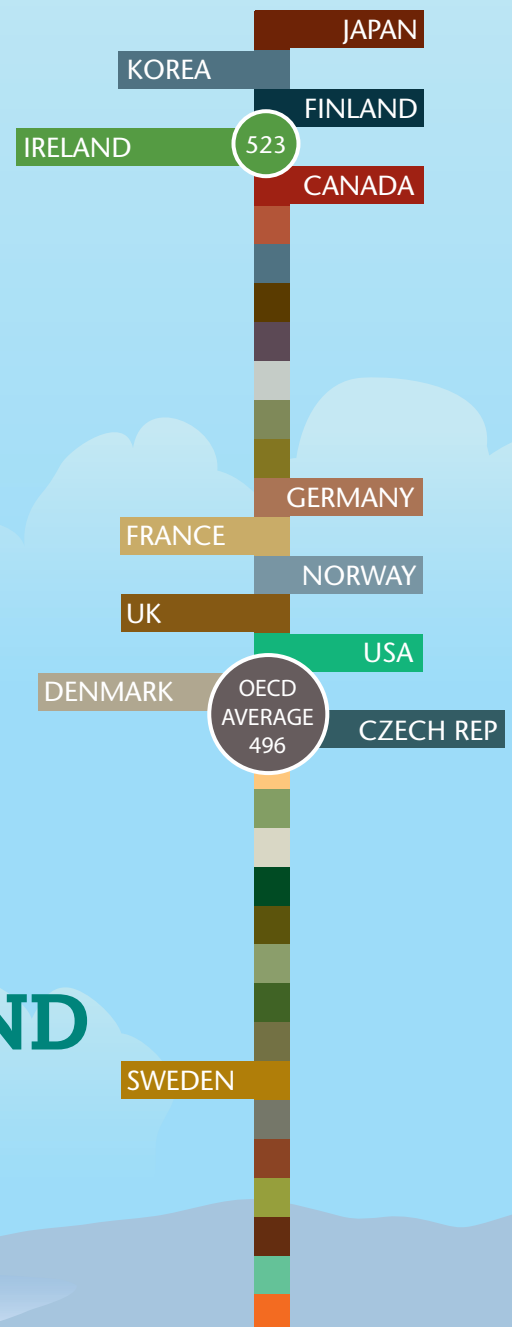


# ASTIR

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland



## OECD REPORT: IRELAND IS TOP PERFORMER DESPITE CUTBACKS

# ASTI Credit Union Ltd

## Home Improvement Loans at 7.99% \* (apr variable)

Example: 59 fortnightly payments on €10,000 - €94.03 per fortnight

Total cost of credit €2,016.58



Loans for lots of things, including the kitchen sink.

## Home Renovation Incentive

If you are considering a home improvement remember the **Home Renovation Incentive** announced in the recent budget applies to any jobs carried out from Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

The Scheme which will run until the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 provides for a tax credit for homeowners on repair, renovation or improvement work to a principal private residence.

Qualifying work must cost a minimum of €5,000 excluding VAT. The credit will be calculated at 13.5% on spending between €5,000 and €30,000. The maximum level of tax relief is €4,050.

Works that qualify include extensions, garages, attic conversions, supply and fitting of kitchens, bathrooms and built in wardrobes, window fitting, plumbing, tiling, rewiring and plastering. Building Contractors who are VAT registered in Ireland and tax compliant, are eligible to carry out work under the incentive. Owner occupiers of a principle private residence who are tax compliant are eligible. Specifically, the homeowner's LPT and Household Charge must be up to date.

\*Loans are subject to approval. Terms and Conditions apply. ASTI Credit Union is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

[www.asticu.ie](http://www.asticu.ie)



# Contents

Volume 32: Number 1: January 2014  
ISSN 0790-6560

## ASTIR

### Editorial Board

Sally Maguire President  
Pat King General Secretary  
Philip Irwin Vice President  
Gerry Breslin Immediate Past President  
Ray St John Honorary Treasurer  
Sean O'Neill Standing Committee  
Nominee  
Mary Ohle Standing Committee  
Nominee

Media and Communications Officer:  
Gemma Tuffy

Published on behalf of ASTI by Think Media.  
Editorial: Ann-Marie Hardiman, Paul O'Grady.  
Design: Tony Byrne, Tom Cullen and Ruth O'Sullivan.  
Advertising: Paul O'Grady.

### ASTI

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

[www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie)

ASTIR is published five times annually by the Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland. The opinions expressed in ASTIR are those of individual authors and are not necessarily endorsed by the ASTI. While every reasonable effort has been taken to ensure information published is accurate, the ASTI cannot accept responsibility for articles or advertisements. The ASTI reserves the right to edit all material submitted for publication.



The ASTIR Editorial Board is interested in receiving feedback on ASTIR. Members can email [astirfeedback@asti.ie](mailto:astirfeedback@asti.ie) or text 087-9349956.

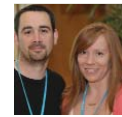
8



18



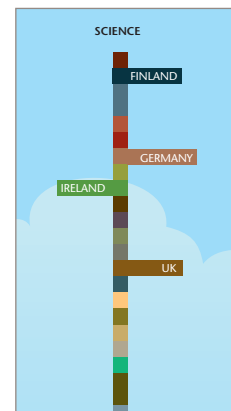
21



20



17



13

10

<p>4 From the President's desk <i>Campaign on junior cycle continues</i></p> <p>4 General Secretary's update <i>HRA shows importance of teacher unity</i></p> <p>5 News feature <i>Haddington Road – the next steps</i></p> <p>6 ASTI news</p> <p>10 News feature <i>PISA – behind the results</i></p> <p>12 ASTI in the media <i>Keeping teachers in the spotlight</i></p> <p>14 News feature <i>Junior cycle campaign steps up</i></p> <p>15 Representing members <i>More CID success for ASTI members</i></p>	<p>16 Feature <i>Tackling homophobic bullying</i> 16</p> <p>18 School initiatives <i>Innovating for students</i></p> <p>20 Convention 2014 <i>Come to Convention 2014</i></p> <p>21 Opinion <i>Teacher autonomy needed for learner autonomy</i></p> <p>22 Feature <i>Breaking point?</i></p> <p>25 Frequently asked questions</p> <p>26 RSTA news</p> <p>27 Obituary</p> <p>28 Crossword</p> <p>29 Noticeboard</p>
--	--

Letters, comments and articles are welcome

All submissions will be considered by the ASTIR Editorial Board. Email [astir@asti.ie](mailto:astir@asti.ie).

## Campaign on junior cycle continues

We would like to wish all ASTI members a happy and fulfilling 2014. The ASTI has now signed up to the Haddington Road Agreement (HRA). Members reluctantly voted to accept the latest proposals, and in the coming weeks and months we will work to ensure that the Government delivers on its commitments. Please contact us if you have any concerns about the way the HRA is being implemented in your school.

### Junior cycle reform

The big priority in 2014 is the Framework for Junior Cycle. The ASTI and TUI are challenging the validity and operability of key aspects of the Framework's proposals. In particular, the ASTI is seeking to remove, change or defer those aspects that are either educationally unsound or will not be effective without the right resources.

The Framework for Junior Cycle is one of the most radical culture changes in our education system in many years, and unless it is properly resourced, it has the potential to exacerbate inequalities between schools.

ASTI research found that many teachers are excited about aspects of the Framework. However, this enthusiasm is heavily negated by concerns about standards, assessment, capacity, time, training and resources. We all want the current junior cycle reformed. But when teachers are unconvinced as to the merits of change, when they are working in environments that are severely undermined by cuts, and where there is no space to have their opinion as educationalists heard and responded to, motivation and energy to deliver successful reform is deeply impaired.

In March 2013 we published our nationwide consultation with teachers on the Framework. In April we published research on the capacity (or lack thereof) of second-level schools to cope with its implementation. In August and September we lobbied politicians. In November we presented to the Oireachtas Committee on Education, Jobs and Social Protection. During the recent ASTI/Department talks on the HRA we secured a statement from the Minister that he recognised our concerns. The Department also agreed to establish a working group, which includes the ASTI. This month – January 2014 – we distributed petitions to ASTI schools calling on the Minister to change key aspects in the interest of students. If you haven't signed the petition yet, please ask your school steward for a copy.

As in-service for the Framework is rolled out, and as preparations for the introduction of the new English syllabus continue, it is clear that serious action is needed. In the coming weeks ASTI Standing Committee and CEC will consider the best strategy to pursue to ensure that the Framework does not lead to irreversible damage to second-level education in Ireland.



**Sally Maguire**  
ASTI President

## HRA shows importance of teacher unity

In December, ASTI members voted by 57% to accept the latest Haddington Road Agreement (HRA) proposals. This acceptance of the HRA cannot be taken as approval of the Agreement. ASTI members previously rejected the HRA on two separate occasions. While the ASTI's industrial action campaign led to additional concessions, the reality is that in the run up to and during the course of the third ballot, ASTI members had a gun put to their heads in the form of the Financial Emergency in the Public Interest (FEMPI) legislation, Government warnings about possible redundancies in schools, and the announcement that ASTI members would not be paid for supervision and substitution after January 16, 2014.

### Anti-worker legislation

The ASTI expressed its dismay at the enactment of FEMPI legislation earlier this year. The Act represents an attack on public sector workers by giving the Government excessive powers over terms and conditions. It is contrary to the spirit of social partnership whereby Government, unions, employers and others commit to dialogue and collective bargaining. The ASTI is currently participating in the ICTU's campaign to repeal this legislation.

In rejecting the HRA on two occasions and embarking on industrial action, ASTI members took a stand against education cutbacks and the deteriorating terms and conditions of teachers. However, given the context of last December's ballot – all other public sector unions had accepted the Agreement and the Government continued to use the threat of FEMPI to influence the vote – members had a very difficult decision to make.

Following the ballot, the ASTI will now turn its attention to implementation of the Agreement. These include: full repayment of any salary lost due to FEMPI cuts and non-application of improved salaries for new entrants; awarding of CIDs to ASTI members with more than three years' continuous service; and, filling 425 new Assistant Principal posts this school year. We have made it clear to the Government that any failure to deliver on commitments under the HRA will not be tolerated. Breaches of the Croke Park Agreement led to a collapse of morale among second-level teachers. 2013 was a challenging year for the ASTI and its members. Members courageously and unselfishly stood together and mounted a not-insignificant industrial action campaign against the Government. In doing so, many of the issues at the heart of the dispute – such as the huge impact of the education cuts on education services in our schools – were highlighted to the public. Some important concessions were also achieved (see page 5). It is most important that we remain a united union. This is our key strength as we continue our campaign for a properly resourced education system and respected teaching profession.



**Pat King**  
ASTI General Secretary

# Haddington Road – the next steps

ASTI focus now moves to ensuring that all Haddington Road commitments are met.

Following ASTI members' difficult decision to accept the Haddington Road Agreement (HRA) in December, the main focus of the ASTI will now be to ensure that the Government fulfills its promises under that agreement in a timely manner, including commitments given specifically to the ASTI in the most recent negotiations.

## Full restoration of any pay lost due to late implementation of the HRA

During the ASTI's most recent negotiation on the HRA, the union secured a commitment that there would be no extra loss of pay for ASTI members as a result of the ASTI's industrial dispute.

