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ASTIR

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland



TEACHER RECRUITMENT CRISIS

Equal pay
campaign

Digital Framework
for schools

Behavioural issues
in schools



WORLDWISE GLOBAL SCHOOLS

A ONE-STOP-SHOP FOR DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION IN POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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WORLDWISE GLOBAL SCHOOLS

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For more information please contact:

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Web: <http://www.worldwiseschools.ie/register-your-interest/>

CONTENTS

4	From the President's desk <i>Crisis in teacher supply says it all</i>
4	General Secretary's update <i>The enduring value of trade unionism</i>
5	News
10	News feature <i>Teacher unions campaign for equal pay</i>
12	ASTI in the media <i>Recruitment issues highlighted</i>
14	News feature <i>Teacher shortages reach crisis point</i>
16	Features <i>Moving with the times</i> <i>Challenging behaviour</i>
20	Convention 2018 <i>Annual Convention 2018</i>
22	My research <i>Fighting stress</i>
24	FAQs <i>Parental and paternity leave</i>
26	Profile <i>ASTI Education Committee</i>
28	RSTA news
29	Noticeboard
30	Crossword



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CRISIS IN TEACHER SUPPLY SAYS IT ALL

For the past number of months the three teacher unions – the ASTI, INTO and TUI – have been working together to improve the terms and conditions of our post-2010 teachers. Since 2011, new entrants to the teaching profession have experienced pay inequality. At second level the majority of these teachers face years of precarious working conditions due to the high level of unnecessary casualisation.

I believe that the three teacher unions are determined to make 2018 the year that income inequality in our profession is resolved. Each of the unions has a rich tradition of fighting against unfair and archaic policies in the education sector. History confirms that when the three unions come together, we are a force to be reckoned with. Together we are more than 67,000 teachers working in primary, secondary and further education.

As well as co-operating on the pay of post-2010 teachers, last November the three unions made a joint submission to the Public Service Pay Commission on teacher shortages. The Commission has been tasked with examining recruitment and retention issues across the public sector.

Our submission to the Commission documents the extent of teacher supply difficulties. The data says it all: the combination of unequal pay and casualisation has led to a teacher supply crisis. This comes as no surprise to the teacher unions who have been raising a red flag on this issue for a number of years.

The following month – December 2017 – the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) issued its report on precarious work in Ireland. The report states that the rise in precarious employment has far-reaching and negative consequences that go beyond the nature of work and people's experience of work. I believe that this is particularly true for teaching and education. In fact, OECD research demonstrates that the high level of casualisation in second-level teaching in Ireland impacts negatively on students' education. Temporary, part-time and substitute teachers find it more difficult to establish themselves in their school communities and their lack of status affects the classroom environment.

The ICTU report notes that precarious employment also has negative consequences for the well-being of workers and their families. I know that this will resonate with many recently qualified teachers who are experiencing the stress of ongoing uncertainty in their working lives.

On a related issue, the ASTI survey 'Teachers and Workload' will launch over the coming weeks. The survey will collect data on teachers' work, changes in work practices in recent years, and the impact of these changes on teachers and teaching.

If you are a teacher in service and if your ASTI membership contact details include your current email address, you will receive a link to the survey by email towards the end of January. Participating in this survey will greatly assist the ASTI in advocating on your behalf.



Ger Curtin
ASTI President

THE ENDURING VALUE OF TRADE UNIONISM

Teaching is the most unionised profession in the world. In Ireland more than 90% of teachers are in unions. A key reason for joining any union is to have effective protection and representation in work-related issues. The ASTI's core objectives are to promote the interests of second-level teachers, to protect and maintain working conditions, and to regulate relations between teachers, school management and the Department of Education and Skills.

Research shows that teachers' job satisfaction is associated with a multitude of factors. These include job security, appropriate salary, supportive management structures, opportunities for promotion, being able to access their rights and entitlements, a safe working environment, and reasonable professional autonomy. Without teacher unions, school management and the Department would have untrammelled control over these and many other issues.

The power of unions lies in solidarity and planned collective action. While industrial action is one tactic, it is by no means the most important. There are many ways that colleagues can speak and act together effectively. In the ASTI, this happens every week, sometimes through ongoing consultation and collaboration between a teaching staff and a school management, and sometimes involving a staff speaking up collectively against decisions that are not in the interests of teachers, or the school community. There are also times when individual teachers find that their employment rights are being infringed or that they are being treated unfairly. While this can feel like a lonely place for the teacher, trade union membership means that support is easily accessible, at local level or from ASTI head office.

