

ASTIR

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland



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league tables?



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Media and Communications Officer:
Gemma Tuffy.

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Editorial: Ann-Marie Hardiman, Paul O'Grady.
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Advertising: Paul O'Grady.

ASTI
Thomas MacDonagh House,
Winetavern Street,
Dublin 8.
Tel: 01-604 0160
Fax: 01-897 2760
astir@astie.ie

www.asti.ie

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The ASTIR Editorial Board is interested in receiving feedback on ASTIR. Members can email astirfeedback@astie.ie or text 087-9349956.



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Letters, comments and articles are welcome

All submissions will be considered by the ASTIR Editorial Board. Email astir@astie.ie.

Budget further undermines education

The cuts made in the Budget will have serious implications for education, says ASTI President BRENDAN BRODERICK.

Budget 2012 has imposed increased misery on workers and the unemployed. It is now clear that this administration is determined to pursue the failed policies of the previous government. All the experts agree that if spending targets are to be met, growth in the domestic economy is essential. Yet the austerity programme agreed with the Troika will guarantee that this vital sector of the economy remains moribund, resulting in increased unemployment, increased emigration and a lower tax take from a dwindling workforce. Furthermore, it compounds the sense of insecurity many in the workforce feel, and the vulnerability of those on social welfare and pensions. As a result of this budget, education funding will be cut in 2012 by €76 million, rising to €157 million in 2013 and €241 million in 2014. Further cuts of €68 million in 2013 and €138 million in 2014 are required to stay within the expenditure ceilings set out for those years.

The most significant cut at post-primary level will be the allocation of guidance posts on an in-quota basis. This is equivalent to an increase in the pupil-teacher ratio of 0.8. As a result, schools will be faced with the stark choice of either curtailing guidance and counselling services to students, or dropping subjects and/or programmes (such as LCA). Richard Berkeley describes how the undermining of guidance and counselling services will impact on schools and their students on page 28 of this issue.

In fee-paying schools there will be an additional one-point increase in the staffing schedule. This has implications for the viability of some of these schools and is a major worry for colleagues who are on privately paid contracts.

A decrease in the pupil-teacher ratio for DEIS schools is offset somewhat by the phased withdrawal of legacy disadvantage support posts from schools. Overall, the budget measures will result in 700 teaching posts being lost at post-primary and 250 at primary level in 2012/2013. From the 2013/2014 school year onwards a further 30 teaching posts will be lost at post-primary and 490 at primary level. This is devastating news for non-permanent and unemployed teachers and has serious implications for classroom management and school discipline. As a result, Standing Committee adopted the following motions at its meeting in December:

Motion 1:

"That the ASTI deplores the ill-considered decision to abolish the ex-quota guidance counselling allocation for second-level schools and demands its immediate restoration."

Motion 2:

"In light of the statement by the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn, that 'Change will be implemented at a pace which the system can sustain', and in view of the recent cuts announced in Budget 2012 and the

publication of budgetary profiles for the coming years, the ASTI calls on the Minister for Education and Skills to pause the deeply flawed proposals for reform of the Junior Certificate."

From December 6, 2011, any teacher being employed for the first time will have their allowances applied at a maximum of an honours degree. This is yet another assault on new teachers who already earn approximately 15% less than colleagues who entered the profession prior to 2011. This cap also applies to serving teachers looking to up-skill, while the position of those currently pursuing courses is to be dealt with in the context of an overall review of public service allowances, to be carried out later this year by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The ASTI believes that this will discourage teachers from engaging in further study. It is particularly unfair on teachers currently undertaking certain academic courses that began before the budget announcement, as they had a legitimate expectation in this regard. The other main measures in budget 2012 affecting schools and teachers are summarised on pages 16 to 17.

Your union needs you

Standing Committee, following a recommendation from the Education Committee, has decided to hold a series of education seminars around the country in February on proposed junior cycle changes (see page 7 for details). It is vital that members engage with this issue as it has major implications for future working conditions. Ideally, every school should have representation at these seminars, as their input will inform future ASTI policy. Changes are coming down the tracks and it is essential that teacher practitioners have a say.

In addition, a review of incidental inspections will take place at the end of this academic year. It is important that your union representatives have access to empirical rather than mere anecdotal data when engaging with the Inspectorate. If you have been or become the subject of an inspection this year, please take time to fill out the relevant feedback form available on the ASTI website. This will inform Head Office of concerns that arise and will greatly assist in eliminating negative experiences for members.



Brendan Broderick
ASTI President

Fighting education cuts – your involvement is crucial

On December 5, 2011, the Government announced a number of education cuts as part of Budget 2012.

The ASTI believes that the Budget cuts to the second-level education service will have a profound impact on students, teachers and schools.

Guidance counselling

The decision to abolish the guidance counselling allocation for second-level schools is ill considered and crude. It gives no consideration to the essential nature of the advice and support provided by guidance counsellors for students who are at a difficult stage in their lives. This decision follows the introduction of a post of responsibility moratorium in schools, which has led to the dismantling of pastoral care and year head structures in schools. It demonstrates scant regard for student well-being.

The announcement that the guidance counsellor allocation will be subsumed into the overall allocation for second-level schools is, in effect, an increase in the pupil-teacher ratio of almost one. Seven hundred teaching posts will be lost, meaning that most second-level schools will lose a teacher. Further jobs are at risk in fee-paying schools. Second-level schools are still reeling from the impact of the increase in the pupil-teacher ratio in 2009, which resulted in the majority of schools losing between one and three teachers. Schools now face the impossible choice of cutting back on guidance provision or dropping subjects (see page 14 for more on the ASTI's Budget campaign).

Teacher employment

As a result of Budget 2012, many newly qualified teachers will find it impossible to find teaching employment in Ireland. In addition, a number of part-time and temporary teachers will lose their jobs. Second-level schools will miss out on the talent and commitment of these highly motivated young teachers, many of whom will be forced to emigrate to find work (see page 24).

Funding for schools

The ASTI is extremely concerned that the capitation grant to schools is to be cut by 2% next year and by 6% over the next four years. OECD reports have consistently demonstrated Ireland's poor record on

investment in second-level education. Many second-level schools engage in fundraising in order to meet day-to-day running costs, such as heating and electricity. Now that so many families are experiencing their own financial pressures, this type of fundraising is no longer sustainable. The removal of supports to disadvantaged students who are not in DEIS schools amounts to penalising vulnerable students on the basis of the school they attend and/or where they live. The evidence is that the majority of disadvantaged students attend schools outside the DEIS scheme.

Standing up for education

We are all aware of the enormity of the financial crisis facing Ireland. However, the ASTI makes no apology for standing up for young people's education. Young people are the key to sustainable economic recovery. In this context, the education cuts announced in Budget 2012 are indefensible.

During 2012 the ASTI will continue to campaign against the education cuts. The ASTI's strength as a campaigning union is entirely dependent on members' participation. To this end, we will be undertaking a sustained events programme this year, including a comprehensive survey of the impact of the cuts on schools and students, information leaflets for members, public meetings, online campaigns, political lobbying, and more. I urge you to get involved in at least one ASTI campaign event this year so that we can bring about change to the education service and the lives of hundreds of thousands of young people before it's too late.



Pat King
ASTI General Secretary

ASTI marches against austerity



ASTI members take part in a pre-budget march against austerity. For more see page 14.

High achiever



ASTI Vice President Gerry Breslin presents the ASTI award for highest achievement in teaching practice to UCD PGDE 2011 graduate Wessleigh O'Hagan.

AVC Scheme Annual Report

ASTI members who are members of the ASTI AVC Plan should note that, in accordance with pension scheme regulations (2006), a full copy of the Irish Life Trustee Services annual report for the year ending March 31, 2011, is available for examination by contacting the General Secretary of the ASTI. Cornmarket will provide a synopsis of the report in documentation issued to all AVC members.

It's been said ...

"Second-level education has a crucial role to play in Ireland's long-term economic prosperity, as well as being intrinsically valuable, allowing young people to develop intellectually, socially and personally."
 ESRI report: 'Improving Second-Level Education: Using Evidence for Policy Development', December 2011.

Changing employment? Garda vetting requirements

If you are newly appointed to any teaching position, you must be Garda vetted prior to commencing employment unless you have already been vetted during the same or previous calendar year. This requirement applies to those who have been Garda vetted as part of the initial Teaching Council registration process. All teachers who are returning to teaching work after a leave of absence of two or more years must also undergo Garda vetting. See 0063/2010 for more.

Draft Code of Conduct – give your feedback

The consultation process on the Teaching Council Draft Code of Conduct for Teachers is ongoing. Your feedback will be accepted until January 27. See www.teachingcouncil.ie.

Community and comprehensive seminar



The seminar was addressed by Dr Marie Griffin, CEO, Co. Dublin VEC.

The ASTI held a seminar for members in community and comprehensive schools and colleges late last year. The seminar was addressed by Dr Marie Griffin, CEO of Co. Dublin VEC, who advised of the steady development of greenfield community colleges in Dublin to cope with population increases. The development of these schools will lead to an increase in teaching in teaching positions over the next four years. Dr Griffin, along with ASTI speakers, referred to the consultative process in existence between the ASTI and Co. Dublin VEC, which enables the ASTI to advance issues on behalf of members and address matters of mutual concern. The seminar considered the many measures take by the ASTI to secure greater job security for members and enhancing hours.

Former ASTI President appointed Minister of State



Joe Costello TD, who served as ASTI President from 1990-'91, has been appointed Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade with responsibility for Trade and Development. Joe was first elected to Dáil Eireann in 1992, serving the Dublin Central constituency. Prior to this Joe taught at Loreto College, North Great George's Street, Dublin.

Have your say on junior cycle reform

ASTI to hold regional meetings on junior cycle changes

The ASTI is hosting a series of regional meetings for members on the proposed changes to the junior cycle curriculum. These meetings will provide an important feedback mechanism for the ASTI, which continues to be in discussions with the Department about core aspects of the proposed changes, including changes in examination and assessment. The seminars are open to all ASTI members. Further information is available on the ASTI website. For more information contact Eileen at asti.library@asti.ie, Tel: 01-604 0170.



Region	Date	Venue	Time
Cork	Thursday February 9	Cork Education Centre	6.00pm-8.30pm
Sligo	Tuesday February 21	Sligo Education Centre	6.00pm-8.30pm
Limerick	Saturday February 25	Limerick Education Centre	10.00am-12.30pm
Dublin	Tuesday March 6	ASTI Head Office	6.00pm-8.30pm
Athlone	Thursday March 15	Athlone Education Centre	6.00pm-8.30pm

Engineers Week 27 February - 4 March, 2012



Engineers Week offers a fun-packed programme of **FREE** interactive events and activities! Students will gain an understanding of the wonderful, life enhancing, exciting challenges and developments engineers are involved in and responsible for.

Each participant will receive a Certificate of Participation as well as the chance to **WIN** a fantastic trip to NEMO Science Center in Amsterdam.

Events in your area will be listed from 16th January on www.engineersweek.ie
Contact Kate Cannon, Engineers Ireland
kcannon@engineersireland.ie for further details.



Are you a digital creator?

SMART FUTURES

Enter the Smart Futures ICT careers competition now!

Smart Futures is a national competition open to all second level students in Ireland. Create a piece of digital content and win some amazing prizes. Visit www.SmartFutures.ie now to find out how to enter the competition and to download a poster for your school.

www.Facebook.com/SmartFutures

www.Twitter.com/SmartFuturesIE

Stillorgan Branch retirement function



Pictured at a recent Stillorgan Branch retirement function are: Back row (from left): Michael Dooley, St Benildus College; Tim O'Neill, St Benildus College; ASTI General Secretary Pat King; and, Tim Geraghty, St Tiernan's Community School. Front row (from left): Vincent Costello, Blackrock College; Crena Shevlin, Branch Chairperson; ASTI President Brendan Broderick; Maria O'Meara, Ballinteer Community School; and, Pat Kelly, Oatlands College.

ASTI meets Minister of State



ASTI representatives recently met with Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills, Sean Sherlock TD. Minister of State Sherlock has been given special responsibility for research and innovation (his brief spans both the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation). Specifically, he has a role in ensuring that policy and investment decisions are aligned to sustainable economic recovery. This includes ensuring that the education system is delivering the skills and expertise needed for the future, the promotion of science and maths awareness and careers, and the improvement of mathematical proficiency.

Discussion between ASTI representatives and the Minister of State included the Department of Education and Skills' programme for upskilling 'out of field' maths teachers, issues of concern to teachers teaching Project Maths, the role of education in fostering innovation, and the importance of education to economic recovery.

Principals' and deputy principals' seminar

A one-day seminar for ASTI principals and deputy principals will be held on February 29 in Athlone. Come along to find out about:

- the new allocation system at second level;
- the Croke Park Agreement – one year on; and,
- junior cycle reform – NCCA update.

Applications to attend have been sent to all schools and must be returned to ASTI Head Office by Friday February 10.

Your membership details

ASTI Head Office is in the process of updating its membership database system. The new system will be in operation from the end of February. We would like to apologise for any disruption during the changeover period.

The new system will allow us to provide better services to members and to communicate more effectively with you.

If any of your contact details have changed recently, you can update them online in the membership section of our website – www.asti.ie.

If you have changed school or contract type, please notify us by downloading a Change of Membership form and sending it to us at www.asti.ie.

To contact the ASTI Membership Department, Tel: 01-604 0162, or Email: membership@asti.ie.