This means that all measures will be backdated to July 1, 2013, including:

- the restoration of incremental progression;
- the reduction of pay cut by up to €1,769; and,
- improved salary scales for new teachers.

The ASTI will seek that members' salaries and incremental points are adjusted at the earliest opportunity, and that any refunds due because of backdating are paid to members promptly. For more information, see [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

## No further additional hours

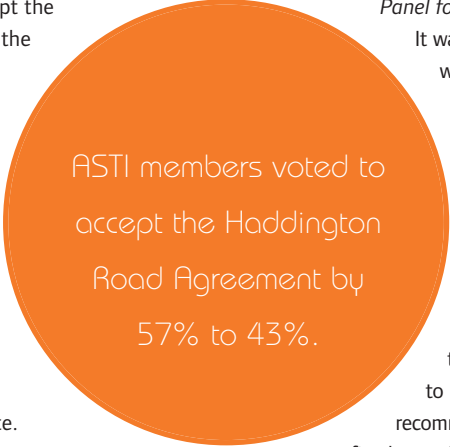
During the ASTI negotiations on Haddington Road, the union sought and received confirmation from the Department of Education and Skills that the only extra hours of work that can be required of ASTI members arising from the HRA are:

- the 33 'Croke Park' hours; and,
- the 43 hours of supervision and substitution.

While certain commitments regarding parent-teacher meetings and staff meetings continue, the ASTI will be vigilant in ensuring that the HRA is not used to place any extra working time requirement on ASTI members over and above those stated in the agreement.

## Permanency prospects improved

The ASTI sought to ensure that the high level of temporary and part-time contracts in second-level teaching was addressed in the talks. As a result two important commitments were achieved:



ASTI members voted to accept the Haddington Road Agreement by 57% to 43%.

## Panel for fixed-term teachers

It was agreed that a panel to allow fixed-term teachers who meet certain criteria to achieve permanency would be established. The establishment of such a permanency panel has been an aim of the ASTI for some time and the union will seek to ensure that it achieves the best terms for teachers.

## Expert group

An expert group is to be established to address the high level of temporary/part-time contracts in the second-level teaching sector. The expert group, to be established this month, will make recommendations on ways to address the high level of fixed-term/part-time contracts in the short term, as well as in the medium and long term.

## CIDs after three years

The ASTI raised the issue of CIDs during the negotiations. As a result, the length of continuous service necessary for a teacher to be granted a CID has been reduced from four years to three years. This is a very significant achievement for the 30% of teachers currently employed on non-permanent contracts. The ASTI is now seeking to ensure that ASTI members who met the three years' continuous service criterion after July 1, 2013, and who are eligible for a CID, are awarded their CID as a matter of urgency.

## Improvements in the use of the 33 hours

During the latest ASTI negotiations on Haddington Road, it was agreed that a review of the usage of the Croke Park hours would take place in 2014, with a view to improving the utilisation of these hours from September 2014. The ASTI will participate in this review panel and ensure that teachers' experienced views are represented.

## Teachers to be heard on junior cycle

Having succeeded during the negotiations on the HRA in achieving an engagement process to address teachers' concerns on junior cycle reform, the ASTI will now seek to ensure that this engagement is expedited and that teachers' concerns are addressed. See page 14 for more.

For full information on the implementation of the HRA, see [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie). Read answers to some frequently asked questions on the Agreement on page 25.

## ASTI award winner



Adana Keane (centre) received the ASTI award for top results in the UCD PDE 2013 from ASTI President Sally Maguire (left) in November (also pictured is Bernie Judge of the TUI). We asked Adana if her experience of teaching so far has matched her expectations: "My initial idea of what it was to be a teacher was eroded over the course of the PDE year. The actual classroom experience, particularly the diversity of students, was not what I had expected and, initially, was very overwhelming. Gradually I moved from wondering what I would do in class to seriously considering what students would learn, and how I could best achieve that. I panicked less when noise levels rose and learned to embrace the interaction necessary with students. Over the year, I discovered that teaching is much more individualised and student centred than I had anticipated, that rote learning has given way to active methodologies, and that education is as much about the learning experience and the acquisition of social skills as it is about grades and the State exams."

## High satisfaction with Irish education system

A new report has found that Ireland has the highest level of public satisfaction with its education system across all of the OECD's 34 countries. The OECD 'Government at a Glance 2013' report showed that, at 82%, public satisfaction with education in Ireland is very high, particularly in comparison with the OECD average of 66%. In addition, more people expressed satisfaction with the Irish education system than with the healthcare system, the judiciary, national government, or the police. Another OECD report, released last month, shows that educational attainment among Irish second-level students is also high – read a detailed report on page 10.

## ESRI report on school funding mirrors ASTI research

A report from the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), published in October, shows that the vast majority of schools seek additional funding from parents to meet running and governance costs. The ESRI research mirrors the results of a survey commissioned by the ASTI early last year, which found that 14% of schools had increased parents' voluntary contributions in response to cuts in capitation funding. A further 23% indicated that they intended to do so in the following year.

The ESRI report called for greater transparency in the funding of school governance and running costs, and recommended that the future funding of second-level schools needs to take into account that voluntary secondary schools are more likely to rely on parental contributions, which puts them at a disadvantage in the context of the current economic situation. Commenting on this, ASTI General Secretary Pat King said: "This potential inequality needs to be addressed to avoid placing certain schools at a disadvantage and to safeguard equality in education".

## Sick leave update

Changes to certified sick leave arrangements for teachers will come into effect from September 1, 2014, it has been confirmed. From September 1, 2014, 'ordinary' sick leave will be limited to three months on full pay and three months on half pay over a rolling four-year period. Teachers with 'critical' illnesses will be limited to six months on full pay and six months on half pay over a rolling four-year period. The period of paid sick leave may be followed by TRP (Temporary Rehabilitation Pay) for up to 12 months. TRP is roughly equal to the pension a teacher might have been eligible for if they had retired. While the new arrangements will be implemented from September 1, 2014, teachers should be mindful that because a four-year rolling period applies, sick leave taken prior to September 1 may impact on their remaining sick leave allowance. The changes to public sector sick leave were first announced in July 2012, following a dispute on the issue between public sector unions and the State as employer, which resulted in a binding Labour Court decision.

## This issue in numbers...

4

**Ireland's position out of 34 OECD member countries for reading literacy according to PISA 2012. (P.10)**

9

**Ireland's rank in science; Irish scores improved considerably in PISA 2012. (P.10)**

## Students' tribute to teacher reaches top 10



Presentation Secondary School students with: RTÉ Radio 1 presenter John Murray; Alice's sisters, Vera, Mary and Stella; the producers of the song, Luan Parle and Gavin Ralston; TY Co-ordinator Noel Buckley; and, school principal Michael O Loughlin.

A song written by students in tribute to their late teacher climbed the charts in December and was even in the running for Christmas number 1! The students' song, 'My Hero', was written in tribute to their teacher, Alice Strain, who taught in Presentation Secondary School, Clonmel. The song reached number 1 in the iTunes chart and went straight in at number 7 in the Irish charts last month. Noel Buckley, a friend and colleague of Alice's and the students' TY co-ordinator, was instrumental in getting the word out about the song and pushing it into the charts. He says the song resonated because it is about an ordinary teacher who was extraordinarily human and kind to her students: "This song reminds people that there are still heroes out there in schools and homes and in ordinary life".

The song is still available to buy on iTunes and all proceeds go to St Vincent de Paul. Congratulations to all involved in Presentation Clonmel!

## Winning young poet



Aoife Fitzgerald, a first-year student in St Michael's Holy Faith Secondary School, Finglas, Dublin 11, won the junior section of the national Poetry Aloud competition last month. This represents a remarkable successive win for St Michael's, as last year's overall winner, Shauna Hession, also came from this Finglas school. Aoife is pictured with her English teacher, ASTI member Noel Bannon.

## Important update to ASTI Diary information on salary scales

As the ASTI has accepted the Haddington Road Agreement, revised salary scales now apply to post-2011 and post-February 2012 entrants to teaching.

The new scales are available at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie) and replace the scales provided in the ASTI Diary 2014.

## Significant ASTI cases ahead

The ASTI has a number of important cases ongoing, which could have significant implications for members. Among them are:

- a challenge to the maternity/adoptive leave changes introduced in Budget 2013; and,
  - an Equality Tribunal case challenging the cut to new entrants' pay.
- Keep up with developments at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie) and in future editions of *ASTIR*.

**13**

**Ireland's ranking in maths** in PISA 2012, out of 34 countries. (P.10)

**30**

**Number of identifiable cuts** schools have had to cope with since 2009. (P.22)

## No-cost salary protection until March

Join the ASTI Salary Protection Scheme today and you won't have to pay any contributions until March 2014.

The ASTI Salary Protection Scheme provides you with the security of an income of up to 75% of your annual salary should you fall ill and are unable to work as a result. For a limited time only, ASTI members can join the ASTI Salary Protection Scheme for the first time and not pay any contributions until March 1, 2014.

Join before January 31, 2014, to avail of this offer. For more information, see [www.cornmarket.ie](http://www.cornmarket.ie).

## FÉILTE 2014 – open call for teachers

Following on from the success of FÉILTE 2013, the Teaching Council has begun planning for FÉILTE 2014, which will take place on Saturday, October 4, 2014. FÉILTE, the Festival of Education in Learning and Teaching Excellence, promotes and celebrates innovation in teaching by showcasing the work of teachers who are leading innovative learning projects. The Council's hope is that FÉILTE 2014 will be able to accommodate a greater number of teachers and has issued an open call for teachers who would like to showcase innovative practice. More information is available at [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie).

To watch the highlights of FÉILTE 2013, please visit [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie). Read about one of the projects involved in the 2013 showcase on page 19.

## Teach your students about trade unions' struggle for decent work



*Pictured at the launch of the 1913 Schools Programme are Lord Mayor of Dublin Oisín Quinn and ICTU General Secretary David Begg.*

A new schools programme to commemorate the 1913 Lockout and the ongoing struggle for decent work was launched last month. The resource is part of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' YouthConnect programme, which is supported by the ASTI.

The programme offers all schools an introductory lesson delivered by a trained champion, who will introduce the background to the 1913 Lockout, the concept of decent work and the links between them. During this visit, the school will also receive free copies of the teaching module to explore these topics more deeply throughout the year. The module includes 12 high-quality photographs with 14 lesson plans, five handouts, and 14 worksheets.

Students from CBS James's Street, Dublin; Larkin Community College, Dublin; Balla Secondary School, Mayo; Kinsale Community School, Cork; Mercy College Coolock, Dublin; and Loreto College Dalkey, Dublin, attended the launch last month.

To find out more or to book a lesson, visit [www.lockout1913.ie/secondary-level](http://www.lockout1913.ie/secondary-level).

**School Video COMPETITION**

Decent Work

**LOCKOUT 1913-2013 CENTENARY**

**WIN A TRIP TO NEW YORK**

Create a 3 minute video about the 1913 Lockout and the concept of Decent Work!  
Open to groups of 4 - 6 students.  
The best overall video wins a team trip to New York with their teacher.  
Fantastic runner-up prizes for Best Actor, Most Original Video, and much more!