ASTI members are represented at national level by elected activists who are also classroom teachers. These representatives develop ASTI policy and, together with ASTI head office, work to ensure that teachers are represented in a wide range of areas including education policy, teachers' terms and conditions, and health, safety and welfare. While the ASTI is a campaigning union, we must not forget our ongoing successes at school as well as national level. Recently these have included securing CIDs for teachers who were wrongly denied them, negotiating arrangements with school management bodies to combat bullying and harassment, and working to restore management posts to second-level schools. We are currently undertaking an intensive political lobbying campaign – along with our sister unions the INTO and TUI – on the issue of unequal pay, and have already had some success (see page 10). The pay scale for post-2010 teachers is blatantly discriminatory and we intend to put an end to this.

Much of the antagonistic commentary about the ASTI has sought to paint us as a divided union. Ironically, the aim of this rhetoric is to cause division and weaken us! We are a diverse group with a strong sense of solidarity. Anything the ASTI has achieved over the past 108 years has been achieved because we have spoken and acted together when and where it mattered. Anything that is achieved in the future will come about in the same way.



Kieran Christie
ASTI General Secretary

ASTI donates to development aid projects



Staff of MICC Dunmanway in Christmas jumpers for the Zambia Appeal.

Over €13,000 was donated to development aid projects from the ASTI development aid fund in 2017. One of these donations was to a group of students and teachers from Maria Immaculate Community College (MICC), Dunmanway, Co. Cork, who will travel to Zambia to build homes with housing charity Habitat for Humanity Ireland next July.

Transition Year students Sean Cronin, Meadhbh King, Donna Hayes, Cian Hurley, Shauna Coughlan and Ryan Twomey, and their teachers Kenneth Hickey and Sarah Crowley-O’Sullivan, will spend two weeks in the community of Kabwe, where they will help a local family to build their own safe and decent home, complete with access to sanitation facilities.

In Zambia, two-thirds of the population live on less than US\$1 a day.

An estimated 74% of urban residents live in slums, where shelter is highly overcrowded and children face acute housing deprivation.

MICC Dunmanway teacher Kenneth Hickey said: “I am hoping this will be a life-changing experience, not only for the families who are benefiting in Zambia, but for the students and teachers volunteering”.

The team aims to raise over €24,000 for Habitat for Humanity, a charity that builds and renovates homes in partnership with low-income families in 70 countries around the world.

Other development aid projects that have received donations from the ASTI this year include UNICEF, Sightsavers, Greater Chernobyl Cause, and The Hope Foundation.

Job share and career break deadlines

The deadline for applications for career break and job share for the 2018/19 school year is **February 1, 2018**.

Job share

Job sharing is the sharing of a whole-time position on a 50:50 basis, or a reduction of hours to 50% of a whole-time teacher, i.e., 11 hours per week teaching.

The minimum period for which a job-sharing arrangement may occur is one school year.

Career break

The main objective of the career break scheme is to facilitate applicants in the areas of:

- personal development
- voluntary service overseas

- accompany spouse/partner on diplomatic/military posting
- education
- public representation
- childcare/dependent care
- self-employment.

A career break shall be a period of not less than one school year and may be extended on an annual basis provided that the total period of the career break does not exceed five years at any one time.

Application forms

Full information and application forms are available in the Department of Education and Skills booklet ‘Terms and Conditions of Employment for Registered Teachers in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools Edition 2’, available at www.asti.ie.



ASTI prize awarded

ASTI President Ger Curtin presented the ASTI Prize to Elisabeth Sinnott at her graduation from the Trinity Professional Master of Education (PME) course. The ASTI Prize is awarded to the student with the highest grade on school placement. Pictured are (from left): Melanie Ní Dhuinn (Trinity School of Education), Elisabeth Sinnott (ASTI Prize recipient), and Ger Curtin (ASTI President).

Child Protection legislation update

The Children First Act 2015 and the updated 2017 'Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children', have changed the legal context for schools as regards child protection. The revised 2017 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools' incorporates the new statutory obligations arising from the 2015 Act and the 2017 Children First Guidance.

Section 6 of the Act imposes obligations on teachers as mandated professionals. Section 11 imposes obligations on schools as safeguarding institutions. Both Sections commenced on December 11, 2017.

Teachers as mandated professionals

The 2017 Procedures continue the previous requirement wherein teachers must report allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP). The DLP can then either: (i) get advice from Tusla; (ii) make a report to Tusla; or, (iii) both.

In addition, if the allegation or suspicion of abuse is at or above a defined threshold of harm, the teacher must also make a mandated report to Tusla. In making this mandated report, the teacher must liaise with the DLP and submit the mandated report jointly with the DLP. These thresholds are defined in the Procedures.

