn it again, even into their mature years.

The gaelcholáiste representatives responded to any possible impacts on the secondary school in Tourmakeady.

The Castlebar school will begin with limited numbers, starting with first years, and there will be opportunities for the two schools to share resources.

Tourmakeady, also, is in a Gaeltacht area and has a different funding stream, so it would not threaten that.

Former councillor Therese Ruane told the meeting she firmly believes in the new school's vision.

“There has been a gap in education provision and now there is a vision to bridge that,” she stated.

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