Go to [www.lockout1913.ie](http://www.lockout1913.ie) for all the info!  
Email [1913schoolcomp@gmail.com](mailto:1913schoolcomp@gmail.com) to register!

## Non-permanent? Make sure you are paid for your leave

Non-casual teachers are entitled to the same terms and conditions as permanent teachers, including payment for sick leave and other authorised leave.

The ASTI has succeeded in claiming retrospective payment for members who were not paid for leave to which they were entitled. If you believe you are owed money due to non-payment for leave, please contact ASTI Head Office. You must make a claim for payment within six months of the date of non-payment.

Find out more about non-permanent teachers' rights on the non-permanent teachers' section of the ASTI website. More information about teachers' leave is also available at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).



## ASTI contributes €12,000 to Philippines disaster funds

The ASTI has contributed €10,000 directly to UNICEF to assist in the relief effort following the typhoon in the Philippines late last year. Four million children were affected by Typhoon Haiyan, which has left towns flattened and tens of thousands of people homeless. UNICEF has been working to provide clean water, medical supplies and vaccinations to those affected. UNICEF is also working to ensure that children are reunited with their families and that those who are now orphaned are cared for. The ASTI also contributed €2,000 to an Education International urgent action appeal for the Philippines education communities. Education International will use donations to provide sustainable aid to recover the education system in the affected areas. Read more about the emergency aid appeals at [www.unicef.ie](http://www.unicef.ie) or [www.ei-ie.org](http://www.ei-ie.org).

## New guidelines on student placement

The Teaching Council has published new guidelines for school placement. The guidelines aim to ensure greater consistency in the school placement experience for all student teachers and to facilitate enhanced collaboration between universities and schools. Download the guidelines at [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie).

## St Aidan's awarded Yellow Flag



St Aidan's Community School, Brookfield, Tallaght, was recently awarded a Yellow Flag for its efforts to promote equality and inclusion. Under the Yellow Flag Programme, the teachers and students met eight progressive targets to ensure that their school created an environment where diversity and equality were fostered and embedded within whole school practice. Pictured are students from the school with school principal Sr Ann O'Donoghue, link teacher Elizabeth Tierney and guest presenter, Voice of Ireland singer Kelly McDonagh. For further information on the Yellow Flag Programme and how your school can get involved, log on to [www.yellowflag.ie](http://www.yellowflag.ie).

# SMART Board® E70

interactive flat panel designed for classrooms

- Brilliant HD contrast reducing eye strain
- Etched glass providing low friction and a natural touch experience
- Four students can work together simultaneously
- 70" surface with little to no glare
- Long lasting commercial grade LED display
- Equipped with SMART Notebook™, powerful education software for content creation and delivery



Find out more here!  
[info@steljes.ie](mailto:info@steljes.ie)



# PISA – behind the results

The most recent PISA report shows that Ireland has enviable levels of educational achievement and equality. We look behind the headline rankings.

Ireland is one of the world's top performers in reading literacy, coming fourth out of 34 OECD countries and seventh out of 65 participating countries. That's according to the most recent Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study, which also shows that students in Ireland are performing significantly above average in maths and science. The PISA 2012 report compares the performance in reading, maths and science of 15-year-old students in 65 countries across the globe. Over 5,000 15-year-old students in 182 schools in Ireland took part in this round of PISA, which tested students' ability to apply their knowledge of maths, reading and science to everyday contexts.

Ireland has moved up the rankings in all subjects. Students' scores in reading and maths are up significantly from alleged steep declines in 2009, but remain consistent with previous PISA cycles. Their science scores, meanwhile, show a marked improvement on previous cycles. This is attributed to the 2003 junior cycle science syllabus, which provides considerable scope for practice work and experimentation.

## Reading – 4th out of 34

Ireland comes fourth out of 34 OECD countries for reading literacy – only Finland, Korea and Japan performed better in the PISA assessment. The score of Irish 15-year-olds is significantly above the OECD average and represents a significant improvement on 2009 results. More good news is that performance is high at all levels, and the proportion of low achievers in reading is only half the OECD average, and declining, while the proportion achieving at a high level is above average.



## Science – 9th out of 34

Science was Ireland's most improved subject in PISA 2012. Ireland not only improved in comparison to other countries, but students' scores improved significantly too. Ireland's average score of 522 points is 21 points above the OECD average, and up significantly from 2006, the last occasion on which science was a major domain.

Ireland now ranks ninth out of 34 OECD countries and fifteenth out of 65 participating countries in science. In addition, the proportion of high performing students in science has increased significantly since 2006 and the proportion of low performing students has decreased considerably.

## Maths – 13th out of 34

For the first time in PISA, Irish students performed significantly above the OECD average in maths; Ireland is now ranked thirteenth out of 34 OECD countries and twentieth out of 65 participating countries. Despite the improvement, maths remains Ireland's weakest subject area. Project Maths was initiated in 2008 to address a number of concerns about maths, but it should be noted that only 15% of Irish 15-year-olds had studied the new syllabus when PISA 2012 was administered.

In PISA 2015, all participating students will have studied Project Maths since the beginning of their second-level education.

## Excellence and equality

Equity in the education system is an important measure of its success. According to the PISA report, Ireland is among a small group of

countries, including Canada, Denmark, Estonia and Finland, which combine “excellence with equity”, where students’ above average levels of achievement are reached with relatively small differences across socio-economic groups.

The difference in achievement that can be attributed to different school types has decreased slightly in Ireland since 2009 and, relative to other OECD countries, the differences between Irish schools in average student performance are small. Of course, no system can fully compensate for social inequalities, and the economic and social status of a school does have an impact on student achievement, but PISA shows that this impact is more diluted in Irish schools than on average.

The evidence is that Irish schools are doing very well in providing a quality education to all students. For example, PISA found no significant difference between immigrant and non-immigrant students in any of the domains, except in reading, where students who spoke a language other than Irish or English at home performed less well. In contrast, the OECD norm is that immigrant students perform less well than native students. Despite significant increases in students with special educational needs, and those whose first language is not English, over the last 10 years, Ireland has improved or maintained its average performance across all subjects.

#### The gender divide

PISA found that boys outperform girls in maths, while the opposite is true of reading and the sides are about level in science. The PISA report also examined attitudes to maths, and found that girls are more positive about school and its outcomes while boys have greater instrumental motivation and perseverance, and are less anxious about maths than girls. Interestingly, while boys’ higher maths performance is consistent with previous PISA reports, the difference does not play out in Junior Cert results or in primary level maths assessments. Similarly, the research into Project Maths carried out by the NFER found that girls are less confident in their maths abilities, but that does not impede them from performing just as well as boys in maths.

#### How high is high?

In both reading and science, Ireland has a greater amount of students who achieve at a high proficiency level, and a smaller proportion of students who achieve at a low level, than the OECD average. Accordingly, Irish students who achieve at a ‘low’ level tend to achieve at a higher level than the ‘low achiever’ average, while those who achieve at a high level tend to achieve at a lower level compared to the average ‘high achiever’.

In its report on PISA 2012, the Educational Research Centre (ERC) cautions against a drift to the middle and urges that schools must have higher expectations and aspirations for all students across the range of performance.

#### Looking to the future

A new primary level science curriculum introduced in 1999, and a new junior cycle science syllabus in 2003, have been identified as the reason for Ireland’s improved science score.

The next round of PISA assessment in 2015 will be entirely computer based. While Irish students perform particularly well in digital reading, the same is not true of maths, where Irish students performed below the OECD average on computer assessments and significantly below their print scores.

The Department of Education and Skills is currently consulting on a digital strategy for schools.

Equitably distributed resourcing is crucial to excellence in education, PISA 2012 reports. The Government must take note because earlier this year another OECD report, ‘Education at a Glance 2013’, demonstrated that investment in education as a proportion of public expenditure has declined significantly in Ireland since 2005. Schools and teachers have been working hard to shield against education cuts, but they are at breaking point and this disinvestment must be reversed in order to maintain our education system of high quality.

### Did you know....

#### In Ireland

- Students who worked for more than eight hours a week did significantly less well in each of the PISA domains.
- The percentage of students who did not intend to complete the Leaving Cert has dropped from 20.5% in 2003 to 6.5% in 2012.
- The percentage of Irish students who reported a more positive disciplinary climate and higher levels of support from teachers was higher than average.

#### A world view

- Systems that give schools more autonomy over curricula and assessments tend to perform better.
- While it is only one part of the equation, high-performing school systems tend to pay teachers more.
- Criteria such as “a safe school environment” and “a school’s good reputation” are more important to parents than “high academic achievement of students in the school”.
- Finland continues to be among the best performing countries, but its rankings and achievement scores have fallen in this round of PISA. Poland, meanwhile, is one of the most improved countries, scoring above the OECD average in all subjects, and surpassing the Finns in maths.

### Why the rebound?

Ireland’s falling rankings in the last PISA cycle caused considerable concern about dropping standards in Irish education. The results of this most recent PISA assessment are largely in line with pre-2009 results and suggest that 2009 was likely an anomaly. The Educational Research Centre, which administers PISA in Ireland, indicates that differences in methodology and implementation; increased motivation and effort; and fewer competing assessments could account for putting Ireland back on track.

# Keeping teachers in the spotlight

The ASTI has made the most of the media spotlight to highlight issues of concern to all teachers.



*ASTI Deputy General Secretary Diarmaid de Paor speaking to TV3.*



*ASTI General Secretary is interviewed for RTÉ News.*

## Junior cycle concerns

“This is a very major change they are seeking for the way teachers teach, and they seem to be doing it kind of backwards. They don’t seem to be involving the teachers in it, discussing with teachers how this change might work or might not work. It’s a very top-down approach and teaching is a very personalised profession ... this is a huge, dramatic change to the way teachers teach.”

**Diarmaid de Paor, Deputy General Secretary, The Last Word, Today FM, November 25**

“We are very concerned that schools are not prepared ... the in-service that is being provided for teachers, the training that is being provided for this entirely new approach to teaching, consists of one day. That is totally inadequate as a preparation ... what we want is a realism. We want the Department officials to listen, we want honest engagement, and we want them to listen to the practitioners. We want reform but we want it to work well. Children get one chance to go through the school system and it’s got to be right.”

**Pat King, General Secretary, Morning Ireland, RTÉ One, November 25**

“While the reform plans contain some positive initiatives, teachers have deep reservations about key aspects of the proposals, which they say will lead to a lowering of education standards and increased inequity between schools,’ said ASTI General Secretary Pat King ... The fresh negotiations earlier this month prompted a new ballot in exchange for concessions, including the decision to establish a working group on junior cycle reform. ‘We are most concerned that almost 50% of school principals surveyed have told us that their school has little to no capacity to implement junior cycle reform,’ said Mr King.”

***Irish Times, November 26***

“As part of the negotiations on Haddington Road – even though it’s completely separate to Haddington Road – we had got an agreement that the Department would meet us and seriously address the concerns of teachers about the junior cycle. Now, if those concerns are not addressed adequately, relations will deteriorate. But I hope that it won’t come to that and that this process will be the one that will get junior cycle on the rails in the right way, and that it will address serious concerns, particularly

in relation to assessment and in relation to capacity, that teachers, and indeed school managers and parents, all have.”