The statutory obligation to report under that Act applies only to information that a registered teacher acquires in the course of his/her professional work. However, all adults are statutorily obliged under the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 to disclose information to the Garda Síochána. All adults are additionally required to report concerns under the 2017 Children First Guidance.

Schools' safeguarding statement

Section 11 of the Act places the following statutory obligations on schools:

- ensure, in so far as is practicable, that children are safe from harm while availing of the school's services
- carry out an assessment of any potential harm to children while they are attending the school or while they are participating in school activities
- prepare a written child safeguarding statement in accordance with the Act
- appoint a "relevant person" as the first point of contact in respect of the school's child safeguarding statement.

For more information on child protection, visit www.asti.ie or www.tusla.ie.

Teachers' workload: important survey

ASTI members who receive an email with a link to a RED C/ASTI questionnaire on teachers' workload are encouraged to take approximately 10 minutes of their time to complete it. The findings will be of significant assistance to the ASTI in terms of protecting and improving members' terms and conditions. The survey focuses on the diverse range of work carried out by second-level teachers in addition to their classroom teaching. It uses

methodologies from international research to calculate the average time commitment of a range of tasks undertaken in Irish second-level schools. It also asks teachers about their key challenges and how these impact on workload, work intensity and well-being.

The questionnaire will be emailed to members whose current email address is included in the contact details provided to head office.

ASTI member to chair Teaching Council

ASTI member Noelle Moran has been elected Chairperson of the Teaching Council.

Noelle is a teacher at St Jarlath's College, Tuam, Co. Galway, and is ASTI Standing Committee representative for region 3 (Galway, Tuam, East Galway). She has been a member of the Teaching Council since 2016. Noelle previously served as an ASTI School Steward, Chair of the Tuam ASTI Branch, and as a member of the ASTI Non-Permanent Teachers' Committee.



Commenting on Noelle's election, ASTI President Ger Curtin said: "It is a great honour for a member of the ASTI to serve as Chair of the national teachers' regulatory body. I wish Noelle well in her role".

The Teaching Council has 37 members, 16 of whom are registered teachers elected by teachers. In addition, each teaching union has two nominees on the Council.

ASTI seeks nominees to Teaching Council

The ASTI is seeking applications from members who are interested in serving as an ASTI nominee on the Teaching Council. The Teaching Council comprises 37 members, 11 of whom are registered teachers employed in, or qualified to teach in, second-level schools. Of these 11, four are nominated by the teacher unions representing second-level teachers (two by the ASTI and two by the TUI), with the remaining seven being elected by registered teachers. In February, ASTI Standing Committee will nominate two members to serve on the Teaching Council for the next four years. Interested members should apply to the General Secretary by outlining their suitability in 600 words or less. Applications must reach ASTI Head Office before close of business on Friday, February 9.

For information on the role of Teaching Council members, visit www.asti.ie.

Applications should be sent to: ASTI General Secretary, ASTI, Thomas MacDonagh House, Winetavern Street, Dublin 8 Do8 P9V6, or via email to gensecgalligan@asti.ie.

Student's unique device wins SciFest 2017



Aaron Hannon and his teacher Kevin Boyle (right) along with Dr Eilish McLoughlin.

Aaron Hannon from St Muredach's College, Ballina, Co. Mayo, was named overall winner of SciFest 2017 for his project EnableArm – a shaving device for people with limited hand dexterity.

His teacher, Kevin Boyle, who is a member of the ASTI Central Executive Council, was named Intel Teacher of Excellence at the National Final. The two will attend the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, next year, where Aaron will represent Ireland in the international competition.

EnableArm was inspired by Aaron's late grandfather, who suffered from limited hand dexterity due to a stroke. It is a fully functional device capable of shaving facial hair for people with limited use of their hands. The device is user friendly and was created through technical research to develop the physical, electrical and software aspects. A mannequin head was used to test the device and an android app was designed to allow greater ease of use. Aaron secured his place at the National Final after his victory at the SciFest regional final in IT Sligo.

Speaking about his experience of SciFest, Kevin Boyle said: "SciFest is a wonderful competition, which allowed 10,000 students from all over the country to showcase their projects. I'm honoured to have been given the 2017 Intel Teacher of Excellence Award at the SciFest national awards but, more importantly, I'm delighted that Aaron's effort has been recognised and rewarded by being awarded the overall 2017 SciFest Science Foundation Ireland Intel ISEF Award and the overall 2017 SciFest Boston Scientific Medical Devices Award.