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Rocketing off as winners!



Team Rocket – students Gearoid Moore, Gavin Randles, Eimear O’Sullivan and James Ryan of Crescent College Comprehensive, Limerick – under the guidance of their teacher Ann O’Dea, were the winners of the National CanSat Competition final held in December. The four students successfully built and tested a simulation of a real satellite that is designed to fit into a soft drinks can. The Crescent Comprehensive students will now represent Ireland at the European CanSat final, which takes place in Norway next April.

Report explores PISA results

A report published in December identifies ways in which PISA can be used to inform reading literacy teaching and learning in schools. ‘Reading Literacy in PISA 2009 – A Guide for Teachers’ offers recommendations for teachers of English and other classes and gives examples of tasks used to assess reading proficiency in PISA. The report also gives an overview of PISA 2009 results for Ireland and a consideration for the observed declines in reading literacy since 2000. To read the full report, see www.erc.ie. Read more on Department strategy to improve literacy and numeracy on page 37.

Are you paying the correct PRSI rate?

The ASTI is aware that a number of teachers may be assigned to the wrong PRSI class. Teachers recruited prior to April 6, 1995, should pay D rate PRSI. Teachers who were recruited on or after April 6, 1995, pay class A rate PRSI, unless they were working elsewhere in the public sector and paying B, C, or D rate PRSI immediately prior to their appointment.

It is important to make sure that you are paying the correct class of PRSI, as this has implications not only for your PRSI contribution obligations and entitlements, but also for your pension contribution obligations and entitlements. If an error has occurred, it is best to rectify the mistake sooner rather than later. With effect from January 1, 2010, an application for the return of PRSI contributions must be made within four years of the last day of the contribution year in respect of which the contributions concerned were paid. The ASTI understands that the Department of Education and Skills has come to an agreement with the Department of Social Protection to allow teachers who were assigned to the wrong PRSI class to recoup overpaid PRSI for years before this four-year limit. Full information is not yet available on this matter but will be posted on www.asti.ie as soon as it is available. An ASTI industrial relations official recently assisted a member who was facilitated in recouping overpaid PRSI beyond the four-year limit. Please contact the ASTI for further advice if you believe you have paid the incorrect PRSI rate.

Run for election to the Teaching Council

The term of office of the current Teaching Council ends on March 27 and national elections will be held in February and March 2012 to elect teachers to the new Council.

Twenty-two places on the 37-member Teaching Council are reserved for registered teachers. Sixteen are elected and six are nominated by the teacher unions. Application forms for ASTI endorsement and nomination were sent to schools in November and had to be submitted by January 13. If you wish to stand for election to the Teaching Council, you must be nominated by 15 registered teachers in the same electoral category and geographical constituency. Nomination forms are available on the Teaching Council website and must be received by January 31, 2012. All nominations must enclose a consent form completed by the nominated teacher.

For more information, see www.teachingcouncil.ie.

This issue in numbers...

2

Percentage decrease in student capitation rate in 2012 (P16)

6

Percentage of PDE students who believe they will find a full-time job in Ireland after graduation (P31)

JobBridge Scheme

ASTI members are asked to report any breaches of the JobBridge National Internship Scheme in schools to ASTI Head Office to inform the ASTI's response to and policy on the scheme. The ASTI is concerned that the JobBridge Scheme could be abused either in the treatment of interns or in the assignments that might be given to them in schools. The ASTI has made its concerns about the JobBridge Scheme clear to the Department, pointing out that any use of JobBridge to deal with the effects of reduced school services arising from cuts by the Department will be strongly opposed by the union.

Under the JobBridge Scheme in schools:

- an internship must not cause an existing member of staff to be displaced;
- interns may not be used to fill a current teaching vacancy;
- interns must not be used to fill a post of responsibility vacancy that arises in a school; and,
- interns must be appropriately qualified.

If you are aware of any of these conditions being breached, it is very important that you report this to ASTI Head Office as soon as possible. The Department will periodically review the experience of JobBridge in schools.

Contact ASTI, Thomas MacDonagh House, Winetavern Street, Dublin 8, Tel: 1850-418400, or Email: info@asti.ie.

Interested in becoming a CPD facilitator?

Teachers with at least five years' experience can nominate themselves to work as local facilitators for the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). The PDST is a support service that provides professional development, support, advice and guidance to teachers in primary and post-primary schools.

Local facilitators are engaged for up to six days per year to facilitate a number of events locally to complement and extend the work of a particular support service or to enable delivery of the programme of CPD of a particular education centre.

Visit www.pdst.ie to find out more.

Supporting the community



ASTI President Brendan Broderick presents a donation on behalf of the ASTI to Rose McGowan, President of St Vincent de Paul Dublin, before Christmas. The ASTI provides financial grants to support educational and other charity work throughout the year.

Ireland tops for school completion

Almost 90% of 20- to 24-year-olds have completed second-level education, according to the latest figures from the Central Statistics Office.

The proportion of those aged 20-24 who have completed second-level education (89%) is well above the EU average of 79%. However, while the percentage has increased six points since 2000, the growth has slowed in the last number of years, indicating the need to continue support for programmes to encourage school completion and combat educational disadvantage.

At 37%, the unemployment rate for early school leavers is over twice that for other persons aged 18-24.

Ireland ranks joint first in the EU for third-level attainment among those aged 25-34, with almost half of those having a third-level qualification. This success could be threatened by education cuts, including cuts to guidance counsellor allocation and disadvantage supports.

735

Number of teaching hours completed per year by Irish second-level teachers (P23)

679

OECD average number of second-level teaching hours completed per year (P23)

Irish students show solidarity with Colombian trade union activists

Rosalba Gaviria Toro (third from left), a Colombian trade union activist and President of the Women's Movement for Peace and Human Rights, visited Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine, Kenmare, in December. Rosalba was imprisoned for her opposition to the Colombian regime in March 2009.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions Global Solidarity Campaign organised a campaign to free Rosalba, and two students from Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine, Ellie Gudgeon and Annie Cooper, became involved in the campaign, which sent 400 letters over three months to the Colombian Embassy.

Rosalba was released in June 2011, and promised to visit the school and meet the students. Also included in the photograph is CSPE teacher Ann Pigott, who co-ordinated the campaign in the school. Ann represents the ASTI on the ICTU Solidarity Committee and is an ASTI Standing Committee representative.



Alleviation of POR moratorium restored

Budget 2012 included a provision to allow for the restoration of alleviation measures in relation to the filling of assistant principal posts in second-level schools. Schools will be able to maintain approximately half of the assistant principal posts held prior to the moratorium. The moratorium on posts of responsibility, which came into effect in March 2009, originally meant that schools could not make any posts of responsibility appointments. Limited alleviation measures were later introduced allowing schools that met certain criteria to apply to the Department to make appointments to assistant principal posts. Last year the application of the alleviation measures became very limited. However, Budget 2012 restores these measures.

For more information, see www.asti.ie.

New title for PGDE

The Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) qualification has been renamed the Professional Diploma in Education (PDE). The change in title follows discussions between the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland and universities. The PDE qualification will be placed at Level 8 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The Teaching Council has clarified that the change of title and designation as a Level 8 qualification will have no bearing on the Council's professional accreditation of such programmes for the purposes of registration with the Council. NQF placement relates to academic accreditation only. The ASTI wishes to reassure teachers and student teachers that Level 8 placement will not affect a teacher's progression on the salary scale. In Ireland, all qualified teachers are entitled to progression on this incremental salary scale. The NQF placement of the PGDE/PDE has no bearing on the Council's professional accreditation and, therefore, will not have an impact on qualified teachers' salaries.

Section 30 preparing to commence

The Minister for Education this month published a Bill paving the way for the commencement of Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act, which, when enacted, will mean that only teachers registered with the Teaching Council may be paid through State funds. The Education (Amendment) Bill 2012 amends Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act to allow for the employment of unregistered teachers who meet minimum qualification requirements for a limited period in certain exceptional and limited circumstances, such as to meet urgent staffing needs. It remains the stated aim of the Minister that all teachers in schools be registered with the Teaching Council and therefore fully qualified.

Unregistered teachers paid at unqualified rate

Any teacher not registered with the Teaching Council who is appointed after September 2011 will be paid at the unqualified rate. For this reason, it is very important that teachers apply for Teaching Council registration at the earliest opportunity and that they maintain Teaching Council registration while seeking work. Department Circular 0031/2011 states that unregistered teachers will be paid at the unqualified rate of pay and may not be paid in respect of more than one week's continuous employment at any one time. Their contract must state that the contract will terminate immediately if the employer is in a position to employ a registered teacher. The Circular, which came into effect in September, aims to ensure, as far as possible, that people appointed to teach are registered teachers, and that unemployed teachers are offered employment in preference to those who have retired.

Teachers who are waiting excessive amounts of time for Teaching Council registration and are being paid at the unqualified rate should contact ASTI Head Office. The ASTI will explore possible avenues for recouping lost earnings following registration.

Maths upskilling courses

The Department of Education intends to provide courses to allow 'out of field' maths teachers to achieve full Teaching Council accreditation to teach maths, beginning this year.

The graduate diploma courses will be free of charge but must be completed in the teacher's own time. Successful participants will be awarded a Level 8 qualification, which will meet Teaching Council registration requirements to teach maths.

The courses will be provided in six regions, with one national course provided for teachers in Irish medium schools. Approximately 40 to 55 participants will be accepted in each region per year.

More information on these courses will be available once the tendering process has been concluded and contracts to provide the courses have been awarded.

Currently, registered teachers who meet certain criteria, including having studied maths in at least the first year of their undergraduate degree, can undertake certain postgraduate courses or modules to gain Teaching Council accreditation to teach maths. Fees are payable for these courses. For full information on registration requirements, contact the Teaching Council.

Budget measures for DEIS schools

From the 2012 school year, 195 second-level DEIS schools will operate with a reduced pupil-teacher ratio of 18.25:1 – a 0.75 point reduction. However, this measure is accompanied by the withdrawal of posts allocated under disadvantage programmes prior to DEIS.

A new bursary scheme to incentivise and reward high achievement for students from DEIS schools is to begin in 2012. The scheme, which will replace existing scholarship schemes for students from DEIS schools, will have a budget of €130,000 in 2012. The allocation is expected to rise to an estimated €750,000 in 2015. In addition to the capitation grant, reduced by 2% in the 2012 Budget, DEIS schools will continue to receive the enhanced DEIS grant payment, which has not been reduced.

See more on the Budget on page 16.

ICTU supporting equality

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) has published guides to promote equality in the workplace.

The booklets, *Being Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender at Work* and *Gender Identity in the Workplace*, are available to download at www.ictu.ie.

Did you know?

Equality legislation places a legal obligation on employers to reasonably accommodate people with disabilities. An employer is obliged to take appropriate measures to enable a person who has a disability:

- to have access to employment;
- to participate or advance in employment; and,
- to undertake training.

The measures put in place must be reasonable and practical.

Re-employment of mid-year retirees

In order to alleviate disruption to exam classes, the Department has issued a circular allowing schools to re-hire teachers who retire before February 29, 2012, for a limited time, under certain circumstances.

Teachers who retire between December 1 and February 29, and who were, immediately prior to retirement, teaching students preparing to sit Junior Certificate or Leaving Certificate examinations in 2012, may be re-employed by the school until the end of classes for the 2011/2012 school year. A school may re-employ that teacher for the totality of the hours he or she was teaching before retirement (i.e., it is not confined to the examination class duties). However, where a teacher's pre-retirement hours included a portion of teaching and non-teaching duties (e.g., post of responsibility, deputy principal), he or she may be re-employed in respect of his or her teaching hours only. Where a teacher who is retired and is in receipt of a pension returns to teaching on or after January 1, 2011, he or she will start on the first point of the post-January 1, 2011, incremental salary scale. For more, see Circular T/SNA 2011/01.

Teachers returning to teach following retirement should ensure that they renew their Teaching Council registration. For most teachers, the annual renewal date is March 2012.

www.glasnevinmuseum.ie/education

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Education week highlights impact of cuts

Education week, which took place from November 28 to December 2, 2011, was organised as part of the teacher unions' Budget 2012 campaign.



Pictured at the march against austerity are ASTI members Sharon Daly, Elaine Devlin and Mairéad Wilson.

A number of activities during Education Week highlighted the importance of education for economic recovery and the impact of education cuts on students, schools and society.

Nationwide lobby

ASTI representatives around the country engaged in a political lobby of TDs at constituency level.

This was complemented by a briefing of teacher TDs and Senators in Dublin by the General Secretaries and Presidents of the teacher unions.

Support of parents

A press conference was organised by the Post Primary Education Forum, a forum of parents, teacher unions and school management bodies, which campaigns on issues of common interest. The conference received national and regional media coverage.

It is vital that ASTI members continue to voice their objections to education cuts and to explain the impact of the cuts on their students.

Public meeting

A public meeting entitled 'Education Cuts Don't Heal' was held in Dublin. Speakers included Ritva Semi from the OAJ education union in Finland and Ciaran Sugrue, Professor of Education at UCD. The meeting focused on the evidence that education funding is an investment that pays off in terms of individual and societal outcomes.

Demonstration

A demonstration organised by the Dublin Council of Trade Unions was held on November 26. ASTI members marched under the ASTI banner.

Information leaflets

Information leaflets on the impact of an increase in the pupil-teacher ratio were circulated to schools, parents' organisations and TDs.