ASTI President, Sally Maguire, *The Last Word*, Today FM, December 19

## Education cuts and initiative overload

“Every two weeks there seems to be a new initiative announced by the Department and no consideration of the capacity of schools to do these. And a lot of them, while they may be very valuable in themselves, do require an awful lot of administrative work and again a lot of box ticking, and the message from teachers is: teachers want to teach ... Irish teachers – almost uniquely in Europe – devote huge amounts of time to activities outside of the curriculum and there has been no acknowledgement of that ... Teaching is a very demanding job... you can’t walk into a classroom unprepared ... After that there’s assessment, there’s looking after correcting the essays, there’s the exams, and there’s a lot of other work that goes on and there’s also the work of being with the children, and talking to them and talking to the students who are having problems – all those things take place.”

Diarmaid de Paor, Deputy General Secretary, *The Last Word*, Today FM, November 18

“[Teachers] feel they signed up in good faith, very reluctantly, to the Croke Park Agreement. They did everything that was asked of them in that Agreement, and then the Government broke that Agreement, and that anger is escalating. Teachers feel enough is enough, too much has been asked of them and everything that they held dear has been cut.”

Sally Maguire, ASTI President, *Newstalk Breakfast*, November 18

“Members have had to make a most difficult decision,” said the union’s General Secretary Pat King. They had cast their ballots [on the Haddington Road Agreement] in the context of years of education cutbacks and deteriorating terms and conditions for teachers, he said.

He also warned, however, that any failure by the Government to ‘meet its commitments’ under the Haddington Road Agreement, including any delay in implementing those commitments, would be viewed as ‘unacceptable’. They would be ‘met with strong action from the union’, Mr King said.”

*Irish Times*, December 19

“We now expect the Government to deliver everything that is in the [Haddington Road] Agreement and we now will be making sure and holding them to account because a major part of the problem was that the previous agreement was reneged upon by government and we will be making sure that doesn’t happen again.”

ASTI General Secretary Pat King, RTÉ Six One, December 19

## Educational achievement

“League tables tell us very little about schools because they ignore the multi-faceted work they do. League tables do not consider that each school and student is unique. They fail to see merit in the fact that schools set and meet goals based on the individual needs of their students. League tables dismiss the challenges faced and often overcome by students and teachers in every school in the country. The real debate in education is not about

league tables, it is about what we want as a society and how schools can work to help us achieve that.”

Letter to the Editor by ASTI General Secretary Pat King in reaction to the publication of league tables, *Irish Times*, November 27

“Students and teachers could feel ‘justifiably proud’ of the Irish results from PISA, said ASTI General Secretary Pat King. ‘Despite five years of unyielding education cutbacks, school communities are working tirelessly to ensure their students continue to receive a high quality education,’ he said.”

*Irish Times*, December 4

## Teachers’ status as professionals

“A spokesperson for the Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland said that the teachers’ union welcomed the move [to commence the Teaching Council’s role in the investigation of alleged professional misconduct] ... The ASTI spokesperson added: ‘The work of the Teaching Council is important in maintaining standards in the teaching profession and the high level of confidence of Irish parents in our schools.’”

*Irish Daily Mail*, January 3

“It’s a very good reassurance for parents that the quality of teaching is being regulated – and it always has been – but this is in a particular way with the Council, [which] makes it that bit different.”

ASTI President, Sally Maguire, TV3 News, January 3

# Junior cycle campaign steps up

A number of important developments have taken place as a result of the ASTI's junior cycle campaign.

A crucial outcome of ASTI talks with the Department of Education and Skills in November was the Minister's formal recognition of teachers' concerns regarding junior cycle reform.

## Teachers' concerns to be considered

As a result of those talks, a working group will consider the specific concerns of teachers and make recommendations on how they can be addressed. The ASTI will be represented on this working group. In advance of the establishment of the working group, ASTI representatives participated in a bilateral meeting on junior cycle reform with senior officials in the Department of Education and Skills. The ASTI also met with the Officers of the National Parents' Council Post Primary in relation to junior cycle reform, and late last year representatives of the ASTI addressed the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Social Protection on the issue of junior cycle reform.

Among the key points made by the ASTI representatives at each of these meetings were:

- A lack of information about how the new Framework will work on the ground is impacting on confidence in the Framework and schools cannot operate in this information vacuum.
- Comprehensive consultation with teachers is necessary for workable reform and to ensure that teachers have confidence in the reform.
- Schools are at breaking point and teachers are under huge stress. This context must be considered in any reform or implementation strategy.
- Teachers believe that the replacement of the State certificate by a school certificate could give rise to the status of the certificate varying from school to school.
- There must be an external moderation mechanism to ensure that grades awarded in a school-based assessment can be validly and reliably compared across schools.
- The ASTI is open to different modes of assessment but objects to the change in teachers' role from advocate to judge.
- There is a danger that subjects could be downgraded and that short courses could be superficial.
- Teachers must be supported through good teaching resources, including ongoing professional development; they must also be given time to engage with change.
- There is a need for whole-school in-service, as junior cycle proposals represent an entire cultural change in schools.
- The provision of just three days' in-service for English teachers to master new subject content and new assessment practices is insufficient. The ASTI is asking that its implementation be delayed for at least a year.



ASTI President Sally Maguire addresses the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Social Protection.

## Have you signed the ASTI petition?

The message is clear: if the new Junior Cycle Framework is to work, teachers' concerns must be addressed. That is why we're asking all ASTI members to sign a petition calling on the Minister for Education and Skills to:

- put students at the centre of junior cycle reform;
- ensure that the methods of assessment used are fair, impartial and transparent, and are capable of maintaining educational standards; and,
- acknowledge the role of teachers as advocates for their students.

The petition also states that teachers do not support the Junior Cycle Framework proposal for school-based assessment.

A petition has been sent to each school. If you haven't yet signed your school's petition – please do it today. We

need as many signatures as possible to show teachers' strength of feeling on junior cycle reform.

Make sure that your school's petition is returned to ASTI Head Office by January 31.

The more signatures we present to the Minister, the clearer the message that he must address the concerns of teachers if junior cycle reform is to be educationally sound.

Have you signed?  
The more signatures  
we present to the Minister,  
the clearer the message  
that he must address the  
concerns of teachers.

# More CID success for ASTI members

We look at two ASTI cases that resulted in CID successes for ASTI members.

## Case results in the doubling of CID hours

The Adjudicator found that it had been unjust not to include all of the hours taught in the previous year in a Munster teacher's contract of indefinite duration (CID) when it was originally awarded.

### Background

The teacher had been awarded a CID for 11 hours from the 2011/2012 school year. In the previous year, she had been employed on a fixed-term contract for 11 hours and on a second fixed-term contract for a further 11 hours to cover a job-share arrangement.

While under CID contract for 11 hours, the teacher also worked additional hours in the school under further fixed-term contracts, and she submitted a claim to the school for these hours to be added to her CID. The Department of Education refused the claim on the basis that she must hold these hours for four years in order to become eligible for a CID.

### The case

Supported by her ASTI industrial relations official, the teacher submitted an appeal to the Adjudicator, who determined that the teacher should have received a CID for all the hours she was teaching in the year prior to being granted a CID. He stated that: "In calculating the hours of a CID, the Transitional Agreement does not exclude hours attributable to approved schemes of leave of absence in the previous school year. The Transitional Agreement has been consistently interpreted for some time as providing, after qualification for a CID has been established, that in the calculation of the hours of a CID, hours in the previous school year attributable to approved leave are not to be excluded".

The Adjudicator ruled that the member was entitled to a CID for 22 hours from September 2011.

The member was represented by

Ann Marie Ryan, ASTI Executive Officer: Industrial Relations.



## ASTI successfully challenges Department stance on CID service requirement

An ASTI-supported case has refuted a claim by the Department of Education and Skills that teachers must be employed for five days each week in order to meet the requirements for a CID.

The ASTI took the case on behalf of a teacher who had been employed in a school in Leinster for well in excess of the required four years when she made a claim for a CID. Though the school accepted that the teacher had been employed continuously in the school since September 2002, and that her hours were paid for out of Oireachtas funds, her claim for a CID was denied. The school informed the teacher that she was refused on the grounds that she did not have sufficient continuous teaching service under Department of Education and Skills regulations.

The Department of Education stated that their records indicated that the teacher did not meet the requirement for qualification for a CID and that the teacher did not have "appropriate continuous teaching service in an Oireachtas-funded post in the school, i.e., was not employed for five days per week on some weeks."

The Adjudicator accepted the case made on behalf of the member, that although the school issued her with a salary, the monies flowed from the Department of Education and Skills. He also acknowledged that the school accepted that the teacher was in fact employed on a five-day per week basis but stated: "In any event the fact that a teacher is not employed for five days per week is not grounds for exclusion of that teacher from qualification for a CID".

The Adjudicator found that no grounds to disqualify the teacher from qualification for a CID had been established and he awarded the teacher a CID for 17 hours and 20 minutes from September 2013.

The member was represented by Maire Mulcahy, ASTI Assistant General Secretary.



# Tackling homophobic bullying

Eliminating homophobic bullying is within reach, writes SANDRA IRWIN-GOWRAN of GLEN.



When Minister Ruairi Quinn took office at the Department of Education he set about tackling the problem of bullying. Since then he has provided strong leadership in building “a roadmap towards the elimination of homophobic bullying from our schools”.

The publication last September of Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools by the Minister was a good news day for schools. Over the years GLEN (the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network) has worked with many teachers and schools in making schools safe and inclusive for LGBT young people. At times, many were doing so in a vacuum without any official guidance, so it was a momentous day for these pioneers, and for the thousands of LGBT young people in our schools, when the Department published these new procedures.

We know that many LGBT young people do not experience school as a secure or affirming environment. These new procedures have the potential to change that forever. Now schools have the Department’s guidance and direction to deal with issues such as cyber-bullying and homophobic bullying. All schools have until Easter to review current policy and to ensure full compliance with the new procedures, and GLEN continues to support schools in this task, including by updating our range of guides.

## All schools must now address homophobic bullying

Compliance with the new procedures means that all schools must include homophobic and transphobic bullying in their anti-bullying policies. This is enormously important as it ensures that young people who experience homophobic or transphobic bullying – regardless of whether they are in fact LGBT or not – can have confidence that their school must respond. More importantly, the procedures require schools to take action to prevent bullying happening in the first instance.

Many schools already run education programmes to prevent homophobic bullying and we know that for LGBT young people who attend these schools their experience of school is so much better; they have higher achievement and educational aspirations, better attendance and a greater sense of belonging.

## A positive school climate prevents bullying

A positive school climate is the best approach in effectively preventing bullying. This is a key element of the new procedures. A positive climate means that difference and diversity are welcomed; minorities, including LGBT people, are respected and included and the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment is acknowledged and assured.



One great programme, now funded by the Department of Education and Skills, which supports a positive school climate, is BeLonG To's (National Youth Service for LGBT youth people) Stand Up! annual awareness week against homophobic and transphobic bullying. This initiative provides a great platform on which schools can build a positive school climate and will take place from March 10-14, 2014.