"He is an excellent student and has done St Muredach's College proud over the last number of years, and we are looking forward to representing Ireland at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Pittsburgh in May". Funded primarily by Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), Intel Ireland and Boston Scientific, SciFest is an all-island STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) initiative, which fosters active, collaborative and inquiry-based learning among second-level students.

For more information see www.scifest.ie.

Cycle to Work Scheme



Teachers who are on the Department of Education and Skills payroll can apply for the Cycle to Work Scheme. The Scheme allows an employer to purchase a new bicycle/bicycle safety equipment to a maximum value of €1,000 once every five years on behalf of an employee.

The total cost of the bicycle/bicycle safety equipment will be deducted from the employee's salary and they will not pay tax, PRSI, Universal Social Charge or Pension Related Deduction on the remuneration sacrificed. The applicant must be employed in a permanent, CID, fixed-term or regular part-time capacity at the date of application, and the employment must be capable of lasting until the salary sacrifice has been recouped.

The Scheme applies only to new bicycles and bicycle safety equipment purchased from approved suppliers. A list of suppliers and further information on the Cycle to Work Scheme are available at www.procurement.ie/suppliers/contracts/1939.

Further information on the Scheme, including an application form and salary deduction authorisation form, can be found in Circular 0066/2017 on the Department of Education and Skills website – www.education.ie.

Droichead application process

The Teaching Council commenced the administration of applications for the Droichead process via DR1 forms on September 4, 2017. Since then, in excess of 1,200 primary and post-primary applications have been received and processed.

The Council is currently updating and streamlining the administration of the application process for Droichead, which will in the future be carried out via the Teaching Council 'My Registration' log-in. Links to this will be provided on the Teaching Council website in due course.

It is anticipated that this will commence in January 2018.

Forms and further information are available on the Council's website www.teachingcouncil.ie, and queries can be emailed to conditions@teachingcouncil.ie.

AVC annual report

ASTI members who are members of the ASTI AVC (Additional Voluntary Contributions) plan should note that, in accordance with pension scheme regulations, a copy of the latest annual report is available for examination by contacting the Honorary Treasurer, Ray St John, at ASTI head office.

High public satisfaction with schools

Public satisfaction with the education system in Ireland is the highest in Europe, according to a report by the Institute of Public Administration (IPA). The report presents recent international and national data on public services (see graph below).

Some 83% of those surveyed by the OECD said they were satisfied with their local schools/education system. Ireland is also ranked as having an efficient education service based on an analysis of student performance and Government spending per student. The percentage of business executives who believe education in Ireland meets the needs of a competitive economy is higher than the EU average.

The publication, 'Public Sector Trends 2017', also found that Ireland has a proportionately smaller public sector workforce than most European countries. Government expenditure on public services is below the European average.

Ireland second in EU for school completion

Ireland's school completion rate is the second highest in Europe, according to a new Department of Education and Skills report.

The report examines completion for students who entered second-level schools in 2010, and compares this to other years. It finds that 91.2% of those who entered second-level education in 2010 sat their Leaving Cert compared to 90.2% of those who entered in 2009. Of the 2010 cohort, 97.4% sat the Junior Certificate.

The average retention rate to the Leaving Cert for DEIS second-level schools has also increased, and is 84.41% for the 2010 cohort, compared to 82.7% for the 2009 cohort.

The report states that the retention rate is even higher when participation in apprenticeships, out-of-school programmes and other training within the first year of leaving school is considered.

Over the 13 years from 1997 to 2010, there has been a steady improvement in the Leaving Cert retention rate. For the 2006 cohort, the rate rose to about 90% for the first time. The 2010 cohort represents the first time that the rate has moved above 91%.