Web page

A Budget 2012 campaign page included resources for members wishing to participate in the campaign.

What's next?

After more than three years of austerity, including savage education cuts, second-level schools all over the country are facing the challenge of doing more with less in 2012. The ASTI believes that the cuts will have a profound effect on young people's education and on their futures. The ASTI is carrying out a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the cuts in schools, including identifying the worst cuts. We will be asking all members to participate in our campaign to reverse the worst of the education cuts in 2012.

Please join our campaign against the education cuts. Visit www.asti.ie.

Take action

It is vital that ASTI members continue to voice their objections to education cuts and to explain the impact of the cuts on their students. It is vital that our policy makers hear and understand your experience as professionals working in classrooms every day.

Budget reaction

The ASTI was the first to express concern about the cuts to second-level education on Budget day (See ASTI in the media, on page 22).

The ASTI wrote to the Minister following the Budget announcement and expressed its anger at the cuts.

ASTI Standing Committee met and passed the following motions:

"That the ASTI deplores the decision to abolish the ex-quota guidance counselling allocation for second-level schools and demands its immediate restoration."

And

"In light of the statement by the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn, that 'change will be implemented at a pace which the system can sustain' and in view of the recent cuts announced in Budget 2012 and the publication of budgetary profiles for the coming years, the ASTI calls on the Minister for Education and Skills to pause the deeply flawed proposals for reform of the Junior Certificate".

For more
information

Visit www.asti.ie



Jim Moore and Tommy Walshe of the National Parents Council outline the worst of the education cuts.



Former ASTI member and leader of Fianna Fáil Micheál Martin TD with ASTI President Brendan Broderick at the briefing for teacher TDs and Senators.



ASTI members take part in the pre-budget march against austerity.

Budget 2012 – the main education measures

Despite a stated emphasis on fairness and jobs, Budget 2012 has again targeted education and further compromised young people's employment prospects and futures.



Guidance allocation change means 500 teachers lost

With effect from the 2012/2013 school year, guidance provision must be managed by schools from within their standard teacher allocation. This will mean the loss of some 500 teaching posts and will have the same effect as a 0.8 increase in the pupil-teacher ratio.

The majority of second-level schools will lose a teacher, with larger schools losing between 1.5 and two. This will lead to further subject loss in second-level schools, curtailment of career guidance counselling services, the amalgamation of classes, reduced focus on maths and science education, and the dropping of programmes such as transition year and the Leaving Cert Applied.

Reduction in funding for schools

There will be a 2% reduction in capitation and related grants in 2012 and 2013. A further 1% reduction will apply in 2014 and 2015. The new student capitation rate will be €317 in 2012, with a pro-rata reduction in the funding allocation to community and comprehensive and VEC schools.

Pupil-teacher ratio increased for fee-paying schools

The pupil-teacher ratio for fee-paying schools will increase by one point to 21:1 from the 2012/2013 school year. The Department will conduct an analysis of the tuition fee income available to schools in this sector and its utilisation, in order to inform future policy on investment and funding for teacher posts in fee-paying schools.

The Department will conduct an analysis of the fee income available to fee-paying schools and its utilisation, in order to inform future policy on investment and funding for teacher posts in this sector.

Qualification allowances reduced

The maximum amount payable to new entrants to teaching through qualification allowances cannot exceed the amount payable for an honours degree – €4,426. This measure does not affect allowances being paid to existing teachers. However, existing teachers who acquire additional qualifications in future will not be paid allowances in respect of these qualifications. These measures were taken in advance of a public service-wide review of allowances.

Disadvantage posts cut

Posts allocated across primary and second-level schools under disadvantage programmes prior to DEIS will be withdrawn over a three-year period, beginning in the 2012/2013 school year. Most of these are at primary level.

Reform of the teacher allocation process

The Department of Education and Skills has published details of reforms to the existing teacher allocation process, which come into effect for the 2012/2013 school year.



In addition to Budget measures, including that guidance provision must be managed from within a school's standard teacher allocation and an increase in the pupil-teacher ratio to 21:1 for fee-paying schools, the Department of Education has made significant changes to how support teachers are allocated to schools in future.

The main reforms at second-level are:

Merging of learning support and language support

Allocation for learning support and language support will be combined into a single allocation process. The current allocation of 850 language support and learning support posts will be allocated on the following basis:

- 0.9 of a post for schools with fewer than 600 students; and,
- 1.4 of a post for schools with an enrolment of 600+ students.

Additional support will be provided to schools that have significant concentrations of students requiring language support in the following way: schools that currently have two temporary language support posts will be allocated one permanent post; and, schools that currently have one temporary language support post will be allocated 0.5 of a permanent post.

Allocation of resource hours

In future, 70% of a school's existing allocation for resource hours will be automatically re-allocated to the school in January. The balance of resource hours will be allocated when the NCSE process has concluded. This arrangement will commence in January 2012 when 70% of a school's resource hours for 2012/2013 will be allocated.

Schools that currently have two temporary language support posts will be allocated one permanent post, and schools that currently have one temporary language support post will be allocated 0.5 of a permanent post.

Leaving Cert Applied allocation


Existing resources for schools that operate the Leaving Cert Applied programme will be redistributed to allow support to be provided to new schools joining the programme.

In addition to the school's standard allocation (18.25 in DEIS schools, 21:1 in fee-charging schools, 19:1 in all other schools), an additional fixed allocation of 0.5 of a post will be allocated to each school that operates the LCA programme.

Read full details on the reform of the teacher allocation process at www.astir.ie.

Resource hours

In future, 70% of a school's resource hours will be automatically allocated in January.



Are you claiming all of your tax reliefs?

You may be entitled to a number of additional tax reliefs – *ASTIR* explains.

Did you know that as a PAYE worker you should complete a tax return each year? A lot of teachers don't claim all of their entitlements and their unclaimed tax reliefs accumulate year on year. You can claim back returns for a period of up to four years. This means that many teachers may be entitled to a substantial amount of money. To put this in context, the average tax rebate for Cornmarket customers in 2011 was €850 for one tax year. The majority of these customers were teachers.

There are a number of tax reliefs/credits that were abolished from 2011 onwards, which you may have previously claimed for. The good news is that if you didn't claim for these from 2008 to 2010, then you can still claim for them this year.

The tax credits and reliefs you are entitled to will depend on your own personal circumstances. To find out what tax credits and reliefs you are currently claiming for you should check your Tax Credit Certificate, which is available from Revenue. As a teacher, you should definitely be claiming flat rate expenses. This is an allowance of €518 for teachers and €608 for principals. A further €126 can be claimed if you are teaching full-time and are also involved in PE or guidance counselling. These amounts can be increased by €90 if you are a member of the Teaching Council and are available to you at your higher rate of tax. There are a number of tax reliefs/credits that were abolished from 2011 onwards, which you may

have previously claimed for. The good news is that if you didn't claim for these from 2008 to 2010, then you can still claim for them this year:

- **Teaching Council registration** – The Teaching Council registration fee of €90 is tax deductible. Tax relief on your Teaching Council fee will be provided when the fee has been paid in full and up front. You must alert Revenue that you have paid the fee each year and wish to have the amount offset against your tax liability.
- **Medical expenses** – On January 1, 2009, Revenue reduced the tax relief available on medical expenses from 41% to 20%. However, don't miss the opportunity this year to make one final claim at the higher rate of 41% for 2008.
- **Trade union membership** – maximum credit of €70 per annum. This tax credit was abolished in 2011 but is still available to claim from 2008 to 2010.
- **Service charges** – Maximum tax credit of €80 per annum for refuse or water charges. This tax credit will be abolished in 2012 but can still be claimed from 2008 to 2011.
- **Mortgage interest relief** – This relief is to be abolished by December 31, 2017, so if you qualify, you should ensure that you are receiving this relief.

As well as making sure that you are claiming all of your tax reliefs, you should check your payslip regularly to make sure that you are being paid the correct salary and allowance rate. Multiply the fortnightly amounts for salary and allowances by 26.09 and compare to the salary scales published on the ASTI website.

Some other credits that you may be entitled to claim for include:

- **One Parent Tax Credit** – If you are living alone and have a child who is still in full-time education you may be entitled to an additional tax credit of €1,650.
- **Widow's Tax Credit** – If you are widowed, additional tax credits may be available depending on what year you were bereaved and/or if you have dependent children.

In addition, there are annual claims for reliefs that you should be making that you will not see on your Tax Credit Certificate such as medical expenses, college fees, single premium pension contributions, etc. All the tax credits and reliefs available can be found on the Revenue website – www.revenue.ie.

Advice received by the ASTI from Damian Wilson, Assistant Manager, Midas Tax Division, Cornmarket.

Get money back from your ASTI membership

Money-saving schemes

The ASTI offers a wide range of services and benefits to members, including negotiated deals on motor, home, travel and health insurance, as well as other member benefits such as an ASTI Visa card and mortgage scheme.

See the services and benefits section of the ASTI website for full details.

Sickness Benefit Scheme

ASTI members with two years or more of consecutive membership can claim benefit in respect of:

- illness entailing seven or more consecutive days' absence from school;
- expenses for optical and dental treatment, subject to a maximum of €165 in any five years; and,
- hearing aids prescribed by a qualified medical practitioner, subject to a maximum of €165 in any five years.

Receipts from the appropriate medical authority or qualified practitioner must accompany your application for benefit and claims must be submitted within six calendar months of the termination of illness or treatment.

ASTI Benevolent Scheme

The ASTI operates a Benevolent Scheme for members, through which you can apply for financial assistance of up to €10,000 if you:

- become totally incapacitated and are forced to retire from teaching;
- have an illness that results in your absence from work for 18 consecutive months; or,
- find yourself in other exceptional circumstances.

Qualifying dependents of deceased members can also apply for financial support.

Terms and conditions apply to these schemes. For more information and application forms, see www.asti.ie or contact the Accounts Department in ASTI Head Office, Tel: 01-604 0164.

Budget 2012 – what it means for your finances

While income tax and PRSI rates were unchanged in Budget 2012, other measures will have an impact on your finances.

Taxes and reliefs

Income tax and tax credits

Income tax, PRSI rates and bands, and tax credits did not change in the 2012 Budget.

Universal Social Charge

Universal Social Charge (UCS) rates remain unchanged. However, the income level for USC exemption has been raised to €10,036 from January 1, 2012. This means that those who earn below €10,036 in one tax year will not be liable to pay any Universal Social Charge on that income. Those who earn above €10,036 will continue to pay 2% on the first €10,036, 4% on the next €5,980, and 7% on the balance. In the case of individuals aged 70 or over, and individuals who hold full medical cards, the 4% rate applies to all income over €10,036.

Mortgage interest relief

The rate of mortgage interest relief for first time buyers who took out their first mortgage between 2004 and 2008 has been increased to 30%. For those who wish to buy a home in 2012, first time buyers will get mortgage interest relief at a rate of 25% and non-first time buyers will get relief at 15%.

Mortgage interest relief will no longer be available to house purchasers who purchase after the end of 2012 and will be fully abolished from 2018.

Tax exemption for illness benefit removed

The tax exemption for the first 36 days of Illness Benefit and Occupational Injury Benefit has been removed.

Household costs

VAT

The standard rate of VAT has increased from 21% to 23%. The lower rate of VAT – 13.5% – will apply to home heating oil, residential housing, and general repairs and maintenance. The 9% rate introduced in the Jobs Initiative will continue to apply for certain services.

Household charge

A household charge of €100 is being introduced in 2012. The charge is an interim measure pending design and implementation of a full property tax.

Increase in motor tax

Motor tax has been increased for all categories of vehicle.

Increase in carbon tax

Carbon tax has been increased by €5 to €20 per tonne on fossil fuels. The increase applies to petrol and auto-diesel.

Drug Payment Scheme

The Drug Payment Scheme threshold has been increased by €12 from €120 to €132 per month.

Family finances

Child benefit

Child benefit remains at €140 per month for each of the first two children. The rates for the third and subsequent children will be standardised and reduced to €140 over the next two years. In 2012, the rate for the third child is cut by €19 to €148 and the rate for fourth and subsequent children is reduced by €17 to €160. Additional monthly payments for twins and triplets are maintained but grants usually paid at birth, four years and 12 years for multiple births will cease.

One-parent family payment

The upper age limit of the youngest child for new claimants of the one-parent family payment has been reduced from 14 years to 12 years in 2012 (and will fall to seven years by 2014). In addition, the amount a lone parent can earn while still being allowed to claim the payment is being reduced from €146 to €60 weekly over a five-year period.

School transport

The charge for primary school transport has increased from €50 to €100. The family maximum at primary level increased from €110 to €220. The primary charge for concessionary students has been reduced from €200 to €100. The charge at second-level remains unchanged at €350 with a maximum of €650.

Back to school allowance

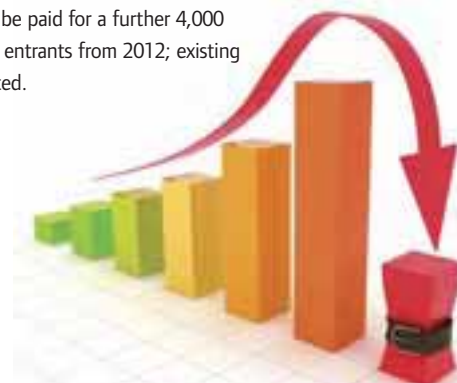
The qualifying age for the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance has been increased from two to four and rates of payment have been reduced from €305 to €250, and from €200 to €150.