### One good adult

Teachers as individuals have a major role to play in building a positive school culture. Two simple actions that each teacher can make to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying are:

- Acknowledge that there are LGBT people in the school community, as pupils, as staff, as parents. When this expectation is reflected in all aspects of school life, LGBT people will feel confident that they are welcome, respected and included. Teachers can reflect this by using inclusive language in their classrooms, including LGBT people and issues where relevant in their teaching, and by creating opportunities to address LGBT issues, for example during Friendship Week.
- Challenge unacceptable use of language every time. The use of the term 'gay' as a derogatory term is frequent, widespread and unchallenged in many schools. When it is used by people to describe themselves or others it's acceptable. When it is used pejoratively to describe an individual who may or may not be LGBT or to refer to an object in a pejorative way, it is not acceptable. So, it's ok to say 'I'm gay', it's not ok to say 'That lunchbox is so gay'. Wrong use of these terms should be challenged every time by school staff. Pupils also need to be equipped with skills to challenge peers if they hear unacceptable language.

If every teacher who is not yet following these two simple actions were to do so, we would go a long way to eradicating homophobic and transphobic bullying from our schools.

GLEN would welcome the opportunity to work with more schools as they implement the new procedures; please contact us for further information – [www.glen.ie](http://www.glen.ie).

### Sandra Irwin-Gowran

Sandra Irwin-Gowran ([sandra@glen.ie](mailto:sandra@glen.ie)) is Director of Education Policy with GLEN (Gay and Lesbian Equality Network). She has developed a number of guides for the education sector in supporting LGBT students in schools and has a background in curriculum development and as a second-level teacher. Guidelines on Supporting LGBT students are available at [www.glen.ie/education](http://www.glen.ie/education).

## New anti-bullying procedures mean schools must address homophobic bullying

New Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools require that every school must document and implement education and prevention strategies that explicitly address the issue of identity-based bullying, in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying. School initiatives and programmes focused on developing students' awareness and understanding of bullying should deal explicitly with homophobic and transphobic bullying. Schools must comply with the new procedures no later than the end of this school term.

## Stand Up! Week 2014

The fifth annual Stand Up! Week runs from March 10-14. The campaign, which urges young people not to stand for homophobic or transphobic bullying, is organised by BeLonG To, an organisation that supports lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people in Ireland. The campaign is supported by a number of education bodies, including the ASTI and the Department of Education and Skills. Education packs for Stand Up week will be sent to all schools during February – look out for them and find out more about how you can get involved at [www.belongto.org](http://www.belongto.org).

## Safer Internet Day 2014



Members of the Safer Internet Youth Advisory Panel look forward to Safer Internet Day 2014.

Safer Internet Day 2014 takes place on February 11, and this year's theme is 'Creating a Better Internet Together'.

Safer Internet Day is part of a global drive to promote a safer internet for all users, especially young people. Organisations across the country will be getting involved, running information sessions for parents, giving talks in schools, hosting workshops, and generally encouraging safer and more positive use of the internet by children. Find out what's going on at [www.saferinternetday.ie](http://www.saferinternetday.ie). Webwise will be co-ordinating a nationwide campaign encouraging young people to do something positive to help combat online bullying. The key campaign messages are that bullying affects us all; it won't go away if we do nothing, but it can if we do something. Webwise has developed a resource pack containing a new teaching resource for dealing with the issue of cyber bullying through the SPHE curriculum in post-primary schools and an innovative interactive poster initiative – get more details at [www.watchyourspace.ie](http://www.watchyourspace.ie).

# Innovating for students

All over Ireland, teachers and schools are implementing innovative projects to improve the whole school experience. Here are two inspiring examples.



Maggie Owens leads the maths workshop at St Mary's.



St Mary's students watch the egg-speriment on No Pens Day.

## No Pens Day

St Mary's School for Deaf Girls tried out a hands-free approach to teaching. ASTI member MAGGIE OWENS tells us more.

At the assembly the students looked on as the school's deputy principal took out a pen to do the roll call and told her with great delight that she wasn't allowed to use it. It was No Pens Day and no one – students or staff – was allowed to write anything. Across the classrooms, teachers were encouraged to work out how to teach their subjects verbally and through sign language without resorting to the comfort of their whiteboards. Students weren't off the hook either – just because they couldn't write notes didn't mean they weren't expected to learn on the day. Introducing No Pens Day into St Mary's was initially a daunting notion. But promoting language acquisition through effective communication is at the heart of what we do in St Mary's School for Deaf Girls, so I thought we would be the ideal school to try what no school in Ireland had tried before. No Pens Day would give us an opportunity to create high quality interaction with our students. We, as teachers, were encouraged to engage students in meaningful conversational exchanges and group discussions to enhance their communication and language skills – all without using a pen.

### Whole-school approach

After a great build up the day was finally upon us in early October of last year. We decided to break away from the normal timetable and do a whole-school approach to learning in a cross-curricular way, in keeping with the current focus at a national level in the 'Literacy and Numeracy Strategy for Learning and Life 2011–2020'. Groups of students comprised of different year groups attended workshops in maths, English, drama, home economics, science, performance art and media. The main objective of each was to create a more student-led learning environment, to get students more involved in discussions and reasoning. No Pens Day was an excellent success. It enabled students to blossom in

confidence in their communication and language skills. Feedback from staff and students was very enthusiastic with one student saying we should have No Pens Day every week. I really hope that more Irish schools will adopt the No Pens Day initiative next year – and not just because it means we don't have any marking to do that night!

### Some of the workshops

#### Unlock the locker

Being a maths teacher, I organised a workshop where students could engage in a more cognitively challenging aspect of problem solving by 'unlocking the locker'. Students manipulated the interactive lockers on the smartboard, accessing mathematical discussion and analysing patterns while learning about the characteristics of unique numbers such as multiples, factors, prime numbers, and more. I found that I could differentiate this lesson and that it was accessible to students with learning needs, while challenging the more able students.

#### Sensation Nation

The home economics and business studies departments worked together to organise a 'Sensation Nation'. Students had a hands-on experience with all their senses and participated in a branding discussion where they had to drink two different types of cola and discuss the taste and the importance of branding. This workshop was voted by students as the best activity of the day.

#### Drama

The goal of the drama workshop was to encourage the students to develop effective communication skills. Students, teachers and special needs assistants alike had lots of fun and spirited competition, playing a variety of theatre games, designed to develop good eye contact, observation skills and emotional expression.

### Egg-sperimentation

In science, students were amazed by an air contracting trick that made a boiled egg squeeze itself through a narrow opening. They discussed how the trick worked and what made it happen.

### Walking debates

In English, students took part in walking debates in which they were given a number of controversial statements to consider. Different areas in the room were designated as “agreed,” “disagreed,” or “unsure” areas and the students moved to the area that reflected their views. They then gave a rationale for their decisions and discussed the topic. Students also took part in a “Desert Island Dilemma” activity where

they discussed the three essential items they would choose to bring with them if they were marooned on a desert island. These activities energised the students and encouraged good listening and discussion.

Go to [www.stmarysdeafgirls.ie](http://www.stmarysdeafgirls.ie) to see examples of the school’s No Pens Day activities.

St Mary’s School for Deaf Girls is the first Irish school to be involved in No Pens Day. Last year, over 2,400 UK schools took part in the initiative to encourage all students to communicate and contribute in class.

## School for all needs

*Deerpark CBS’s focus on the inclusion of students with autism spectrum disorder has benefited the whole school community, writes the school’s ASD team.*

Deerpark CBS was the first second-level school in Cork to establish a unit catering specifically for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The programme began in 2007 with three ASD students; now, 24 students with ASD attend the school, spread over five year groups. The ASD unit is the largest of its kind at second-level in Ireland and the school is now recognised as a model school for the inclusion of students with ASD. A 2011 WSE MLL inspection report praised the school’s pioneering work and exemplary practice in relation to the inclusion of students with ASD.

### Exemplary practice

Each year group with ASD students has an assigned special needs teacher, who is primarily responsible for developing individual education plans for the students with ASD in that year. The special needs teacher consults with the student’s parents, their subject teachers and other staff, and observes the student in both resource and mainstream settings to make sure that they are working from as broad a picture as possible. This also helps to foster a whole-school approach to supporting the students throughout their second-level education. The teachers develop the student’s individual plan to cater to the student’s unique strengths, needs and interests. It is hugely important to identify the strengths of students with ASD; often, what might be seen as a deficit or oddity can be used to the student’s advantage when acquiring a new skill.

We use three key areas to identify goals for students: academic, social and practical life skills. We identify two or three goals per category, which we try to make as realistic as possible so that the student can get a sense of achievement. This really helps to promote self-esteem and the motivation to progress further.

The student’s programme is created within the constraints of the mainstream curriculum, with careful attention to subject differentiation and reduced curriculum, if necessary. We ensure that we take a holistic approach, and include areas such as art, movement, drama or music to further support each individual programme. The development of life skills and social skills also forms a large part of the programme. Students develop turn taking, listening, study, friendship and independent living skills.

### Full integration

Students with ASD are fully integrated into the life of the school, including representation on the school’s Meitheal team and Student Council. The inclusive approach permeates throughout the school, and some of the initiatives initially developed for ASD students have now been rolled out across the school to the benefit of all students.

The school’s highly visual learning environment is the most noticeable innovation. We make use of visual schedules to identify subjects and teachers. We also frequently colour code the students’ books and copies with their timetable, aiding students to improve organisation skills. Older students with ASD mentor first-year students to give them the benefit of their unique understanding of the problems they may be facing. This buddy system has now been rolled out across the school, and has been really successful in building understanding, acceptance and integration. Often reverse integration works very well; for example, mainstream students join the ASD special class for some periods. This really encourages integration from all of the student community and is particularly useful during social skills classes, when mainstream students can give highly valuable peer input.

Digital projectors are used in every classroom and students with ASD have access to laptops that can be used for those with motor skills difficulties. This is conducive to a highly visual and interactive learning environment that improves literacy and allows a broader range of students to access the curriculum. Some of our staff allow students to email their homework or class work and this has also helped the whole school student population. Another measure that has taken hold across the school is that teachers write instructions on the board for classroom tasks and try to keep verbal instruction as short and precise as possible. Each classroom has a list of classroom rules that are uniform throughout the school.

The school has a multitude of other accommodations that are highly individualised to meet the needs of each student with ASD and to facilitate them to access the curriculum, manage their needs, promote independence, and make the transition as smoothly as possible from primary to post-primary education, special school to mainstream school setting, or special class to mainstream class, and finally from post-primary to post-Leaving Cert courses or ‘real-world’ situations.

The ASD team in Deerpark CBS includes Judith Callan-Gough, Shirley Coughlan, Sandra Hamilton, Brian Kenny, Sean McCarthy, Elaine McQuaid and Fiona O’Leary. Contact [deerparkcbs@eircom.net](mailto:deerparkcbs@eircom.net) or see [www.deerparkcbs.ie](http://www.deerparkcbs.ie) for more information.

# Come to Convention 2014

ASTI Convention is the most important event in the ASTI calendar – find out what it's all about and how you can get involved.



Each year up to 400 ASTI members gather at ASTI Convention to discuss a wide range of topics relating to teaching and education, and to make important decisions about ASTI policy.