Gender gap

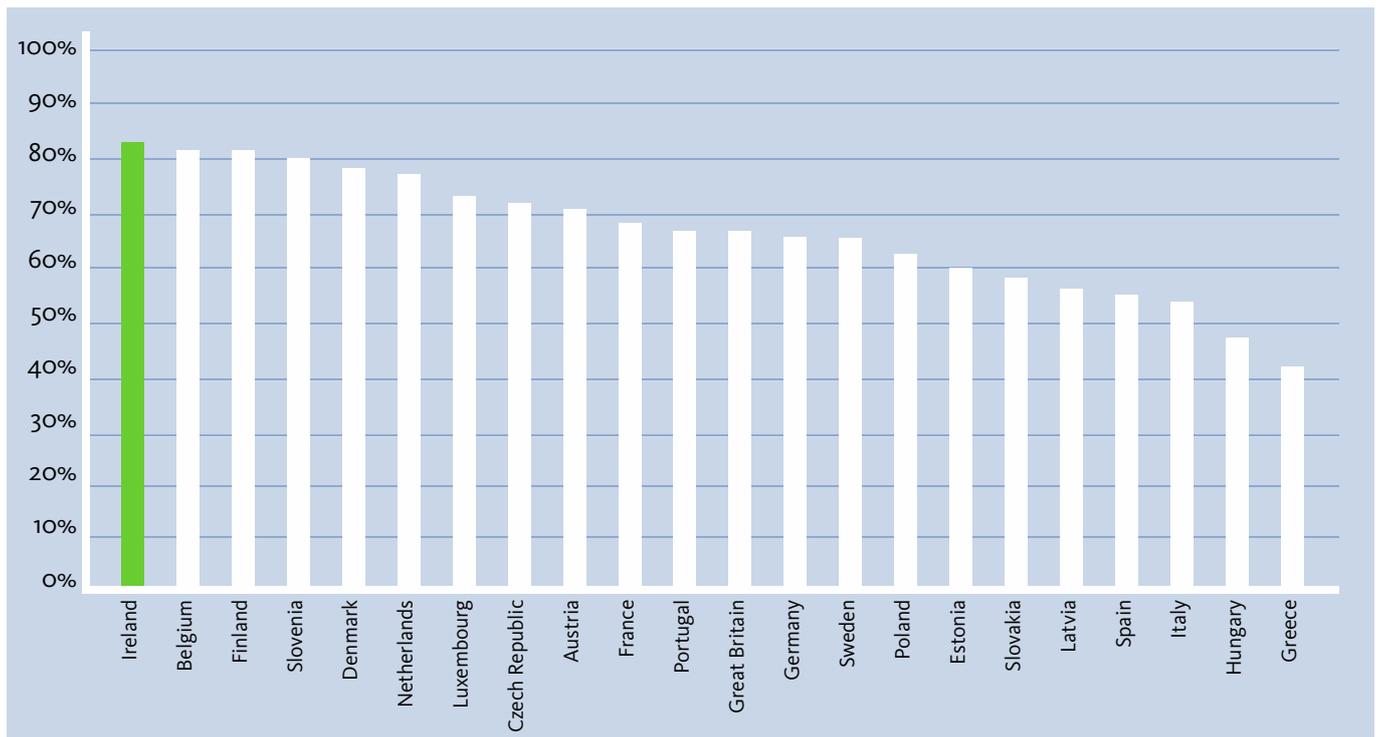
The Leaving Cert retention rate was 92.7% for females and 89.74% for males in 2010. This gender difference of 3% compares to a gender difference of 11.3% for the 1995 entry cohort and 8.9% for the 2001 entry cohort.

The report gives a county-by-county breakdown of school completion, with Sligo having the highest rate at 93.91%.

Read the full report at www.education.ie.

FIGURE 75 CITIZEN SATISFACTION WITH THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2017, based on Gallup World Poll data. Figures are for 2016.



GILL EDUCATION

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Join us for an information event with our expert team of Junior Cycle authors in History, Geography, Home Economics, French, Irish and English.

We look forward to welcoming you at the following venues

AREA	VENUE	DATE
NORTH DUBLIN	Crowne Plaza Dublin Airport, Santry	Saturday morning, 10 March
SOUTH DUBLIN	Radisson BLU St. Helen's Hotel, Dublin	Tuesday evening, 13 March
CORK	Rochestown Park Hotel, Cork	Wednesday evening, 14 March
DUNDALK	Crowne Plaza, Dundalk	Thursday evening, 15 March
LIMERICK	Thomond Park Stadium	Wednesday evening, 21 March
ATHLONE	Athlone Springs Hotel, Athlone	Thursday evening, 22 March
KILKENNY	Lyrath Estate Hotel, Kilkenny	Saturday morning, 14 April
WATERFORD	Woodlands Hotel, Waterford	Tuesday evening, 17 April
GALWAY	The Connacht Hotel, Galway	Wednesday evening, 18 April
DONEGAL	Radisson BLU Hotel, Letterkenny	Thursday evening, 19 April

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-  From your Gill Education sales rep.
-  Via your email
-  On www.gilleducation.ie/secondary
-  Via Twitter @GillEducation

NEW JUNIOR CYCLE TITLES FOR 2018



See you there!

TEACHER UNIONS CAMPAIGN FOR EQUAL PAY

The teacher unions are coming together in the fight for equal pay.



Front row (from left): John Boyle (INTO President), Sheila Nunan (INTO General Secretary), and Joanne Irwin (TUI President). Back row (from left): Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary), Ger Curtin (ASTI President), and John MacGabhann (TUI General Secretary).