Third-level contribution

The current €2,000 student contribution will increase by €250 in 2012.

Student grant

A 3% reduction in maintenance grants applies from 2012. From 2013, capital assets will be considered in means testing for grant applications. No maintenance grant will be available for postgraduate studies from 2012. Fees will be paid for special rate postgraduate students and the €2,000 fees contribution will be paid for a further 4,000 students. This applies to new entrants from 2012; existing grant holders will be unaffected.





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Key Facts

- Deals with current issues faced by today's teachers
- Focuses on application in the Irish classroom
- HETAC accredited to Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (www.nfq.ie)
- Delivered by experienced educators
- Modules can be completed as stand alone continuing professional development courses
- Duration: 2 years taught plus thesis
- Relevant for both primary and post-primary teachers
- Now enrolling for spring 2012

Entry Requirements Include

- A recognised teaching qualification
OR
A minimum of 2 years practical experience in a recognised educational context.
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www.hiberniacollege.com/matl



Reactions to the Budget

The ASTI continues to respond to educational issues.

Budget 2012 reaction

Pat King ... warned an increase in the pupil-teacher ratio would lead to some classes being dropped. He said this could severely affect optional subjects including physics, chemistry or German, while schools may be forced to merge honours and ordinary classes in areas such as maths. "This will damage students' career options and job prospects," Mr King stated, adding: "Merged classes, which are already a significant feature in second-level schools, lead to a diminished learning environment for every student in the class".

Schooldays.ie, December 1

"That translates in the real world as 700 jobs to go next year – I could be one of those. It also shows how little guidance counselling is valued. But it is so essential, especially as we are now focusing on building a knowledge economy. It seems counter intuitive."

ASTI member Trevor Murray on RTÉ Drive Time, December 6, on the decision to abolish ex-quota provision for guidance counsellors

Secondary teachers union the ASTI has warned that most schools will lose at least one teacher because of the cuts ... ASTI General Secretary Pat King said second-level schools were still reeling from cuts to resources and funding. He said the Budget cuts would be catastrophic. "This will lead to further subject loss in second-level schools, curtailment of career guidance counselling services, the amalgamation of classes, reduced focus on maths and science subjects, and the dropping of programmes such as transition year and Leaving Cert Applied," he said.

The Irish Daily Star, December 6

Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI) General Secretary Pat King said it was absurd that when the Government said its No. 1 priority was jobs the country's schools would lose one or two guidance counsellors or have to reduce focus on key subjects.

Irish Examiner, December 6

"This is a time when guidance is needed more than ever, both in terms of careers because of the difficulties in the job market, but also in terms of the emotional and pastoral support that would be provided by guidance counsellors ... If [schools] decide to retain their guidance they're going to have to decide to drop subjects ... While the Government will say they haven't changed the pupil-teacher ratio, the effect is the same."

ASTI Deputy General Secretary Diarmaid de Paor discusses the implications of Budget 2012 for schools on Ireland AM, TV3, December 7



ASTI President Brendan Broderick is interviewed by 98FM.

The ASTI plans to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the impact of budget cuts on schools, students and teachers. We will use the results of this research to highlight the impact of shortsighted Budget cuts in the media.

Mid-year retirements

"Teachers aren't choosing to retire in the middle of the school year. Rather, those teachers who wish to avail of the Croke Park early retirement arrangements have little option but to leave at this time. Teachers are the only group in the public sector faced with this dilemma."

ASTI President Brendan Broderick responds to the article 'Betrayed by our Teachers', December 13, *Irish Daily Mail*.

"The extra duties [retiring teachers] have ... will not be replaced ... and on top of the recent announcement of the departure of guidance counsellors, that is a double whammy for schools."

ASTI General Secretary Pat King, discussing mid-year retirement concerns on RTÉ News at 1, December 8

"I think it's very unfair that teachers have been presented with this dilemma. They're trying to balance the interests of their students with their own personal and family interests."

Brendan Broderick, RTÉ Nine O'clock News, December 8

In a letter to the Minister for Education and Skills, the general secretary of the ASTI wrote that the [guidance counsellor] cut "gives no consideration to the essential nature of the advice and support provided by guidance counsellors for students who are at a most difficult time in their lives".

Irish Independent, December 21

Budget survey

The ASTI plans to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the impact of budget cuts on schools, students and teachers. We will use the results of this research to highlight the impact of shortsighted Budget cuts in the media. In 2012 we will be asking all members to participate in the campaign to reverse the worst of education cuts. Look out for updates on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie

Inaccurate report on teaching hours – complaint upheld

The ASTI has been to the forefront in pointing out that Irish second-level teachers spend more time teaching their students than the OECD average

The Press Ombudsman has upheld a complaint by a teacher that an article in the *Irish Independent* inaccurately stated that the number of hours worked by Irish secondary teachers was “significantly lower” than the OECD average. The article in question reported on data supplied in the OECD report ‘Education at a Glance 2011’. This report states that the average teaching hours in OECD countries is 701 for lower secondary teachers, and 656 for upper secondary level teachers. It records the average for Irish teachers in each of these categories as 735 hours.

The Ombudsman found that the article, published on September 17, 2011, contained a significant inaccuracy and breached Principle 1 (Truth and Accuracy) of the Code of Practice for Newspapers and Magazines.

The ASTI has been to the forefront in pointing out that Irish second-level teachers spend more time teaching their students than the OECD average and the decision of the Press Ombudsman further affirms the ASTI’s work in counteracting the misleading use of OECD data. The ASTI has had a number of letters published in the national press in response to misleading reporting on this issue, including the letter below by former President Jack Keane, published in *The Irish Times* on June 14, 2011:

Madam,

In his article ‘Teachers’ summer shutdown should not be a closed book’ (Opinion, June 9), Brian O’Connell refers to an OECD table which shows that Irish second-level teachers are expected to be present in schools for 735 hours per annum compared to the OECD average of between 1,116 hours and 1,192 hours. The ASTI wishes to point out the following: For 12 out of the 14 countries represented in this table, the aggregate number of hours includes time spent teaching and time spent carrying out non-teaching duties. In the case of two out of the 14 countries – Ireland and New Zealand – time spent carrying out non-teaching duties is not included. As a consequence, the stated number of hours for Ireland and New Zealand is significantly lower than they are for other countries. Irish second-level teachers are required to teach for 735 hours per annum, which is well above the OECD and European average of 682 and 646.5 hours, respectively.

In addition, Irish second-level teachers are required to be present in their schools for additional time and are required to carry out a wide

range of non-teaching duties. These duties include administrative tasks required by law, lesson planning, subject and whole school planning, liaising with external personnel (e.g., special educational needs organisers and school inspectors), setting and marking exams, and meeting with parents. This does not include voluntary work such as organising musicals, coaching teams and running the photography club, which usually take place outside the school day or at weekends. Irish schools and teachers are renowned for their commitment to extra-curricular activities and research has shown that these activities benefit young people both personally and educationally.

There is no evidence to suggest that Irish teachers spend less time at school than the OECD average. In addition to teaching for 735 hours per year, Irish second-level teachers carry out the same or similar non-teaching duties as their OECD counterparts.

– Yours, etc,



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ASTIR speaks to two teachers who have had to emigrate to find work.

Generation emigration



The latest CSO statistics show that Ireland's emigration rate has increased by 45% in the last year, with up to 1,500 people moving abroad each week. Teacher Marc McMenemy is soon to be one of them. Having spent the seven months since he qualified as a history and English teacher searching for work without success, he has recently started speaking to UK recruiters. Marc doesn't want to emigrate and never has. However, facing the current situation, he sees little choice. "It just seems so much easier to get a position abroad. That is not something that I want to do – absolutely not. It has been forced upon me. I like Ireland; my literature is Wilde and Yeats and my history is Parnell and O'Connell. I think I'd be out of place in a classroom in Hackney, but it's something I might have to get used to. I want to work as a teacher so I can't afford to stay here for another year waiting." Much as he is reluctant to leave, the UK does have one thing going for it, says Marc: its recruitment system. "There's a very localised mentality towards recruitment here and that's difficult for newly qualified teachers. Our methods of recruitment need to modernise. I would be very strongly in favour of recruitment agencies or some regulated system that takes away the parish pump thing. I understand looking after your own, but it's very hard to compete in a system like that."

I like Ireland; my literature is Wilde and Yeats and my history is Parnell and O'Connell. I think I'd be out of place in a classroom in Hackney, but it's something I might have to get used to.

Hurling star

Local renown has not helped Brian Smyth to find work in Ireland. Until recently, Brian combined captaining the Westmeath hurling team with teaching PE and maths in England. Having moved to the UK when the recession first hit, he had been travelling home each weekend to train with Westmeath as well as with his local club. Unfortunately, before Christmas, Westmeath manager Brian Hanley decided he needed full commitment from players, which, living in another country, Brian couldn't give. Ideally, Brian would like to be teaching in Ireland, living among friends and family and playing for his local club and county. But, he says, he has to go where there is work and right now, that's not Ireland. "In England, there's a structured career progression and more opportunity for promotion – you know where you're going. At home you don't know if you'll even have a job." Brian is hurling with London now and has started a masters in education. He says he's settling in more and will only be coming home during school holidays.

The danger of settling

Like Brian, many of those who intend to emigrate for a few years find themselves settling in and, Marc worries, they may never come back. "We're exporting young talented teachers and I would ask the question: where are the vacancies from retirements going to be filled from in the years to come when we've exported so many?" Turning its back on newly qualified teachers, especially with targeted cuts to their salaries and allowances, is a short-sighted move on the Government's part: "Newly qualified teachers could offer a boost to schools and students."

Departures →



I have new skills and new things to bring to the table. I mean no disrespect to older teachers because it was they who educated me and I respect that and I thank them for it. But younger teachers would have more in common with what students are facing today. I try to encourage students in whatever small way I can when I am doing the few days of substitution work that I get because I know what it's like out there and I know that there should be an imperative put on them to work because there are very few opportunities for anybody in any sphere at the moment".

The most fundamental things to reinforce in any recession are education and health. Give me a chance to work. I just want a paycheck and a sense of independence. That's all I'm looking for. As one friend said to me, ours is an education gone to waste.

The UK perspective

According to Claire Birch of UK recruitment agency Uteach, the number of Irish teachers applying to the agency has doubled since

CSO

Ireland's emigration rate has increased by 45% in the last year, with up to 1,500 people moving abroad each week.

January of last year and for most applicants the main reason is the dismal job situation in Ireland. While not paved with gold, the streets of London are certainly inviting for newly qualified teachers. Education has taken cuts there as it has in Ireland, but there are jobs for graduates and, in contrast to Ireland, where newly qualified teachers are being specifically targeted for cuts, the UK offers bursaries for training, added allowances for locations and a 'golden hello' of up to £4,000 for maths teachers.

When that option is available it makes no sense to stay in Ireland in unemployment, says Marc, so teachers are being exported unnecessarily because they can't afford to wait any longer without knowing if their job prospects will improve.

They could be facilitated to stay, he says, if the Government considered simple pragmatic alternatives: "I understand that the Government is constrained – I see the problems they face – but there are ways around them and ways to keep young teachers here. The most fundamental things to reinforce in any recession are education and health. Give me a chance to work. I just want a paycheck and a sense of independence. That's all I'm looking for. As one friend said to me, ours is an education gone to waste".

The ASTI's Non Permanent Teachers' Advisory Committee discusses issues of concern to part-time and temporary and new teachers and advises ASTI Standing Committee on these matters.

What's wrong with league tables?

In an era when accountability and transparency are highly valued, why does the ASTI continue to oppose league tables? General Secretary PAT KING explains.



"The publication of *The Irish Times* school league tables last week drew a robust response from the Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland".

So commenced *The Irish Times* editorial on Monday, November 28, 2011. Yes indeed, the ASTI's response was robust. After all, it was one of the many education agencies that successfully advocated that the 1998 Education Act prohibit the publication of information on the comparative performance of schools in respect of the academic achievements of students enrolled therein (Section 53).

But that was over a decade ago.

So why – in an era when accountability and transparency are highly valued – does the ASTI continue to oppose the publication of league tables?

League tables promote a primitive form of accountability in schools

Schools must be accountable to society. This requirement derives not just from the fact that schools are publicly funded but, more fundamentally, from the fact that schools are providing a public service and that service must be open to scrutiny. Second-level schools are subject to a range of accountability mechanisms. These include representative and autonomous boards of management (which include parent, community and teacher representatives) with legal duties to implement policies and ensure that students' needs are met. More specifically, Section 24 of the Education Act provides specific and time-bound procedures for responding to complaints against teachers. Under the same Education Act, the Department of Education and Skills

Inspectorate was extensively re-organised and now judges the work of schools through a number of evaluation models. The ensuing reports provide forensic analyses of the operation of schools and are available on the internet (www.education.ie). More than 5,000 primary and second-level school inspection reports have been published on the web in the last five years. Inspection methods used include teams of inspectors conducting school-wide and school-deep evaluations, and the surveying of parents and students. This is accountability in action. Measurement-driven accountability mechanisms, on the other hand, are flawed because they do not provide comprehensive statements on the multi-faceted performance of schools. League tables do not consider that each school and each student is unique. They dismiss the challenges faced and often overcome by students and teachers in every school. They ignore the fact that each school has its own set of goals and objectives, based on the needs of its students. Finland, which has a high performing education system, places no emphasis on, nor does it give any particular place to, testing or measurement-driven accountability. Instead schools are required to engage in continuous self-evaluation aimed at school improvement. There is much to be learned from Finland.