## What's involved?

ASTI Convention takes place each year during the Easter break – this year Convention runs from Tuesday, April 22, to Thursday, April 24, 2014. Convention devotes three days to discussing the matters of concern to second-level teachers. Through debate and reports, delegates are brought up to date on the most recent developments in education and industrial relations. During Convention sessions, delegates have the chance to participate in debates on key issues and to vote on crucial motions. These motions are decided by members in branches during January and they inform future ASTI policy and decisions. This year's big issues are likely to be junior cycle reform and teachers' pay and conditions. A number of important elections are also held during Convention, including the election of ASTI President, Vice-President, and Honorary Treasurer, and elections to various committees.

### Convention sessions include:

- updates and reports on education and industrial relations matters;
- debate and votes on education, pay and conditions, and union policy motions; and,
- speeches by invited guests, and the ASTI President and General Secretary.

The cost of travel to and from Convention is covered by the ASTI and an overnight allowance is paid to cover accommodation costs. Find out more on the accommodation booking form on page 30.

## Who attends?

A wide range of ASTI members attend ASTI Convention each year – any member who has been in the ASTI for one year or more can be nominated by their branch to attend as a delegate. Members of the ASTI Central Executive Council also attend. Away from the conference hall, the event is a great chance to get to know teachers from around the country and to catch up with friends and colleagues.

## How do I get involved?

If you would like to attend ASTI Convention this year, go to your next branch meeting and put yourself forward as a delegate. Delegates should be nominated by January 31. New delegates are always welcome!

Convention is a representative body – if you can't attend yourself make sure you let your delegates and CEC representatives know how you feel about the matters for debate this year. You'll find details of the motions for debate in an upcoming *Nuacht* and on the ASTI website – [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

While it's on, you can keep up with ASTI Convention online at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie), where some speeches will be streamed live. You can also follow us on Twitter and Facebook for live updates!

More details about ASTI Convention – including childcare facilities and night-time entertainment – are available on the accommodation booking form on page 30.

# Teacher autonomy needed for learner autonomy

Greater freedom for teachers will encourage better outcomes for learners, says ASTI member JIM AHERN.



Learner autonomy is one of the most talked about topics in education today. The concept has its roots in language learning, but has in recent years moved centre stage and broadened its application to other fields of study. The aim in each is to promote and enhance the learner's capacity to:

- take responsibility for their learning;
- self-direct and make choices about their learning;
- learn interdependently and independently;
- self-manage and self-regulate learning;
- think critically and creatively; and,
- reflect upon their learning and their experience of learning.

The cognitive glue that binds these concepts together is freedom – for both learner and teacher.

In order for learner autonomy to emerge, the learner must be given the freedom, opportunity and space in which to exercise autonomy. Significantly, however, learners may be unable to give effect to their autonomy because this space is monopolised by the teacher. Therefore, it stands to reason, that in order for learner autonomy to be fostered and promoted, the teacher must be willing and in a position to cede this space to learners.

However, while teachers are being asked more and more to move away from rote learning and to lead a learning revolution, there remains a persistent insistence upon standardisation and predetermined learning outcomes. This emphasis hinders the promotion of learner autonomy. Put simply, if the teacher has already determined the learning outcomes, the learner may perceive that his/her input and influence is of little importance.

## Tangents are good

If learner autonomy is to become a reality in our schools, teachers will need to be given the freedom to adapt and to facilitate learners in the expression of their autonomy. Learners will make decisions about their learning if they have the opportunity to do so. Learners will self-direct if the direction that they choose is recognised and validated. In this context – as a colleague put it to me recently – tangents are good. It is in these very tangents that learner creativity, critical thinking and self-direction will often emerge. The teacher must be in a position to facilitate these.

In recent times, attempts have been made to standardise classroom learning and a formula-based regime has been prioritised. Experience should inform us that this approach in the classroom will encourage a tendency to rely upon and perpetuate an over reliance on predetermined input, leading to predetermined output.

In order to break out of this regime, enhanced teacher autonomy is required. The ability to act flexibly and to respond appropriately to learner initiatives is an essential element of this. If we are to have any chance of emulating the often-quoted high-ranked educational systems where critical thinking and learner self-direction have received much attention, then we must also follow their lead in the promotion and development of teacher autonomy.

We welcome feedback on *ASTIR* – email [astirfeedback@asti.ie](mailto:astirfeedback@asti.ie).

### Jim Ahern

Jim teaches in Kilkenny CBS and is a member of the ASTI Education Committee.



# Breaking point?

After five years of education cuts and mounting initiatives, schools are struggling to cope, says ASTI Assistant General Secretary MOIRA LEYDON.

In the last five years schools have had to cope with more than 30 separate identifiable cuts, which have had wide-ranging impacts on school communities and second-level education. At the same time, almost 20 new policy initiatives have been introduced, adding significantly to teachers' workload.

Since 2009, investment in education has been drastically reduced as part of overall 'austerity' measures, but even prior to the economic collapse Ireland had a poor record of investment in education. Successive OECD 'Education at a Glance' reports provide evidence of a consistent failure to invest in education. The most recent such report shows that investment in education as a proportion of public expenditure has

declined significantly in Ireland since 2005. In 2005, 14% of total public expenditure went to education. By 2010, this had dropped to 9.7%. In comparison, the OECD average in 2010 was 13%.

At the same time as imposing austerity on schools, the Government and Minister for Education and Skills have pursued a wide-ranging reform agenda in second-level education. The question is whether schools – after five years of cutbacks – actually have any capacity left to engage with change and innovation.

To put the situation teachers face in context, here is a year-by-year look at how schools have been impacted by budget cuts and initiative overload over the last five years

## 2009

### Cutbacks in schools

- Increase in pupil-teacher ratio from 18:1 to 19:1 (20:1 in fee-charging schools).
- Ceiling of two on the number of English as an additional language teachers a school can employ.
- Withdrawal of teacher posts historically provided under previous disadvantage schemes to non-DEIS schools.
- Substitution cover suspended for absences arising from uncertified sick leave and school business absences.
- Reduction in capitation funding for Travellers.
- Withdrawal of certain capitation funding from schools receiving top-up funding under disadvantage initiatives.
- Abolition of grants for choirs and orchestras, home economics, physics and chemistry.
- Abolition of grants for Junior Certificate Schools Programme, Leaving Certificate Applied, LCVP and TY.
- Cessation of funding to local authorities to support school library services.
- Funding for teacher in-service education reduced by €5m.
- Post-primary school transport charge increased.
- Non-implementation of EPSEN Act, 2004.
- Moratorium on appointment to posts of responsibility in schools.
- Reduction in school building programme.

### Initiatives developed/implemented at the same time

'A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Teachers', NEPS September 2009:

- triage model of school support;
- assessment and interventions for each stage;
- record keeping; and,
- engagement with external services.

'Planning and Implementing E-Learning in your School', June 2009:

- whole-school planning;
- e-planning;
- implementation; and,
- evaluation.

## 2011

### Cutbacks in schools

- Change in pupil–teacher ratio for LCVP from 17:1 to 19:1.
- Abolition of additional teaching hours for Travellers, including Visiting Teacher Service.
- Non-appointment of 150 teacher posts to primary and second-level schools, as required under Revised Programme for Government.
- Phased reduction of 500 language support posts over five years at primary and second level.
- Redeployment of 170 over-quota posts.
- Post-primary school transport scheme cost for individual student increased from €300 to €350; changes to eligibility criteria.
- 5% reduction in capitation grants to schools.
- 5% reduction in grants for adult literacy, community education, School Completion Programme, Youthreach.
- 5% reduction in capitation grants to VTOS, PLC and Senior Traveller Training Centres.
- Introduction of €200 student contribution for PLC students.

### Initiatives developed/implemented at the same time

‘Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life’, July 2011

‘Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools’, Sept 2011:

- new oversight arrangements;
- revised procedures; and,
- peer abuse and bullying.

‘Inclusive Education Framework: A Guide for Schools on the Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs’, Nov 2011:

- inclusive framework;
- school development and planning;
- implementation; and,
- review procedures.

## 2012

### Cutbacks in schools

- Abolition of ex-quota guidance counsellor.
- 2% reduction in capitation funding for schools.
- Supervision & Substitution scheme – reduction in administration fee payable to schools from 5% to 2% from 2012.
- Reduction in back to school clothing and footwear allowance: from €305 to €250 for second-level pupils.
- Merging of learning support and language support.
- Pupil–teacher ratio for fee-charging schools increased to 21:1.

### Initiatives developed/implemented at the same time

Transfer report card for each student entering first year post-primary, June 2012

New evaluation model – Incidental Inspections, Sept 2012

In-service for principals and link teachers on Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, commenced Sept 2012

New evaluation model – School Self-Evaluation, Sept 2012:

- three-year planning process;
- literacy, numeracy and another areas;
- each subject department to prepare annual reports, to feed into;
- annual school report, to feed into;
- school improvement plan based on data generated in school.

‘A Framework for Junior Cycle’, October 2012:

- new curriculum to be phased in over six years;
- school-based assessment in all subjects (Irish, English, maths excepted for a period);
- introduction of short courses;
- abolition of State certificate;
- focus on literacy and numeracy, and other key skills; and,
- new specifications for each subject – learning outcomes, key skills, assessment tasks.

## More – for less

March 2009: public service pension levy

January 2010: public service pay cut

January 2011: pay cut for new entrants

February 2012: abolition of allowances for new entrants

## 2013

### Cutbacks in schools

- Increase in pupil–teacher ratio in fee-charging schools from 21:1 to 23:1.
- 2% cut to capitation grant.
- Reduction in the number of English language learning teachers in schools.
- Changes to teachers’ maternity leave and adoptive leave.

### Initiatives developed/implemented at the same time

‘Well-being in Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention’, January 2013:

- proactive approach;
- continuum of support;
- whole-school guidance plan;
- child protection; and,
- pastoral care.

‘Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Schools’ – NCSE Policy Advice, Paper No. 4, May 2013:

- new allocation model;
- profiled need of each school;
- evidence base for supports;
- individual education plans; and,
- annual reports to NCSE.

‘Schools for Health in Ireland: Framework for Developing a Health-Promoting School’, 2013

‘Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools’, Sept 2013:

- immediate review of school policy;
- new reporting template;
- regular reports to board of management;
- specification of intervention strategies; and,
- pro-active policies.

‘Draft Admissions to Schools Bill’, Sept 2013:

- new enrolment procedures; and,
- communication with parents, community.

One child, one team, one plan – integrated practice model – pilot project, Sept 2013:

- new reporting requirements and procedures for all schools to support attendance, retention, participation.

Review of STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics – education, initiated Nov 2013

Digital Strategy for Schools, initiated Dec 2013

Notification of additional evaluation model: Follow-Through Inspection, December 2013

## The impact of five years of budget cuts

### On students:

- dropped subjects;
- overcrowded classes;
- reduced class periods;
- restrictions on uptake of JCSP, TY, LCVP and LCA;
- loss of linguistic and learning difficulties supports for students;
- loss of holistic support for students; and,
- reduced extra-curricular opportunities.