The three teacher unions – the ASTI, INTO and TUI – are running a joint campaign to achieve equal pay for recently qualified teachers. The three unions are participating in a talks process under the Public Service Stability Agreement. This process, which is ongoing since October 2017, involves “an examination of the remaining salary scale issues in respect of post-January 2011 entrants” to the public sector.

“As a result of lobbying by the three teacher unions, the Minister must present a costed plan on pay equalisation to the Oireachtas in early 2018.”

In addition to this, the three teacher unions are conducting a campaign of political lobbying. In the ASTI, Standing Committee representatives are conducting/organising lobbying in every constituency around the country. This includes Standing Committee representatives and ASTI members who are post-2010 entrants visiting TDs in their constituencies. The ASTI, INTO and TUI have produced a flier for politicians containing key campaign messages, including:

- since February 2011, those who enter teaching are on reduced pay
- there are career earnings losses (compared to earlier entrants) from €70,000 to over €100,000 over 40 years
- on average, every post-2010 teacher has a 2018 salary that is €4,000 less than the salary of a 2010 entrant with the same experience – in some cases more than €5,000 less
- a 2011 entrant already has earnings over €26,000 below those of a 2010 entrant.



Senator Aodhán Ó Riordáin, Labour Party spokesperson on education (right), and ASTI President Ger Curtin.

Ger Curtin, ASTI President (right), pictured with Thomas Byrne (Fianna Fáil spokesperson on education), and Fiona O'Loughlin (Fianna Fáil and Chairperson of the Oireachtas Education Committee).

Targeted political lobbying

As a result of lobbying by the three teacher unions, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform must present a costed plan on pay equalisation to the Oireachtas in early 2018. This follows the tabling of a legislative amendment, which is included in the Public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017. This Act was passed by the Oireachtas in December 2017.

The amendment was proposed by Deputy Dara Calleary of Fianna Fáil following contacts by the teachers' unions. It states: "The Minister [for Public Expenditure and Reform] shall, within three months of the passing of this Act, prepare and lay before the Oireachtas a report on the cost of and a plan in dealing with pay equalisation for new entrants to the public sector".



Catherine Martin, Green Party spokesperson on education, with ASTI President Ger Curtin.

Keep up with the Equal Pay for Equal Work campaign at www.asti.ie.



RECRUITMENT ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED

ASTI members have been speaking out about the problems the country faces in relation to the recruitment and retention of teachers.

“ASTI president Ger Curtin said that until recently, Ireland was one of a handful of countries in the OECD which did not face recruitment and retention problems in teaching. ‘However, just as we have been warning for the past few years, that situation has now changed. Pay inequality is at the heart of this issue.’”

Ger Curtin, ASTI President, *The Irish Times*, November 29, 2017

“Well in disadvantaged areas, third level may not be the language of the home. It might be survival and just getting through second level and hoping to get into some sort of apprenticeship or PLC course. Remember, we’ve just come through a horrendous recession where we saw an increase in pupil–teacher ratios and another thing that really did affect disadvantaged areas was the cuts to guidance counselling. Thankfully, those cuts are being reversed at the moment. Very often students in disadvantaged areas would need the assistance of a guidance counsellor to direct them into the right area of third level – what their options may be. Their parents might come from very much a working background and working very hard indeed – working endless hours to just keep their kids in school where third level would be just a dream for them. There’s nothing new in the figures today, but we have to be very honest. The cutbacks in the last number of years have had a very serious impact.”

Ger Curtin, ASTI President, discussing feeder school tables, *The Last Word*, Today FM, December 5, 2017

“STEM is critical to future economic growth and to opening up job opportunities for thousands of young people ... If we don’t have teachers with the appropriate skills to teach these subjects to the highest level then I have to say we should all be very concerned.”

Moira Leydon, ASTI Assistant General Secretary, *The Irish Times*, November 27, 2017



“If you look at the Leaving Cert in general, you know you can do art, you can do various other subjects that are not necessarily academic ... this example is the same.”

Andrew Phelan, ASTI Standing Committee, speaking about the introduction of PE as a Leaving Certificate exam subject, RTÉ News, RTÉ One, December 11, 2017

“The overarching question should always be: will my child be happy in that school? A happy and at-ease child will thrive in most environments and school is no different. Parents should ask other parents whose children are attending the school: are they happy there? What is the school’s approach to discipline, homework, punctuality, extracurricular activities and exams? What is the culture of the school like?”

Attend the open evening. Ask the pertinent questions about the range of subjects, expectations of school staff, extracurricular activities, and pastoral care and well-being programmes.”