In Finland, if schools are experiencing difficulties, self-correcting systems of support and evaluation are used, rather than public exposure. Clearly this approach works. In Ireland, the bedrock for such self-correcting performance evaluations is already established in the Education Act.

League tables do not lead to school improvement

There is no evidence that league tables promote improvement in students' educational experience either at system or school level. The OECD, itself an advocate of improvement mechanisms in schools, in its 2008 comparative analysis on school leadership, concluded the following regarding the UK's league tables:

"The consequences for the individual school, as well as for the individual pupil, are often negative, and it is clear that the construction of the tables favours schools that are already advantaged. Less successful schools have to fight against the following vicious circle: bad reputation, worsening school atmosphere, decreasing identification of the pupils with their school, decreasing number of pupils, reduction of resources, decreasing job satisfaction and motivation among staff, lack of applications of well qualified teachers for this school, worse quality of lessons, decreasing pupil achievement, worse results in the league tables. Different studies show that most head teachers disapproved of the great competitive pressure open enrolment and league tables had produced, and considered the strong market orientation as educationally misconceived, even harmful."

In Finland, if schools are experiencing difficulties, self-correcting systems of support and evaluation are used, rather than public exposure. Clearly this approach works. In Ireland, the bedrock for such self-correcting performance evaluations is already established in the Education Act.

League tables exacerbate social inequalities

There is abundant evidence that the more equal societies are, the better they are in terms of core social indicators such as health, employability/capacity for income generation, crime rate, civic involvement, gender equality, etc. Society should therefore be wary of measures that – inadvertently or otherwise – undermine the capacity of schools to meet social equity goals. International evidence tells us that educational outcomes for students are strongly correlated with socio-economic status. In Ireland this relationship is also strong. However, OECD research has found that Irish second-level schools are making a significant difference in terms of "over-riding" the effects of socio-economic disadvantage on individual students' achievements. This accounts for Ireland's outstanding performance by international standards in terms of the percentage of students who stay in school to complete the Leaving Certificate. It is also the reason why in recent years the OECD report 'Education at a Glance' asserted that Irish parents can rely on high and consistent standards across all types of second-level school. The ASTI believes that the success of Irish schools in reducing the link between student background and academic achievement is under threat due to the promotion of college entry league tables as a statement of school performance. The two countries best known for their pursuit of a league tables culture – the UK and New Zealand – fare badly in this regard.

League tables do not encourage the types of learning needed for a knowledge society

League tables provide ranked information on grades awarded in examinations and promote 'teaching to the test'. The global driving force for educational reform today is the ongoing social and economic transformation of society. Government strategy is to develop Ireland as a knowledge society based on knowledge, adaptability, innovation and creativity. In his book *Teaching in the Knowledge Society: Education in the Age of Insecurity*, the eminent educationalist Andy Hargreaves states that "knowledge society schools have to create these qualities, otherwise their people and their nations will be left behind". The current review of the junior cycle is explicitly predicated on freeing up the curriculum from content to give more space to developing all students as learners for the knowledge society. Likewise, the soon-to-be published report on the joint Higher Education Authority and National Council for Curriculum and Assessment conference on transition from second-level to third-level education will underline the need for the Leaving Cert programme to deepen 21st Century learning skills. But such a transformation in the way teachers teach and students learn requires much more than revised curricula. It requires a society-wide consensus that education is not a narrow utilitarian exercise but rather a social good, with broad goals including enriching all aspects of young people's lives and creating a more egalitarian and inclusive society. League tables mitigate against the achievement of this vision.



Pat King
ASTI General Secretary

In the wake of the Budget announcement of major cuts to guidance allocation in second-level schools, RICHARD BERKELEY outlines the vital role of the guidance counsellor.

Guiding light



Traditionally, secondary schools in Ireland have received an allocation for the provision of guidance. This was an ex-quota post with a ratio of approximately 500 to one, depending on the type of school. In the latest budget, in an attempt to cut spending in education, it has been decided that schools will no longer receive this allocation and will have to allocate hours to the provision of guidance from within existing resources. It is a heartless decision and will seriously undermine the valuable work that schools do in the area of guidance.

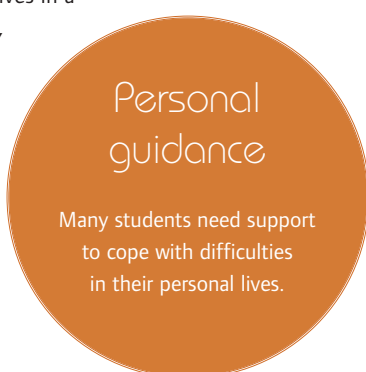
The provision of guidance is now seriously undermined. To put the onus on schools to provide guidance from existing resources is a cowardly act on behalf of the Government.

Guidance programmes

In most secondary schools there is a guidance programme. It dovetails with the pastoral care programme and provides guidance to students in three main areas. It may be delivered in timetabled classes, informal meetings or one-to-one sessions. Firstly there is educational guidance. Students are advised about any educational matter that they may be concerned about, for example, subject choice in first year or fifth year, whether to do a higher or ordinary level paper, formulating a study plan, whether or not to do transition year, etc. The second area is based around career guidance. This plays a large part in most guidance counsellors' work. Schools would generally have timetabled classes in senior cycle. Research skills are taught and time can be given to undertake research into possible careers.

Students are encouraged to examine their own particular career interests and aptitudes. This can be done through career assessments and inventories.

Students are encouraged to examine their own particular career interests and aptitudes. This can be done through career assessments and inventories. There is also a practical element to this with guest speakers invited into the school and trips out to college open days and career exhibitions. There are possibilities here for strong links to LCVP. Information concerning the third-level application process is also covered in detail, as well as other routes for further education and training. Counsellors would also try to meet every student to discuss their choices and guide them in the right direction while giving practical advice. These one-to-one meetings are very time consuming but most counsellors and students would agree that they are very valuable in a time of key decision making for the student. The third area, personal counselling, can be the most challenging area for the guidance counsellor. Unfortunately, many students in our schools are experiencing difficulty in their personal lives. These problems can manifest themselves in a number of ways: misbehaviour, absenteeism, underachievement, poor attitude, a withdrawal from school life, anger, sadness – the list could go on. Of course, not all problems in schools are down to



students' personal issues, but when a student is identified as possibly having difficulties, it is the role of the guidance counsellor to intervene and try to help and support the student. In every school up and down the country, there are students at risk. Some issues are relatively minor. They can be dealt with through meetings with the counsellor, good progress can be made and positive results achieved. However, the threat of suicide, self-harm, violence, substance abuse, and disengagement with life is never far away. It is not an exaggeration to say that the service that schools provide through their guidance programme is saving students' lives. Whether through working with guidance counsellors or a referral to an outside agency for professional assistance, the student is supported and measures can be put in place to help the student through whatever difficulties he or she may be experiencing.

A service under threat

The provision of guidance is now seriously undermined. To put the onus on schools to provide guidance from existing resources is a cowardly act on behalf of the Government. Of course, the argument will be put that guidance is not being taken out, and schools will still be providing guidance. But as we are all aware, cutbacks have decimated our schools' allocation. Things have been getting tighter with more and more vital services having to be curtailed or removed. Now we are expected to find extra hours for the provision of guidance, a service that should be an integral part of every school. I cannot see a practical or ethical solution to this problem. Some schools will continue to provide guidance but at the expense of something else. For example, a school may decide that in order to provide guidance counselling hours, it may have to have bigger classes or reduce options in first and fifth year, while other schools may only be able to give limited time, if any, for guidance. It has also been suggested that the services provided by the school can be accessed outside of school. This is true but often the students who need help most are the very ones who are not in a position to access this help. The school is central for students in this position and the support provided through the guidance and pastoral care programmes is really the only chance they have. To withdraw this support and expect schools to provide it from existing resources will undoubtedly dilute the quality of service provided and ultimately the most vulnerable students in our schools will suffer. It is a decision I feel the Minister urgently needs to reassess.

Richard Berkeley

Richard is a guidance counsellor at Sancta Maria College, Louisburgh, Co. Mayo. He is also ASTI Convenor for Guidance Counselling.

ASTI member DEIRDRE WHITLOW tells us about her experience volunteering in Moldova.

Giving back



Deirdre spent time working in an orphanage in Hincesti, Moldova.

During the last two years, I have worked as a volunteer with Outreach Moldova (ORM). I had always wanted to volunteer during my holidays, so in January 2010 I applied to ORM, and I travelled to Moldova for the first time in August 2010 for two weeks. I travelled with a group of friends, but it is also easy to travel on your own, as everyone gets on really well and the programme is so well organised. We meet in Dublin Airport and from there are directed to our destination; transport, food and accommodation are all covered, so it really is hassle free. I returned to Moldova in April 2011 during the Easter break, to an orphanage situated near the town of Hincesti, 50km from the capital city, Chisinau.

ORM is an Irish charity with its head office located in Dublin. It was set up in 2000, and carries out its work in the Republic of Moldova. The organisation is dedicated to providing human rights, medical care and social inclusion for children who have been abandoned or orphaned, and children with special needs and/or terminal illnesses. I found working in the orphanage extremely rewarding as the children are loving, caring and thrive on the care and attention they receive. I feel that the children in the orphanage are very well cared for; they are arranged in different groups, and throughout your work you get to spend a great deal of time with each group.

Activities

During my time in the orphanage I was involved in various activities, working alongside the Moldovan staff. I assisted in child-oriented activities such as teaching children cooking, sewing, art and drama, and sports, play and learning activities. As well as this, I assisted children who are confined to wheelchairs with various activities. Each day in the orphanage is timetabled and the volunteers and translators go to the different groups of

children for a wide range of activities, ranging from attending school with the girls to wheelchair races, discos and dance classes. We also got to bring some of the children on a day trip from the orphanage into the city and on another trip we visited the baby orphanage in the capital, which was rewarding yet heartbreaking.

Difficult but worthwhile

I found the experience extremely difficult at the start but I guess I did not know what to expect. However, after two or three days I felt at ease and confident that I was making a difference to the children's lives. The staff and other volunteers were extremely helpful and are always there to support you. I found listening to the experiences of previous volunteers extremely helpful and I feel it prepared me and helped me through my first few days especially.

Volunteering was easy; I applied online at www.outreachmoldova.org and within two or three days I got an information pack in the post with the various forms and information that I needed. It truly is an amazing experience and something I will be forever delighted I did and I hope to return again soon.

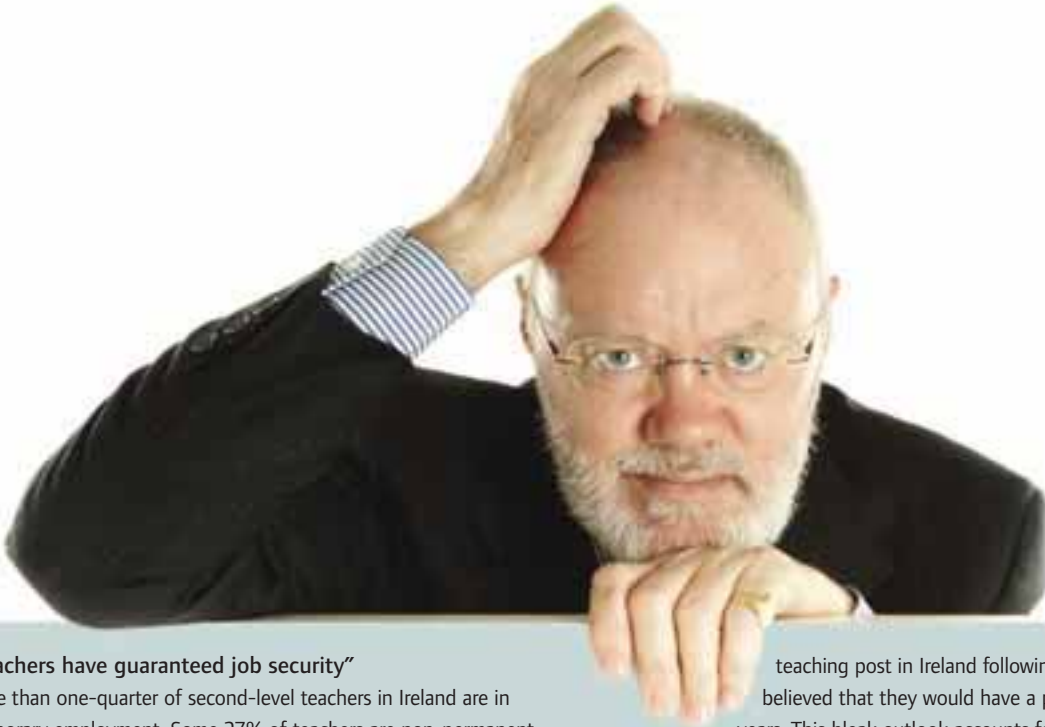
For those of you who may be considering volunteering, I would sincerely recommend ORM as a worthy charity as I have seen at first hand the magnificent work that is carried out daily for these wonderful children.

Deirdre Whitlow

Deirdre Whitlow teaches in Our Lady of Mercy College, Beaumont, Dublin 9.

ASTIR tackles the myth that teachers are guaranteed a job for life.