### On schools and teachers:

- hundreds of mainstream and support teachers lost;

- erosion of in-school management structures;
- increasing pressure and workload;
- school accommodation problems remain unaddressed;
- disadvantage programmes undermined; and,
- financial difficulties.

### On families:

- increased costs placed on families;
- adult education opportunities restricted; and,
- reduced opportunities for further education for school leavers.

The ASTI commissioned research into the impact of education cuts in schools in 2012 and 2013 – read the results in the publications section at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).



# The Haddington Road Agreement – your questions answered

ASTI members' acceptance of the Haddington Road Agreement has a number of implications – we answer some of your questions.

## How does the new Supervision and Substitution (S&S) Scheme differ?

- All teachers (other than those eligible to opt out – see below) will be required to participate in S&S.
- Teachers will no longer be paid an allowance for S&S duties (to compensate for the loss of S&S allowance, there is a commitment to increase all teachers' salaries by €796 per annum in April 2017 and by a further €796 per annum January 2018).
- Teachers will be placed on the substitution rota for five class periods a week (rather than three, as was the case).
- The annual cap on S&S delivery will be 43 hours (rather than 37 hours or 49 hours for new entrants, as was the case).
- The weekly cap on S&S will increase from one hour 30 minutes to three hours (the extra time can only be used for substitution).
- Uncertified sick leave may now be covered by S&S and from the 2014/2015 school year S&S will be extended to cover the first day of *force majeure* leave.

## Who can opt out of S&S?

Only teachers who were not in the S&S Scheme on a pensionable basis during the 2012/2013 school year have the option to opt out of doing S&S.

If such a teacher opts out of S&S duties, a reduction of €1,769 will be applied to their annual salary. This deduction applies from January 1, 2014.

## Will I receive the increment I was due after July 1?

Because ASTI members have now accepted the Haddington Road Agreement, the freeze on increments imposed since July 1, 2013, has been lifted for all teachers earning below €100,000.

Incremental progression will be retrospective to July 1, 2013, meaning that affected teachers will have their salary adjusted from that date and may be due a rebate. See [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie) for information on the processing of this payroll adjustment.

All teachers earning under €100,000 are due their first increment payable after July 1, 2013.

If you earn less than €35,000 you will have one three-month delay in the payment of your following increment. If you earn between €35,000 and €65,000, your following two increments will be delayed by three months each. If you earn between €65,000 and €100,000, your following two increments will be delayed by six months each.

## I am a new entrant to teaching; does acceptance of the Haddington Road Agreement mean I will move to a different salary scale?

Under the Haddington Road Agreement, new salary scales are applicable for post-2011 and post-February 2012 entrants to teaching. The new salary scales can be found at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

These new scales apply from July 1, 2013, so if you are a 'new entrant' your salary will be adjusted from that date and you may be due a refund as well as an adjustment in salary. See [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie) for information on the processing of this payroll adjustment.

## I am on a salary of over €65,000 and have taken a pay cut; does acceptance of the Haddington Road Agreement affect that cut?

If you were subject to the cut in salary for those on salaries above €65,000, the amount of this cut will be reduced by up to €1,769 under the Haddington Road Agreement.

In addition, there is a commitment in the Haddington Road Agreement that the pay cut will be restored to those earning under €100,000 in two equal phases, on April 1, 2017, and January 1, 2018.

## I am in my fourth year teaching in the same school this year; do I qualify for a CID?

Under the Haddington Road Agreement, the qualification period for the granting of CIDs in schools is reduced from four years in a school to three years. This applies to those who completed three years in a school in August 2013 and who were re-employed in that school in September 2013.

Other criteria for the granting of CIDs, as set out in Circular 0034/09, continue to apply as before – see [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie). If you believe you should now be entitled to a CID, please contact the ASTI. More detailed information on all of the topics covered above can be found at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

Answers to more of your questions on the Haddington Road Agreement are available at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

# Come to the RSTA AGM in May

Enjoy a May midweek break and attend the RSTA AGM in Mayo.

The 2014 AGM of the RSTA will be hosted by the Mayo branch in Westport, which is one of Ireland's foremost holiday destinations. It will take place in the Hotel Westport on Wednesday, May 14, 2014. RSTA Vice President Carmel Heneghan has secured a special conference package of two nights' bed and breakfast and the conference dinner for €129 per person sharing, from May 13 to 15. There will be a single supplement of €20 per night. For those who wish to extend their stay over three or four nights, the hotel will offer a special B&B rate of €49 pps for each additional night. Sixty rooms have

been reserved and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Members wishing to avail of the conference package are asked to book their accommodation directly with the hotel before March 21, 2014. Availability and the special conference rate cannot be guaranteed after that date. The host branch is also planning a most attractive programme of cultural and social events to complement the AGM. Details of these, a preliminary booking form for the AGM and a conference programme are available on our website – [www.rsta.ie](http://www.rsta.ie).

## Want to continue reading your copy of *ASTIR*? Contact us now

We want to ensure that RSTA members can continue to enjoy receiving *ASTIR* magazine. However, in the course of a recent ASTI/RSTA Officers' meeting, we discussed the cost to the ASTI of distributing *ASTIR* to the homes of more than 1,500 RSTA members. In order to cut costs and eliminate wastage, we have agreed with the ASTI that RSTA members will be offered the choice to receive 2014 *ASTIR* magazine by post or via a digital copy. In addition, homes where there are two RSTA members may wish to cancel one copy instead of receiving two.

If an electronic format is impractical or unacceptable for any RSTA member, a copy of *ASTIR* will be posted to you in 2014. However, if you wish to receive *ASTIR* in 2014 by post or by email, you must fill out the form below. We are currently developing contact lists of RSTA members who have indicated that they wish to receive *ASTIR* in 2014 by post or by email. **This is the last edition of *ASTIR* you will receive, unless you provide us with the information on the form below.**

### FOR RSTA MEMBERS ONLY

Tick one box only:

I wish to receive a digital copy of *ASTIR* by email

I wish to continue to receive *ASTIR* by post

Please return this form to:

Muriel McNicholas

RSTA Treasurer

Cordarragh

Kiltimagh

Co. Mayo

You may also email the information to: [murielmcnicholas@gmail.com](mailto:murielmcnicholas@gmail.com)

Please note *ASTIR* magazine is available at the ASTI website – [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie)

Name:

Address:

Email:

Please return by Friday, February 7, 2014

## Colaiste Muire Cobh mourns the loss of a beloved colleague

One year on, we remember our dear colleague and friend Phil Agger, who disappeared from our midst on December 2, 2012 with a speed and a sense of unreality that we, the staff of Colaiste Muire Cobh, still struggle to comprehend.

Phil was a hardworking teacher who brought out the best in her students. She loved life and was a healthy, active, fun-loving person right up to the time she got the tragic news of her cancer diagnosis, a few short months before her death.

Phil was a popular and well respected member of staff for over 20 years. At staff meetings her common sense and pragmatic approach had a very grounding effect. She was actively involved in extra-curricular sports, training hockey teams and organising tennis teams for many years. Phil herself was a skilled and natural tennis player, and woe betide anyone who had the misfortune to be at the receiving end of her serve!

She assisted in the organisation of several school tours for students, including two ski trips and a hockey trip. On those tours, her approach was always caring and selfless, and Phil was always attentive to the needs of the students.

For the last seven years she had the post of LCVP Co-ordinator, a job she carried out efficiently and with the minimum of fuss. In addition to her teaching role, she was class teacher to many class groups over the years.

D'oibrigh Phil go dian doicheadh, ag múineadh na Gaeilge agus ag spreagadh daltaí chun an teanga a labhairt agus an cultúr a bhlaiseadh. Chothaigh sí grá don teanga ina cuid ranganna agus ba mhór an meas a bhí ag na daltaí go léir uirthi. Bhí féith an ghrinn go láidir inti agus chuaigh sé sin i bhfeidhm ar na daltaí agus a comhghleacaithe araon.

She faced the brief months of her illness with a resolute determination and dignity. Our only consolation at this time is that her suffering was not prolonged. We extend our deepest sympathies to all Phil's family, especially to her husband John, her daughters Niamh and Siobhán, her mother Chris, and her brothers Kevin, Terry and Tomás. She will be remembered with much fondness by all the staff at Colaiste Muire and by pupils past and present for the special person she was and for the contribution she has made.

Ní bheidh a leithéid ann arís. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam.



SAVE UP TO  
**€450<sup>†</sup>**

*Make the journey  
the start of your  
holiday.*

Drive to France and not only will our Landbridge to Europe save you a boatload of money, it will give you a car boot full of luggage space to bring back as much as you want. Plus, discover all the sights along the way. Stop off as, and when, the mood strikes. It's all part of the holiday when you drive to Europe.

Travel with Stena Line to Britain on one of our 30 daily sailings and then beyond to France, Holland or Spain with our travel partners. Book it all in one click or call from just €145\* single (car + driver).

*Everyone deserves a break*



[stenaline.ie/europe](http://stenaline.ie/europe)

call 01 204 7733 or see your travel agent

  
**Stena Line**

†Compared to FlyDrive. Visit [www.stenaline.ie/europe](http://www.stenaline.ie/europe) to view the price comparison. \*Fares shown is for a car + driver and applies for travel on most Stena Line Irish Sea routes and onward with DFDS from Dover - Calais on mid-week departures during July & August 2014. Lower fares available at other times. Service fees may apply for telephone bookings. Subject to availability. Terms and conditions apply.

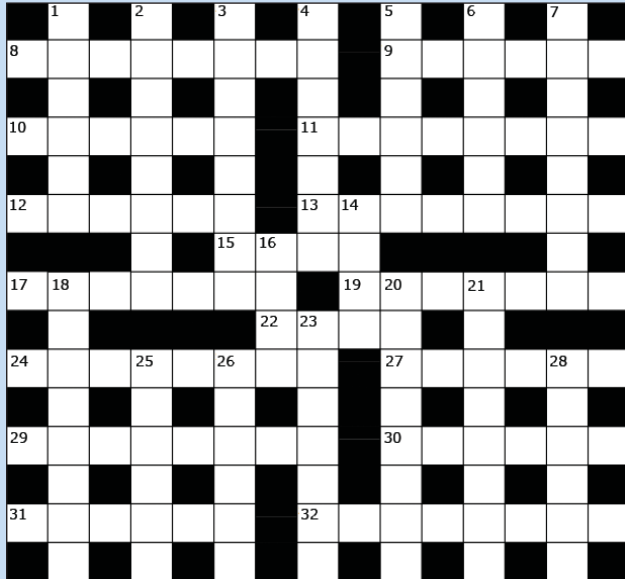


Sponsored by ASTI Credit Union

ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 1401

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. 1401, Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, February 7, 2014

CLUES ACROSS:

- 8 Animals for the most part can evaluate property (8)
- 9 Aspire to acclaim (6)
- 10 Brown pigment in Italy (6)
- 11 In all seriousness when vat is added to Irish love! (8)
- 12 The rest of the afternoon! (6)
- 13 The geese definitely into lawyer speak! (8)
- 15 A bedside edition could contain this title (4)
- 17 Offer in response at the bar (7)
- 19 NUI is an authentic part of the DNA (7)
- 22 Length X width (4)
- 24 Detached Italian musically (8)
- 27 Could be a type of dog (6)
- 29 "No spring nor summer beauty hath such grace as I have seen in one ..... face" (John Donne) (8)
- 30 Wander and you will have been admonished (6)
- 31 Tenant with smaller amount of drugs (6)
- 32 On arctic drug to induce sleep (8)