Ray Silke, ASTI member, *The Irish Times*, December 5, 2017

“I believe most students are happiest in their local school, moving on with the friends they have been with in primary school. This works well outside city areas where, in general, the choice is very limited. In some cases, where pupils have special educational or social/personal needs, it is important to speak to the relevant people in the school to see if the school has experience in this area. The views of other parents and/or students can be helpful here.”

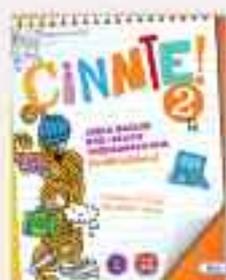
Breda Lynch, ASTI Vice President, *The Irish Times*, December 5, 2017



EDCO NEW PUBLICATIONS

2018

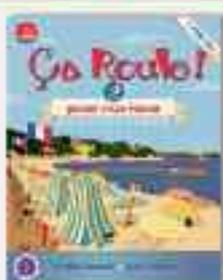
New Junior Cycle Titles



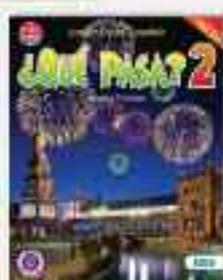
Gaeilge



Gaeilge



French



Spanish

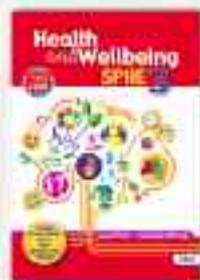


German

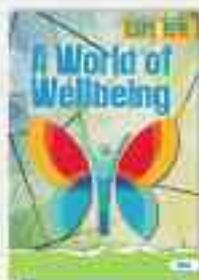
New Junior Cycle Titles



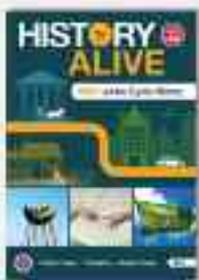
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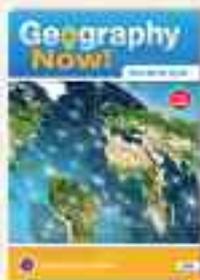
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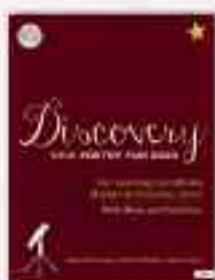


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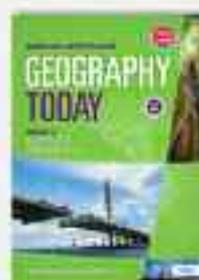


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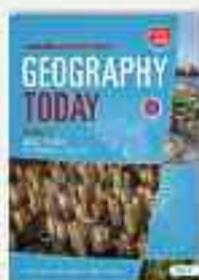
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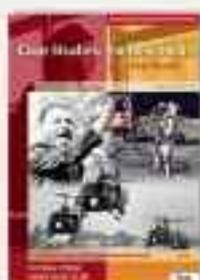
English



Geography



Geography



History



French



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TEACHER SHORTAGES REACH CRISIS POINT

The teacher unions have identified pay as a key factor in the teacher recruitment retention crisis in a submission to the Public Service Pay Commission.

In a submission to the Public Service Pay Commission (PSPC), the three teacher unions – the ASTI, INTO and TUI – have provided evidence that teacher shortages in Ireland have reached crisis point. The detailed joint submission from the three unions is part of a public sector-wide review of recruitment and retention issues.

The teacher unions’ submission argues that pay inequality has created a teacher recruitment and retention crisis that will have severe repercussions for Ireland’s education system unless it is urgently tackled: “The introduction, since 2011, of reduced pay scales for all new entrants to the public service has been exacerbated in the case of teachers by the simultaneous cessation of incremental recognition for pre-service training and the abolition of qualification allowances for those first appointed on or after February 1, 2012. This combination of cuts in the pay rates available to teachers has inexorably created a recruitment and retention crisis”.

The evidence of a teacher recruitment crisis includes data on entry into post-primary teaching courses provided by the Central Applications Office (CAO) for undergraduate degree programmes, and the Postgraduate Applications Centre (PAC) for the postgraduate programmes such as the Professional Master of Education (PME). The submission notes that the majority of applications for post-primary teaching are processed via the PAC and that since 2011, applications for teacher education courses via the PAC have decreased by 62%.

Evidence of retention difficulties outlined in the submission include data from the Higher Education Authority demonstrating a five-fold increase in the proportion of recently qualified teachers who have emigrated. In addition, the submission says that several surveys have confirmed the

difficulties faced by school principals trying to hire teaching staff, particularly for part-time or temporary cover, in a number of subject areas. Subject areas identified as problematic include Irish, French, maths, home economics, German, and physics.