A job for life?



“Teachers have guaranteed job security”

More than one-quarter of second-level teachers in Ireland are in temporary employment. Some 27% of teachers are non-permanent, according to OECD figures. Far from a ‘job for life’, these teachers have no guarantee that their job will even exist in the next school year. The announcement before Christmas of the loss of 700 teaching posts at second level will have brought this into sharp focus for many such temporary teachers.

Only 6% of PDE students surveyed last year by the ASTI believed that they would be able to find a full-time teaching post in Ireland following graduation.

The changes to guidance allocation announced in the Budget will have the same effect on schools as the pupil–teacher ratio increase of 2009, i.e., each school will lose between one and two teachers. This, together with the increase in pupil–teacher ratio in fee-paying schools and the merging and redistribution of support post allocations, means that many teachers will soon find themselves out of work. Only 6% of PDE students surveyed last year by the ASTI believed that they would be able to find a full-time

teaching post in Ireland following graduation. Only half believed that they would have a permanent teaching post in five years. This bleak outlook accounts for the two-fold increase in applications to UK teacher recruitment agency UTeach in the last year. See page 24 to read more about teachers searching for work.

“Permanent teachers cannot lose their jobs”

There are procedures in place under Section 24 of the Education Act to facilitate schools in dealing with issues of professional competence and conduct. These procedures allow school management to take a number of disciplinary actions against teachers, up to and including suspension or dismissal. Where concerns are raised regarding a teacher’s professional competence or conduct, these disciplinary procedures set out the informal and formal steps that must be taken by management to address the concerns.

In the case of professional competence, the procedures allow for internal and external review of a teacher’s competence and ability to meet required professional standards. In the case of matters of professional conduct, a teacher may be given verbal or written warning in advance of disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action in both cases can include the deferral of an increment, the withdrawal of an increment or increments, suspension with or without pay, or dismissal.

In cases of gross misconduct or a threat to the health and safety of students or school staff, depending on the gravity of the alleged offence, a teacher may be dismissed without recourse to the previous stages of the procedures.

Feedback

send feedback to
astirfeedback@asti.ie



Would you or your students like to take part in a world record attempt on Kilimanjaro?

56 kilometres to heaven

On August 30 this year, over 100 second-level students, teachers and parents will join Adi Roche, celebrated founder of Chernobyl International, Dr Padraig Sheeran of Crumlin Children's Hospital ICU, and well-known Irish climber Ian McKeever at the top of Africa's highest peak – Kilimanjaro.

Your school and students can take part in the attempt, which aims to raise €100,000 to save 100 lives on behalf of both Chernobyl International and the Intensive Care Unit in Crumlin Children's Hospital. The achievement will also signify a new official Guinness World Record for the most people to summit Kilimanjaro at one time. The novel record attempt follows the first ever Irish school-based expeditions to Africa's highest peak, which took place in the summer of 2011, when 155 students, teachers and parents from 10 schools travelled to Africa and made their way to the summit. This represented an unprecedented 100% success and the single largest group to successfully summit in the history of the Kilimanjaro National Park.

The first ever Irish school-based expedition was a 100% success and the single largest group to successfully summit in the history of Kilimanjaro National Park.

Those who wish to take part must register by the end of January. Fundraising will be required. Contact Miriam Forde of Chernobyl International, Tel: 021-431 2999/087-285 3907, or Email: mforde@chernobyl-ireland.com. Ian McKeever has made himself available to deliver a series of motivational talks for students in schools entitled 'Conquering your Own Everest'.



Above: Students from 10 Irish schools attempted the climb in 2011, with an unprecedented 100% success rate.

Left: Ian McKeever and students reach the summit of Kilimanjaro.

A unique experience

Irish climber Ian McKeever, who together with his African counterpart Samuel Kinsonga trained and guided those ten expeditions, explains the rationale behind the record attempt this coming summer and just what Irish students are hoping to gain from their experiences in Africa: “Kilimanjaro is unique – perhaps the only mountain in the world that offers a relatively safe and manageable opportunity to reach the summit of one of the continents’ highest peaks. Our 12-week training programme is designed to allow students to grow as people from a physical, psychological and human perspective. It empowers them, teaches them to think for themselves and helps them, most importantly, to believe in themselves”.

Ian is no stranger to breaking climbing records, having held the world record for the seven summit back in 2007. Sam Kinsonga is a highly qualified African guide and has climbed Kilimanjaro over 300 times. His company, Everlasting Tanzania Tours, has worked with McKeever to bring over 350 people to the Kilimanjaro summit and none so far has failed to make it.

The 12-week training programme that prepares the Irish students and adults is about far more than achieving a simple summit. Each climber is encouraged to live by the motto ‘small steps – big results’. The intention of the programme is to equip students with the necessary skills to face all manner of challenges in their lives, to enlighten them about teamwork and to provide them with confidence and self-esteem.

The 12-week training programme that prepares the Irish students and adults is about far more than achieving a simple summit. Each climber is encouraged to live by the motto ‘small steps – big results’.

Links

www.kilimanjaroachievers.com
 Youtube: Ian McKeever
 Kilimanjaro School Adventure
 Facebook: Ian McKeever’s
 Kilimanjaro Achievers 2012

Sarah Prendergast, a student from St Joseph’s in Castlebar who took part in the climb last year, calls the experience the best ten days of her life and says: “The people, the place, this world – all truly amazing. I’m a very, very different person now that I’m back in fifth year!”

The nine-day record attempt will depart on August 23. Students and teachers from up to 25 schools will follow the beautiful and less travelled Lemosho route, which takes 6.5 days to summit and 1.5 days to descend. If your school or students would like to get involved, register today!

IS YOUR SCHOOL LOOKING FOR ONE-TO-ONE E-LEARNING?



The Educational Company of Ireland (Edco) has recently launched a **new and exciting student e-book range**, which provides schools with an end-to-end, innovative, digital curriculum. Schools can enjoy the flexibility of offering their students **e-books in the cloud**, along with the **stability of offline access** to all content.

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Ambitious plans to overhaul the junior cycle should be put on hold until the worst of the education cuts are reversed, according to the ASTI.

Need for review of junior cycle proposals

Following a meeting of ASTI Standing Committee, General Secretary Pat King has written to the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn TD, urging him to “pause” his plans to proceed with junior cycle reform. “The Minister himself has stated that effective educational reform can only be implemented at a pace which the system can sustain,” he said. “What teachers are saying is that after more than three years of education cuts, the second-level education system has been weakened to the extent that the significant reform contained in the junior cycle reform proposals is currently unfeasible”.

Schools already involved in reform

Second-level schools engage in continuous educational reform, said Mr King. For example, the implementation of the National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy (2011-2020) will be rolled out in the coming months and will impact on all areas of the school curriculum. This initiative includes the revision of syllabi, the introduction of new teaching and learning techniques in the classroom, and teachers administering and collating new standardised assessment tests for all students on a regular basis. These and other reforms are being implemented in an environment that is being further drained of resources, including personnel and funding.

Prior to Budget 2012, the ASTI expressed its concerns to the Minister regarding the junior cycle reform proposals, including the lack of detail about what the proposals would mean for schools and how they would be implemented. Concern among teachers over junior cycle reform has increased following the Budget 2012 announcements that 700 second-level teaching posts are to go in 2012, that teacher numbers are to be cut again in 2013, and that funding for schools is to be cut by 6% over the next four years.

“Teachers are eager to contribute to reform that is educationally sound, and which improves their students’ experience of education,” said Pat King. “However, for something as important as the junior cycle, and that involves a State exam, it is vital that the reform works and that it is not just change for the sake of change. To implement such complex and significant reform at a time when all second-level schools are overstretched and many are near breaking point would be damaging for students, schools and the second-level education service.

“The most effective next step the Minister can take towards meaningful educational reform is to begin to undo the most savage of the education cuts.”

For something as important as the junior cycle, and that involves a State exam, it is vital that the reform works and that it is not just change for the sake of change.

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If you require any further information about the programme please contact Claire Dooley (cdooley@education.ucc.ie) or Anita Cronin (a.cronin@ucc.ie) at (021) 4902467

Applications must be made online at <http://www.gac.ie/ucc> (select APPLY - EU TAUGHT). Closing date: April 1, 2012.

Budget questions

Budget 2012 has prompted a number of questions from members. *ASTIR* clears up some of the confusion.



I was expecting to get a CID next September. Where do I stand now with redeployment and the loss of teaching jobs due to the Budget?

The change to guidance allocation made in Budget 2012 mean that schools that were 'in-quota' or 'under-quota' may now be 'over-quota'. Redeployment allows for the reassignment of teachers from 'over-quota' schools to 'under-quota' schools, under certain circumstances. If your school is over quota, permanent teachers or CID holders may be redeployed to another school. If your school is 'under-quota', a teacher from another school may be redeployed into your school for the 2012/2013 school year. If there is an ongoing need and sanction for your post (or any part of it) in the school and you would, in the normal course of events, be entitled to a CID, you must be given that CID for the hours of your current fixed-term contract. Circular 0034/2009 sets out the order in which vacancies are to be filled and the first step an employer must take is to "offer a CID where an existing fixed-term teacher qualifies for such in accordance with the terms of this circular". The same circular sets out the other conditions necessary for the granting of a CID – see page 38.

I am a non-permanent teacher. With Budget changes to allocation, etc., is my job under threat?

Unfortunately, Budget measures do mean that many schools will be losing teachers, either through redeployment or the loss of non-permanent teachers. As a non-permanent teacher, you cannot be redeployed; only permanent teachers and CID holders can be redeployed. If you are covering for the leave of absence of a permanent teacher or CID holder and a replacement teacher has been sanctioned, this job must continue to be filled in a temporary capacity until that teacher returns, resigns or retires. If you have more than one year's service in the school, failure to renew your contract for this job may constitute an unfair dismissal. If you are teaching concessionary hours and the Department of Education sanctions those hours again for next year, you may have an entitlement to some or all of them if you have taught in the school for more than a year. If you do not have more than a year's service in the school, you may still be retained to teach some or all of the hours you have this year. However, the school is required to let the Director of the Redeployment Scheme know of any available posts that require a teacher. If your hours are deemed to be 'available', a teacher may be redeployed into the school and may be assigned the hours you held. However, the number of teachers retiring is higher than usual this year. This is due to the Croke Park Agreement, which offers a financial incentive to those public servants who retire on or before February 29. In addition, demographic changes and growing student numbers mean there will be new teacher vacancies.

I am a guidance counsellor. Now that guidance counsellors are included in the general allocation, will I have to go back to subject teaching only?

All schools are required to use their available resources to ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices. This is stated in Section 9 of the Education Act. It is the responsibility of each school to determine a guidance counselling plan as part of its overall school development plan. The development of this guidance plan should take account of available resources and contextual factors and should, where possible, be led by the guidance counsellor with input from relevant management and staff. You should, therefore, engage with the school management as soon as possible to form a guidance plan for the forthcoming school year that ensures that the school meets its obligations under the Education Act. This plan will determine how many hours are allocated for guidance counselling tasks.

If you are teaching concessionary hours and the Department sanctions those hours again for next year, you may be entitled to some or all of them if you have taught in the school for more than a year.

What changes did Budget 2012 make to qualification allowances?

As part of Budget 2012 measures, it was announced that the maximum amount payable to new entrants to teaching in qualification allowances cannot in future exceed the amount payable for an honours degree – €4,426. This measure does not affect allowances being paid to existing teachers. However, existing teachers who acquire additional qualifications in future will not be paid allowances in respect of these qualifications. The ASTI has contacted the Department of Education and Skills in relation to those teachers who have recently completed a course of study but are not yet in receipt of the applicable allowance or those who are currently taking such a course of study. In correspondence, the ASTI insisted that these teachers undertook studies in good faith and we believe they have a legitimate expectation that they should be entitled to the allowance on successful completion of their studies. The ASTI will update members on this issue as soon as we receive a response from the Department.

Literacy and numeracy strategy – what it means for schools

ASTIR looks at what the Department of Education's strategy for improving literacy and numeracy standards means for your school.

Arising from the most recent PISA report, there is a new policy emphasis on promoting literacy and numeracy in primary and post-primary education.

In July of last year the Minister launched The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People, which is intended as a blueprint for the reform and improvement of

teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy. The strategy sets out a list of targets and actions to be undertaken between now and 2020, in areas such as teacher training and continuous professional development, teaching and assessment, and the work of school management.

Below are some of the measures that will impact on second-level schools and teachers in the near future:

All schools must co-operate with national and international surveys approved or commissioned by the DES. One major aim of the strategy is to significantly improve Ireland's performance in PISA reading literacy and numeracy tests by 2020.	From 2012
Teachers will be provided with access to continuous professional development in literacy, numeracy and assessment.	From 2012
Schools must engage in robust self-evaluation and put in place a three-year school improvement plan, which includes specific targets for the promotion and improvement of literacy and numeracy standards.	From 2012-2013
The development and roll out of Project Maths is to continue and the effects of the implementation on standards will be monitored.	Roll out completed in 2013
All teacher-training courses will include mandatory modules in assessment for learning, and literacy and numeracy monitoring.	2013
The time in school available to students for the development of literacy and numeracy skills is to be increased. Students must have a minimum of five periods of maths per week and maths must be taught regularly during transition year.	2013
In the context of junior cycle reform, the revision of the junior cycle English and Irish syllabuses will be prioritised to ensure that attention is given to a range of literacy skills – including digital literacy – and to strengthen the teaching and assessment of literacy.	From 2014
Postgraduate training courses for second-level teaching will increase in length to two years and will provide time to develop student teachers' skills in teaching and assessment to improve literacy and numeracy.	2014-2015
All post-primary schools will be required to administer standardised tests of reading and maths to all eligible students at the end of second year. All schools must report to parents in clear terms about the progress their child is making.	2014-15
Principals must report annually on the aggregated assessment data from standardised tests to the Board of Management.	2015
As part of junior cycle reform, a limit will be placed on the number of subjects a student may take as examination subjects at Junior Certificate.	2017
To read the full strategy, visit www.education.ie .	