CLUES DOWN:

- 1 Jorge Mario Bergoglio chose the name of a saint from this Umbrian town (6)
- 2 "Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all" he wrote (8)
- 3 Pa ceased his madcap adventure (8)
- 4 Rag file can be brittle or frail (7)
- 5 Made a call after the odds suddenly moved (6)
- 6 Pianist Barenboim and actors Radcliffe and Day Lewis have this first name in common (6)
- 7 In the end he killed two fools! (8)
- 14 The bearded genius has a slight advantage (4)
- 16 The "E" of QED (4)
- 18 A red doubt might have thrust itself on others in an unwelcome way (8)
- 20 Drawback following the direction of the rising sun (8)
- 21 A motive that's hidden (8)
- 23 *The Cuckoo's Calling* author wrote under the pen name Galbraith (7)
- 25 Tom sounds like he's part of the ship's handlers (6)
- 26 A nightcap no easy way to solve a sleep problem (6)
- 28 Pupil's cover! (6)

Solution to ASTIR Crossword No. 1305

Across	Down
1. Allows	1. Atheists
4. Staffing	2. Lobsters
9. Habits	3. Watermark
10. Geometry	5. Tweet
12. Inter	6. FEMPI
13. Intricate	7. In that
15. Mug	8. Geyser
16. Terra	11. Jigsaw
17. Stodgy	14. Red
22. Skewer	18. Onruth
24. Level	19. Galbraith
27. USB	20. Eventide
28. Overcoats	21. Illeagle
31. Range	23. Ego
32. Falconry	25. Boffin
33. Viking	26. Realms
34. Nostrils	29. Choir
35. Phoebe	30. Aural

-DID YOU MISS?

Sign the ASTI petition on junior cycle reform! page 14  
 New anti-bullying procedures must be implemented by the end of term page 16  
 Twenty new policy initiatives introduced to schools in five years page 22

Congratulations

to the winner of Crossword  
 No. 1305: Pat Holland,  
 Loreto College, Cavan Town,  
 Co. Cavan.  
 Cavan Branch member.

## Teacher swap

Home economics and religion teacher in south Dublin seeks swap with same in Louth/Monaghan area.

Contact [homeeconomicsteacherswap@gmail.com](mailto:homeeconomicsteacherswap@gmail.com).

Permanent home economics and religion teacher in Louth seeks swap with same in Leitrim/Cavan/Longford area.

Contact [homeeecteacherswap@gmail.com](mailto:homeeecteacherswap@gmail.com).

The ASTI takes no responsibility for job swap notices.

## Dyslexia resources

Following the publication of new 'Factsheets on Dyslexia at Second Level', the Dyslexia Association of Ireland (DAI) is now offering schools: in-service training sessions for staff; a workshop on study skills for students; and, seminars for parents' groups. For more information contact DAI at [info@dyslexia.ie](mailto:info@dyslexia.ie) or 01-6790276. Factsheets can be downloaded for free at [www.dyslexia.ie/factsheets](http://www.dyslexia.ie/factsheets). The DAI also offers a range of off-site courses for teachers, students and parents.

## Calling all musicians!

Music Harvest is looking for enthusiastic and skilled musicians to work on its music programme in Palestine, where it teaches music to children in under-resourced communities. For more info, Email: [kevin@musicarvest.org](mailto:kevin@musicarvest.org), or visit [www.musicarvest.org](http://www.musicarvest.org).

## Tree planting initiative

A former ASTI member and retired teacher is running a project to encourage tree planting in schools and to increase awareness among second-level students of the aesthetic and commercial importance of trees. The project includes the possibility to purchase trees for planting at low cost. For more information, contact [patwal@eircom.net](mailto:patwal@eircom.net) by February 10.

## New book by ASTI member

Former ASTI member Sean Beattie has published a new book, *Donegal in Transition – The Impact of the Congested Districts Board*. The book will be of value to students of history and offers insight into the lives of ordinary people against the background of Home Rule and civil disturbance. Buy online at [www.iap.ie](http://www.iap.ie).

## ILSA conference

The Irish Learning Support Association (ILSA) offers training and support to learning support and resource teachers at a local and national level. The ILSA Spring Conference will take place in the Clayton Hotel, Galway, on March 2. The ILSA is also seeking submissions for its journal, *LEARN*. Visit [www.ilsa.ie](http://www.ilsa.ie) for more information.

## Class Swap

A new six-part documentary series airing this month on RTÉ One looks at the educational system in a European comparative context. The makers followed and filmed three groups of Irish students and their teacher in three different EU schools over a 10-day period as they experience the physical, educational and cultural challenges of distinct approaches to education. For more see [www.esras.com](http://www.esras.com).

## Have you recently taken retirement?

A study being carried out through Dublin City University's School of Nursing & Human Sciences is interested in the experiences of people who took up the public sector incentivised retirement scheme in February 2012. The study will involve a focus group interview lasting one hour with six to eight other people who retired from the public sector. For further information, contact Muriel Redmond, Tel: 01-700 8034, or Email: [muriel.redmond@dcu.ie](mailto:muriel.redmond@dcu.ie).

## Anti-Racism Creative Competition 2014

Register your school for the Show Racism the Red Card Anti-Racism Creative Competition 2014 and you'll receive a new DVD education pack featuring interviews with six of the current Ireland senior soccer players, and stars from GAA and rugby, as well as young people from primary and secondary schools. The DVD comes with a 40-page easy-to-use activity education pack. In addition, your school will get two tickets to an Ireland senior soccer international in 2014. Register today at [www.theredcard.ie/competition.php](http://www.theredcard.ie/competition.php).

## Asperger's resources for schools

Aspire, the Asperger's Syndrome Association of Ireland, can provide information packs or workshops to schools to assist them in understanding Asperger's syndrome. If you would like more information or to request an information session, please contact [education@aspireireland.ie](mailto:education@aspireireland.ie).

## Writing competition for teachers

The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in London is running a writing competition for Irish and UK teachers. To be in with a chance to win one of three holidays to Indonesia, teachers are asked to write an essay on 'Enhancing Indonesia-UK/Ireland Relations through Education Collaboration'. For more information, see [atdikbudlondon.com/uk-students/writing-competition/](http://atdikbudlondon.com/uk-students/writing-competition/).

### CLASSIFIED ADVERT

BUSINESS FOR SALE – Retail shop and thriving website. School books, stationery, school bag and art and craft business. South-east based. Excellent increasing yearly certified turnover. Owner retiring. Huge potential for expansion. Email only: [businessforsale@eircom.net](mailto:businessforsale@eircom.net)



# Come to ASTI Convention 2014

Whites Hotel, Wexford Town, Tuesday 22nd – Thursday 24th April

Play an important role in deciding your union's policy and have your voice heard on important education issues by attending ASTI Convention. New delegates are always welcome!

### What's involved?

Convention covers a range of topics relating to your profession, your union, and education. Many important debates will be held over the three days; all branches have an input in prioritising motions.

### What will it cost?

The cost of your travel to and from Convention is covered, and an overnight allowance is paid to cover your accommodation costs. There is a registration fee of €30 per person, which is paid by your branch.

### Can I bring my family?

Play centre facilities for delegates' children (over two years of age) will be available each day during Convention hours. Places must be reserved in advance not later than Friday 28th March 2014 - more info at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie). Make sure to also check out the day-trip we have organised at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

### Social events

There will be plenty of time to meet up with colleagues outside of Convention hours. One of the best opportunities is at the Convention Dinner, which will take place on Tuesday 22nd April in Whites Hotel. The cost of a Convention Dinner ticket is normally €45.00 but if your Branch reserves a table of ten before Friday, April 11th, it will cost only €350. Your branch can join with another Branch and book a table under one name. Email [info@asti.ie](mailto:info@asti.ie), reference "Annual Convention Dinner". Payment for reserved tables must reach ASTI Accounts Department on or before 16th April. Tickets will also be on sale from 2.30 - 3.30 pm in the Main Foyer, Whites Hotel, Wexford on Tuesday 22nd April at a cost of €45.00.

Any teacher who has been a member of the ASTI for one year or more can be nominated as a delegate at a branch meeting in January.

## Book your accommodation

Accommodation at Whites Hotel is on a "first come, first served" basis. Delegates are asked to book in pairs or to indicate the person with whom they will share; a limited number of single rooms are available. Family rooms (up to max 3 children) are charged at a double room rate. Children under 12 stay free when sharing with parents (meals not included); children over 12 are charged at full price.

Book by contacting Whites Hotel at 053-9122311 or [info@whitesofwexford.ie](mailto:info@whitesofwexford.ie). The hotel will provide you with a reservation number. Include this number on the form below and return to: ASTI Annual Convention Reservations, Whites Hotel, Wexford.

Reservation No.  Arrival date  Departure date

Please tick whichever room you require    Single  €90 per night    Double/Twin  €130 per night    Family room  See above

Please reserve one room for:

Name   
Address   
  
Tel. No.   
Email

Name   
Address   
  
Tel. No.   
Email

Child/children's name(s) and age(s)

### Credit card details

Cardholder's name

Credit Card No.     Expiry date:

Booking forms without a reservation number will not be guaranteed. A credit card number is essential to guarantee booking. Information on other hotels, guest houses and bed & breakfasts in the area can be found at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

# FREE

## HEALTH INSURANCE COMPARISON SERVICE

With Cornmarket's Free Health Insurance Comparison Service you have access to a team of experts who:

- ✓ Will compare all four insurers on the market
- ✓ Offer FREE impartial advice
- ✓ Will find the best plan for you at the best possible price

*Don't renew  
until we  
review*

We compare all four  
health insurance providers



GloHealth



[www.cornmarket.ie](http://www.cornmarket.ie)

**To discuss your health insurance needs,  
call us today on (01) 470 8098**



**cornmarket**  
group financial services ltd

# TEACHERS

## SAVE ON YOUR INSURANCE

**HOME INSURANCE**

Get  
**€100**  
OFF\*

**CAR INSURANCE**

**SAFER**  
**DRIVERS**  
GET  
UP  
TO **60%**  
OFF

Simply switch to Cornmarket before 31/01/14 (€100 Home Insurance offer is subject to a minimum premium of €323. Safer drivers get a discount of up to 60% if you've been claims free for 5 years subject to a minimum premium of €305.44, inclusive of Government Levy).

**To get a quote or find out more,  
call (01) 470 8042 or visit [www.cornmarket.ie](http://www.cornmarket.ie)**

\*Home Insurance €100 discount is off the current Allianz home insurance premium available through Cornmarket. €100 off is applied to the policy premium(s) after other applicable discounts have been made. Discount applies in year one only. Entry criteria, terms & conditions apply. Discount must be requested at quotation stage, we are unable to issue discounts retrospectively. Only one voucher per product can be used by each eligible proposer. RSA Insurance Ireland Ltd. is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. Allianz plc is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd. is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. A member of the Irish Life Group Ltd. Telephone calls may be recorded for quality control and training purposes.