

Translation of the salient portion of the Taoiseach's interview:

*“Q:… There's a lot more people now speaking (Irish) now than there was 5 years ago, would you agree that there should be more support for the Gaelscoileanna, providing additional buildings, and to promote the immersion education policy as well.*

*A: Yes I have given a lot of support to Irish-medium education, my own daughters went to the local Gaelscoil in Tullamore and they got an excellent education through Irish in that school. Last year for example, we built seven new Gaelscoileanna throughout the country, and two others got big extensions. On that issue the Gaelscoil in Naas is being rebuilt at the moment and will be finished by September for the new school year.*

*The Minister for Education and Science announced last week that four other Gaelscoileanna will be progressing to tender and building this year and each of these projects (represents) an investment of millions of euro.*

*And this is an indication of our commitment to education through the medium of Irish.*

*The Gaelscoileanna movement is the best thing we have seen with respect to the spreading of the Irish language amongst the people, and as Taoiseach I am giving much support to this movement and will continue to do so as far as I am able.*

*Q: and of the immersion education policy…?*

*A: About immersion education, at first I have to say that it is clear that the Department accept the immersion education model and the right of parents and children to choose education through Irish. As you know the Department issued a circular in July 2007 requesting the regulation of the teaching English. We are talking about two and a half hours in the week in the Infant classes: not everyone was happy about that. The Department is discussing the issue with Gaelscoileanna at present to see how this issue can be resolved, and I hope that there will be a solution soon.”*