Another CID win for teacher

Each year the ASTI assists and advises many teachers on their entitlements to CIDs. At any one time, the ASTI is engaged in approximately 40 CID cases at formal appeal or tribunal level on behalf of members. ASTIR reports on a recent case.

The member, who was employed on eight successive fixed-term contracts between 2004 and 2011, applied to her school for a CID commencing from September 2011.

The school accepted that it had secured only 18 hours in 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 by virtue of the absence of the teacher on leave, and the additional four hours were derived from other sources unconnected with the absence of the teacher on approved leave.

Her request was refused by the Board of Management, who claimed that she had been employed to cover for a teacher absent on secondment and, as this was set out in her contract, she did not qualify for a CID.

Cases depend on individual circumstances.

For advice on your potential entitlement to a CID, contact your ASTI industrial relations official.

Tel: 1850-418400;

Email: info@asti.ie;

Web: www.asti.ie.

The teacher appealed to the Adjudicator, arguing that the teacher for whom she was covering was the holder of a post of responsibility working in the community and comprehensive sector and was, therefore, required to teach only 18 hours per week, as she was granted four hours per week to carry out the duties of her post.

The teacher made the case that as she was contracted to teach 22 hours and did not undertake the post duties of the absent teacher, the four additional hours were assigned to her in her own right.

The school accepted that it had secured only 18 hours in 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 by virtue of the absence of the teacher on leave, and the additional four hours were derived from other sources unconnected with the absence of the teacher on approved leave.

The Adjudicator therefore found that in 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 the teacher was employed to teach hours other than those derived from approved leave cover and she was therefore not excluded from qualification for a CID.

He ruled that the teacher was entitled to a CID from September 2011. As the hours of a CID are determined by reference to the number of hours the teacher was employed on a fixed-term contract in the year prior to the award of a CID, the teacher was awarded a CID for 22 hours.



In order to qualify for a CID you must:

- be registered with the Teaching Council;
- hold appropriate qualifications, including a PGDE/HDip; and,
- have in excess of four years' continuous teaching service, under two or more successive written contracts of employment with the same employer.

Teachers who meet the above criteria will be entitled to a CID unless:

- their post will not be viable within a reasonable period, and this was set out as an objective ground in writing in the previous contract;

or,

- they are covering for a teacher on an approved scheme of leave of absence and this was set out as an objective ground in writing in the previous contract.

CID hours

The hours of the CID will be those hours for which the teacher was engaged on a fixed-term contract in the school year prior to the issuing of the CID. The granting of CIDs for teachers paid by the Department is governed by Circular 0034/09. Teachers who are paid privately are also protected by fixed-term work legislation.

After the Budget

Budget 2012 has shaped ASTI campaign priorities for the coming year.

Pupil-teacher ratio and guidance allocation

Immediately following Budget 2012, the ASTI wrote to the Minister for Education and Skills to object strongly to the subsuming of the guidance counsellor teacher allocation into the overall teacher allocation, stating that this ill-considered and crude measure – in effect an increase in pupil-teacher ratio – will have a profoundly negative impact on the quality of education in schools and their ability to provide much needed guidance for students. In the run-up to the Budget the ASTI had undertaken a nationwide lobby of TDs and ran a campaign highlighting the effects any increase in the pupil-teacher ratio or the loss of teaching jobs would have (see page 14). We intend to build on this lobbying campaign over the coming months and to continue to highlight and create public and political awareness of the impact of short-sighted budget measures on education. The ASTI is carrying out a comprehensive analysis of the impact the cuts will have in schools, including identifying the worst cuts. We are asking all members to participate in the campaign to reverse the worst of the education cuts in 2012.

New teachers

Budget 2012 once again targeted new teachers by imposing a cap on the qualification allowances they can receive. This follows a cut to new teachers' salaries of 15% in the 2011 budget. The ASTI has raised this unjust targeting of new teachers with the Minister for Education and Skills and other TDs and in meetings with the Department of Education and Skills, and has denounced the unfair treatment of new teachers publicly at every opportunity. We will continue to argue the case for fair and equal pay for all teachers, and in any future restoration or improvement of teachers' salaries, this will be a priority.

Protect pensions

The ASTI and the other teacher unions are running a campaign of opposition to plans to introduce the proposed single pension scheme for all new public servants. The inferior pension scheme, which has yet to be introduced, would be compulsory for all new teachers and, according to an

For more
information
on ASTI
campaigns
see

www.asti.ie/news/campaigns

independent report prepared by an actuarial firm, could mean that some teachers pay more into their pension than they ever get out.

In advance of the last General Election, the teacher unions contacted the main political parties to seek a commitment that, if in government, they would revisit the new public service single scheme and listen to the unions' legitimate concerns. The teacher unions recently met with the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Brendan Howlin TD, to discuss the issue.

Secure jobs

The ASTI represents approximately 3,000 non-permanent/part-time teachers and we are conscious of their particular needs and concerns. We will continue to campaign against the education cutbacks, particularly in relation to cuts to teaching jobs and the increase in the pupil-teacher ratio, which has implications for the employment of teachers. We will also continue to assert the rights of non-permanent and part-time teachers under legislation and particularly their entitlements to contracts of indefinite duration.

Education reform

The ASTI believes that ambitious plans to overhaul the junior cycle should be put on hold until the worst of the education cuts are reversed. We have written to the Minister for Education and Skills urging him to reconsider the timing of this important reform, given that three years of education cuts have left the second-level education system weakened to the extent that significant reform is currently unfeasible.

Ongoing reforms are already being implemented in an environment drained of resources as a result of successive budgets. To implement the complex and significant reform contained in the junior cycle reform proposals at a time when all second-level schools are overstretched and many more are near breaking point would be damaging for all students, schools and the second-level education service.

The ASTI will continue to voice these concerns to the Department of Education and Skills, the Minister, other relevant stakeholders, parents and the public.

ASTI policy is determined at Annual Convention. This year, Annual Convention takes place in Cork from April 10 to 12. You can be nominated to attend by your Branch. Find out all you need to know on page 45 or www.asti.ie.

ASTI campaigns are only as strong as your involvement. Get involved by:

- keeping informed at www.asti.ie;
- coming along to ASTI events and demonstrations;
- telling us your story or your school's story; and,
- getting involved in your ASTI branch.

Child protection guidelines

ASTIR looks at the main elements of new child protection guidelines for schools.

New Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools came into operation in October and each school must put in place the necessary arrangements to ensure compliance with these procedures, which are based on Children First – the national guidelines for the promotion of child safety and welfare.

School policy and procedure

Under the new guidelines, all schools are required to have a child protection policy and must formally adopt and implement the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools as part of their overall child protection policy. Schools must review their child protection policies and how they are implemented annually. Child protection and welfare considerations should also be reflected in all of the school's policies, practices and activities. Each school must appoint a designated liaison person (DLP) to act as liaison with outside agencies and to be a resource to staff who have child protection concerns. The DLP must inform the school authority where a case involving a child in the school has been submitted to the Health Service Executive (HSE). The DLP must also inform the school authority of cases where advice was sought from the HSE in relation to a case and, as a result of this advice, no report was made to the HSE.

Allegations against members of staff

If a teacher receives allegations of abuse or neglect against another school employee, they must report the matter to the DLP. Where the allegation or concern relates to the DLP, the teacher should report the matter to the Chairperson of the Board of Management or to the CEO of the VEC concerned. School employees who form suspicions regarding the conduct of another school employee should consult with the DLP, who may wish to consult with the HSE.

In the context of any allegation or suspicion of child abuse or neglect regarding school employees, the primary goal must be to protect the children within the school. However, any allegation of abuse or neglect should be dealt with sensitively, and support, including counselling, should be provided for staff where necessary.

If an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against a staff member, the principal must inform the employee that an allegation has been made, the nature of the allegation and whether or not the matter has been reported to the HSE. The employee should be given a copy of the written record and/or allegation, and any other related documentation. Once the matter has been reported to the HSE, the employee will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation in writing.

Necessary protective measures must be taken to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. These measures should be proportionate to the level of risk and should not unreasonably penalise the employee, financially or otherwise, unless this is necessary to protect children.

When there is a requirement for a staff member to be put on administrative leave, the principles of natural justice, the presumption of innocence and fair procedures should apply, and actions taken are intended to be precautionary and not disciplinary.

Where the employer has directed an employee to absent himself or herself from the school, such an absence would not imply any degree of guilt on the part of the school employee. Where such an absence is directed, the school principal should contact the Department of Education and Skills immediately to apply for approval for the payment of the absent teacher and for the employment of a substitute teacher, where necessary.

Did you know ...

- All schools are required to have a child protection policy.
- Each school must appoint a designated liaison person to act as liaison with outside agencies and school staff.
- It is the responsibility of all schools to contribute to the prevention of child abuse and neglect through curricular provision.

Recruitment procedures and Garda vetting

School authorities must ensure compliance with the Department's circulars and any other legal requirements in relation to Garda vetting of school personnel and other persons who have or may have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults.

Curricular provision and child abuse prevention

It is the responsibility of all schools to contribute to the prevention of child abuse and neglect through curricular provision. In that context, the social, personal and health education (SPHE) programme is a mandatory part of the curriculum for all students in junior cycle and all second-level schools are also required to have a relationships and sexuality education (RSE) programme at senior cycle.

Inspection – complaints and review process

Find out how a teacher or school can request a review of a Departmental inspection.

A teacher or the Board of Management (BOM) of a school may request the Chief Inspector to review any inspection carried out by an inspector that affects the teacher or school.

A review can take place where a teacher or school believes that:

- an inspector did not make reasonable efforts to carry out his/her duties in accordance with the Inspectorate's Professional Code of Practice on Evaluation and Reporting;
- an inspector, when conducting an evaluation, did not make reasonable efforts to comply with the published procedures for conducting the type of evaluation involved;
- the written report arising from an inspection did not comply with the principles regarding reporting outlined in the Inspectorate's Professional Code of Practice on Evaluation and Reporting; or,
- the Inspectorate did not make reasonable efforts to comply with the published procedures concerning the publication of school inspection reports.

If a school or teacher is dissatisfied with the work of an inspector, or with an inspection report about the school, they can seek a review, either informally or formally.

Informal stage

If a teacher or BOM has a concern about the work of an inspector, they should bring the matter to the attention of the inspector during the time the inspection is in progress and seek to resolve the matter informally at that stage.

If the concern is not resolved at school level, the teacher or Chairperson of the BOM should contact the Assistant Chief Inspector of the inspectorate region in which the school is situated by phone no later than five school days from the date on which the concern arose. A list of regions and contact details are available on the DES website – www.education.ie. The Assistant Chief Inspector will contact the inspector or inspectors involved and discuss the concerns raised. They will attempt to resolve the concerns through contact with the teacher or BOM Chairperson and the inspector or inspectors. If the person who raised the concern remains dissatisfied, the Assistant Chief Inspector will

Information

ASTI inspection feedback forms are available at www.asti.ie/pay-and-conditions/conditions-of-work/inspectorate-and-inspection. The ASTI will meet with the Inspectorate to highlight our concerns.

inform him or her of the possibility of seeking a formal review.

Formal review

A teacher or the Chairperson of a BOM may request the Chief Inspector to conduct a formal review of the inspection. The request should be made on an Inspection Review Request Form, which is available from the DES website. The request must be received within 20 days of the issue that gave rise to the concern or within 20 days of the date of issue of the school inspection report. It should state clearly the grounds on which the review is sought and include all available supporting documents. If the Chief Inspector considers that the issues raised fall within the scope of the procedure for review, he or she will initiate a formal review. As part of the review two reviewers – one internal and one external – and a review co-ordinator will be appointed. The teacher or BOM will be invited to submit any supplementary submissions in support of the request for a review. The reviewers will examine all documents submitted by the school side and the inspector and may seek additional information. The person who raised the concern and the inspector concerned may be interviewed in the presence of each other. Other persons who may be able to provide relevant information may also be interviewed. The reviewers will then consider all issues raised and provide a report with findings and recommendations to the Chief Inspector. Following consideration of this report, the Chief Inspector will issue his or her initial determination. This determination, together with the reviewers' report, will be sent to the teacher or BOM, inviting comment. The teacher or chairperson may submit written comments in advance of the Chief Inspector's final determination. This final determination will include proposed action or actions to be taken. If a re-inspection is to take place, it will be carried out as soon as possible after the issue of the determination of the Chief Inspector.

For further information, read 'Procedure for Review of Inspections on Schools and Teachers under Section 13(9) of the Education Act (1998)', which is available on the Inspections and Inspectorate section of the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.

Keep up connections

Do you want to keep in contact with retired teacher colleagues after retirement?

The RSTA offers you the opportunity to keep in contact with retired teaching colleagues. The RSTA has 16 branches that organise their own social events, trips, tours and adventures through which you can keep in touch with old friends and meet new ones.

At a national level, the RSTA seeks to promote the welfare of retired secondary teachers. It is not a trade union. It does not have a negotiating licence. It is independent of the ASTI, although many RSTA members are emeritus members of the ASTI. The RSTA is affiliated to the Irish Senior Citizens' Parliament, the Retired Workers' Committee of the ICTU, the National Federation of Pensioners' Associations and Older and Bolder. RSTA annual subscription is just €24 per year, of which €16 goes back to the branch for their use.

RSTA contact details: www.rsta-ireland.com

Secretary: Seán Fallon, 2 Killakee Walk, Firhouse, Dublin 24.

Email: fallonsfamily@eircom.net

Tel: 01-451 3314

Mob: 086-849 6460

If you are retiring this year and would like to join the RSTA, please complete the membership application form on this page and return it to:

Mrs Muriel McNicholas,

Cordarragh, Kiltimagh,

Co. Mayo

Retired Secondary Teachers' Association

www.rsta-ireland.com

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Mobile: _____ Email: _____

RSTA Branch: _____ See * below for list of branches.

Annual subscription €24. Subscription payment options:

Deduction from pension Direct debit Online bank transfer

Cheque Cheques should be made payable to "RSTA"

Members are encouraged to pay by deduction from pension, where possible, to keep administration and banking costs to a minimum.

Mandate for deduction of annual subscription from pension

I hereby authorise the Retired Teachers' Payroll Division of the Department of Education and Skills to make a deduction directly from my pension of the annual subscription as notified to it by the Retired Secondary Teachers' Association on my behalf. I understand and agree that the Retired Secondary Teachers' Association has the right to alter the rate of subscription from time to time and to advise the Department of the changed rate.

Pension Payroll No: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please return the completed application to: Mrs Muriel McNicholas, RSTA Hon. National Treasurer, Cordarragh, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo.

*RSTA Branches: Cork, Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kerry, Kildare, Kilkenny, Limerick, Mayo, Midland, North-East, Sligo, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow.

Engineers Week 2012



Engineers Week runs from February 27 to March 4, 2012. During the week various events will be held nationwide for post-primary students and each student participant will be in with a chance to win a trip to NEMO Science Centre in Amsterdam. Log on to www.engineersweek.ie to find out about the free interactive events taking place in your local area.

Anti-bullying resource

ASTI members Tom Gunning and Siobhan O'Donoghue have compiled a DVD resource called 'Speak Out' to help students to recognise, talk about and deal with school bullying. The DVD includes first-hand accounts of different types of bullying, as well as information on resolution and coping strategies. The DVD is available to purchase online for €19.99 at www.veritas.ie.

Transition year Irish language resources

www.logainm.ie provides the official Irish language names of almost 100,000 towns, streets and post offices throughout the country. Visitors to www.logainm.ie can now download second-level education resources. The resources are targeted at transition year students but they may be used at other levels.

Entrepreneurship awards

The National Entrepreneurial Business Awards (EBAs) include a category for transition year or Leaving Certificate Applied students. Students should demonstrate good entrepreneurial abilities and achievements. Ideally, they must be able to demonstrate entrepreneurial spirit in either setting up a successful new small business or the successful development of an existing small business or social enterprise. For more information see www.eba.ie.

Show Racism the Red Card

The deadline for the Show Racism the Red Card Creative Competition is February 24. Seventy-five schools have now registered for the competition, which will conclude with an awards presentation at the Aviva Stadium in April. Participant groups will receive the Show Racism the Red Card DVD education pack free upon registration. You can register at www.theredcard.ie/competition.php.

Fun Raise

Get your students involved in the Kellogg's Fun Raise 4 Kids to help raise money for Our Lady's Children's Hospital and be in with the chance to win great prizes. Students are challenged to create and run fundraising events during Fun Raise Week, April 23-27. See www.funraise4kids.ie for more information.

RSTA Christmas party



Maeve Cahalan and Margaret Magee pictured at the RSTA Christmas party, which was held in ASTI Head Office in December.

CLASSIFIEDS

School trips to Kerry

Dingle Gate Hostel, Annascaul, Co. Kerry, sleeps up to 48 people and offers package deals to schools. These include a guided walk showing the geography and history of the area, which has standing stones and ring forts. The trip can also take in a surfing lesson by a qualified instructor on Inch beach. Contact: info@dinglegatehostel.com or phone 066 9157150.



Link invites applications for its 2012 Global Teachers Programme

- Work in an African school
- Share skills
- Have the experience of a lifetime

Start a School Partnership with Africa today!

- Themed curricular learning materials provided
- School visits and ongoing support from dedicated staff

For more information, please visit www.lcd.ie; email info@lcd.ie; or phone 01 2841414.

Charity number: 17232

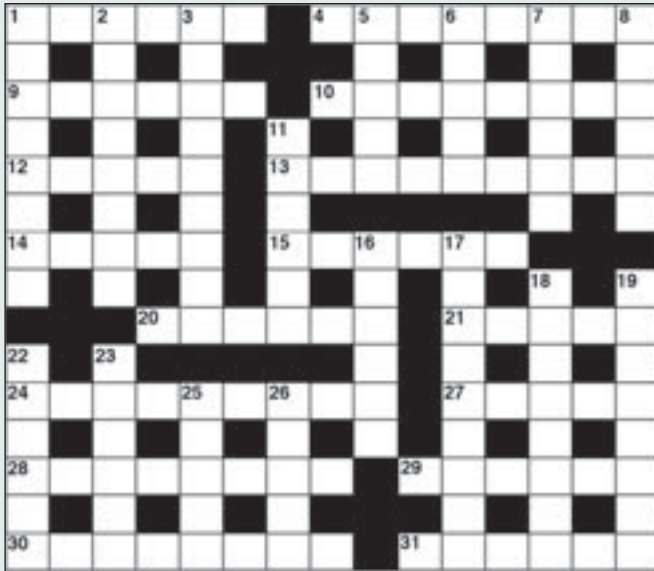


Sponsored by ASTI Credit Union

ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 1201

The winner will receive €200

If you wish to keep your copy of *ASTIR* intact you may send a photocopy of the crossword. One entry only per member.



Name

School

Address

ASTI Branch

Entries to: Astir Crossword No. 1105, Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, February 10, 2012

CLUES ACROSS:

- 1 In a possible danger if you cane me (6)
- 4 For some, a time to retire! (8)
- 9 Lissom Breda is innately melancholy (6)
- 10 "In the spring, a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love," he wrote (8)
- 12 She discovered radium (5)
- 13 A dread omen appearing to radiate from a point in the constellation (9)
- 14 American standard code for information interchange (1.1.1.1.1)
- 15 Greek goddess of wisdom (6)
- 20 First name of Kiefer, the German sculptor and painter (6)
- 21 First prime minister of the Republic of India (5)
- 24 I entrance with an aromatic peach (9)
- 27 Unpleasantly pungent or sharp (5)
- 28 Gentle if rapid and transient (8)
- 29 Site of a Nazi concentration camp during World War II (6)
- 30 & 2 down: The DES has published a National Strategy to improve them by 2020 (8,8)
- 31 Do you display your emotions openly on this part of your jacket? (6)

CLUES DOWN:

- 1 Heidi Klum married one! (8)
- 2 See 30 across
- 3 Relating to a French philosopher and mathematician (9)
- 5 Some men dare to make improvements or corrections (5)
- 6 In your youth this piece of music " ... Alla Turca" may have been your party piece! (5)
- 7 Unseat an 18th century English novelist (5)
- 8 But, soft! What light through window breaks? (Shakespeare) (6)
- 11 A place of splendour (6)
- 16 Shakespeare play seen in a small village (6)
- 17 Peerless (9)
- 18 A hypocritically self-righteous person (8)
- 19 The Budget brings it within the teaching quota from September 2012 (8)
- 22 Created by the United Nations in March 1978 to confirm Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon (1.1.1.1.1.1)
- 23 Emphasis on the way one speaks (6)
- 25 You have it with you now! (5)
- 26 Could be descriptive of certain forms of Greek architecture (5)

Solution to ASTIR Crossword No. 1105

Across	Down
1. Thirty	2. Hawkeye
5. Crouch	3. Ritz
10. Downton	4. Yonder
11. Lionise	5. Callas
12. Omen	6. Oboe
13. FETAC	7. Chignon
15. Snag	8. Odious
17. RBS	9. Seeger
19. Seethe	14. Tbilisi
21. Earner	16. Three
23. Realism	18. Camus
25. Enamel	20. Eel
28. Aurora	21. ESA
29. WSE	23. Exhume
30. Hebe	24. Arbutus
31. Rails	26. Opening
32. DEIS	27. Assent
35. Matisse	28. Waders
36. Pension	29. Elapse
37. Psalms	33. HSCL
38. Expugn	34. Snap

Congratulations to the winner of Crossword No. 1105: Tim Lynch, Mercy Mounthawk, Binnin, Oak Park Road, Tralee, Co. Kerry. Kerry Branch member.

CONVENTION 2012

WELCOME TO CORK CITY



An invitation from the President to attend ASTI Annual Convention 2012

Dear ASTI member,

I look forward to welcoming all delegates to ASTI Annual Convention 2012, which takes place from April 10 to 12 at the Silver Springs Moran Hotel, Cork City.

Play an important role in deciding ASTI policy and make your voice heard on issues of importance to you, your school, to education and trade unionism. Convention gives you the chance to meet colleagues from all over the country, learn more about your union and make a significant contribution to developments in education.

Of course there is always time for socialising too and Convention is a great place to meet friends that could last a lifetime. Convention Dinner is always a very enjoyable event – see overleaf for details.

I encourage all members to consider attending Convention 2012. I particularly welcome new delegates, and hope that this year we will see many members attending for the first time. If you are interested in attending, go to your January branch meeting and put yourself forward as a delegate.

I look forward to meeting you at Convention,

Brendan Broderick, ASTI President

Some comments from delegates on previous conventions:

"It's my first time at Convention and I'm really enjoying it. I find many of the motions very interesting."

Jo Ann O'Connor,
St Mary's Secondary School,
Mallow

"It's brilliant, it's not what I expected; it's surprisingly relaxed, yet there is a lot of important work going on."

John Galligan,
The Royal School, Cavan.

"I've been coming to Convention for a few years. Every year I come, I learn about my profession and my union."

Patrick Andrews,
Colaiste Chríost Rí, Cork City

CONVENTION 2012

WELCOME TO CORK CITY



The ASTI Annual Convention will take place from Tuesday to Thursday, April 10-12, 2012.

VENUE:

Convention will be held in the Silver Springs Moran Hotel, Cork.

ACCOMMODATION:

Accommodation will be provided at the Silver Springs Moran Hotel, Cork. It will be allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis. Delegates are asked to book in pairs or at least to indicate the person with whom they have agreed to share. Please note that there are a limited number of single rooms available.

The hotel family rate is as follows:

Family rooms are charged at a double room rate of €99 per night with a supplement of €10 B&B per child under 12 years of age per night. Children over 12 years will be charged full adult price. Please note that there is a hotel maximum of three children per room.

Further information relating to hotels, guesthouses and bed and breakfast in the area can be found on our website – www.asti.ie.

CRECHE:

Facilities will be available each day during Convention hours in the crèche, located off site. **Places must be reserved in advance** but not later than Friday March 23, 2012. Further information relating to crèche facilities can be found on our website – www.asti.ie.

ADMINISTRATION FEE:

There is a registration fee payable by your branch of €30 per person for all delegates, CEC members and Standing Committee members. The registration fee will be offset against branches' April quarterly cheque.

CONVENTION DINNER

The Convention Dinner will take place on Tuesday April 10 in the Conference Centre.

The cost of a Convention Dinner ticket is normally €45 but if your branch reserves a table of ten before Friday March 23, it will cost only €350, a saving of €100. If your branch wishes to join with another branch for a table, the branch should book under one branch's name by emailing info@asti.ie, reference 'Annual Convention'.

Payment for reserved tables must reach the ASTI Accounts Department on or before March 30, 2012.

Tickets will also be on sale from 1.30pm-2.30pm in the Conference foyer, Silver Springs Moran Hotel, Cork, on Tuesday April 10, at a cost of €45. Book early to avoid disappointment.

Lunches are available on a cash basis in the Silver Springs Moran Hotel, Cork, each day.

BOOKING FORM FOR CONVENTION 2012

Arrival date: Departure date: Required number of nights:

Please tick whichever room you require

Double/twin €99 Single €85 Family room
(as outlined above)

Please reserve one room for:

Name	<input type="text"/>	Name	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>	Address	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
Tel. no.	<input type="text"/>	Tel. no.	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>	Email	<input type="text"/>

Credit card details:

Card holder's name:

Credit card no.: - - Expiry date: / /

PLEASE CONTACT THE SILVER SPRINGS MORAN HOTEL PRIOR TO SENDING BOOKING FORMS TO ENSURE AVAILABILITY, AS BOOKING FORMS SENT PRIOR TO RESERVATION WILL NOT BE GUARANTEED.

PLEASE SEND COMPLETED BOOKING FORM TO: ASTI ANNUAL CONVENTION RESERVATIONS, SILVER SPRINGS MORAN HOTEL, CORK. CREDIT CARD NUMBER IS ESSENTIAL TO GUARANTEE BOOKING.

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