The teacher unions’ joint submission identifies the consequences of teacher shortages as including:

- students missing out on learning because either a teacher with the subject specialism is not available or no teacher is available
- students experiencing fractured service as a consequence of having several different teachers in particular subject areas, with resultant problems of lack of continuity, an absence of attention to individual learning needs of students, disruption of the learning culture in the class/school, decreased student motivation, and diminished discipline
- Subject loss and/or restriction of subject options for students
- curtailment of out-of-class learning activities, e.g., debates, enterprise education, Transition Year projects and cultural events
- curtailment of sports, games and other extracurricular activities
- difficulties securing release of teacher union members to participate on curriculum development groups established by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). If chronic teacher shortages mean that teachers cannot participate in essential curricular development work, then a real danger arises for the integrity and relevance of curricula at both primary and post-primary level.
- the absence of subject specialist teachers to cover for colleagues who are engaged in work for agencies related to the Department of Education and Skills (DES) poses a great risk to a number of DES initiatives, such as the

Attractiveness of teaching is falling dramatically

2011 | 2,824 Applications received for second-level teaching

2012 | 2,158 Applications received for second-level teaching

2013 | 1,990 Applications received for second-level teaching

Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) and the Special Education Support Service (SESS)

- teachers unable to attend continuing professional development as they have to cover for shortages
- student teachers being deployed to teach at too early a stage during their school placement
- student teachers being allocated exam classes
- the State Examinations Commission (SEC) having extreme difficulty in recruiting examiners to assess elements of the State certificate exams due to refusal by school management to release teachers owing to lack of substitutes
- teachers unable to engage in QQI external authentication, as management is unable to get substitution cover.

The key messages in the ASTI, INTO and TUI submission are:

- the cuts to pay and conditions inflicted on new entrants in 2011, and exacerbated by further cuts in 2012, have had the effect of sharply reducing the attractiveness of teaching as a profession, with the result that the number of applicants for initial teacher education has dropped dramatically
- those same cuts have led to a rapid rise in the number of recently qualified teachers emigrating
- the scale of the pay differential is disproportionately large in the case of teachers, and particularly among those in the early years of teaching
- service to students in schools is suffering severe disruption because of timetable changes necessitated by the lack of qualified teachers, including teachers for substitution

- students are losing out on educational opportunities both inside and outside of school
- Departmental agencies and support services cannot recruit staff due to teacher shortages and the difficulty in engaging qualified substitutes
- student numbers are rising rapidly at precisely the same time as the attractiveness of teaching is falling dramatically
- a crisis point has been reached.

What happens next?

The PSPC has been asked to review recruitment and retention issues in the public sector following a commitment to trade unions as part of the Public Service Stability Agreement.

The PSPC states that:

“The Commission will conduct a comprehensive examination and analysis of the particular [recruitment and retention] issues in question, commissioning external expertise as required, and taking into account the full range of causal factors in each case.

“The Commission will be asked to generate options for resolving the issues identified. In this regard the Commission will develop specific methodological and analytical criteria to support it in carrying out this exercise.”

The Commission has until the end of 2018 to complete this work.

For more information, log on to www.asti.ie.

2014 | 1,422
Applications received
for second-level teaching

2015 | 1,139
Applications received
for second-level teaching

2016 | 1,056
Applications received
for second-level teaching

2017 | 1,068
Applications received
for second-level teaching



MOVING WITH THE TIMES

The Digital Learning Framework hopes to make the use of digital technologies commonplace in classrooms and to increase student engagement using these tools.

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) has published its action plan for the implementation of the 'Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020, Enhancing Teaching, Learning and Assessment'. A core feature of the strategy is the emphasis on schools developing a Digital Learning Framework in line with the school's vision and student needs. The Framework is being piloted by 30 primary and 20 post-primary schools and the outcome of this trial will inform the national rollout of the Framework in September 2018. However, the Framework is available to schools not participating in the trial now if they wish to implement it early. An external evaluation of the trial will be undertaken before it is introduced to all schools to inform the national rollout. One of the aims of the Framework is to assist schools in effectively embedding digital technologies into teaching and learning. One of the other aims is to increase student engagement with their lessons by the use of digital technologies.

It is also hoped that the Framework will help schools and teachers to upskill so they can use different digital technologies effectively. The embedding of these technologies across all aspects of school activity will be internally and externally assessed.

Lack of funding

While some of the trial schools report uplifts in student engagement, there has been very little extra support made available from the DES. There is a little more support from the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) for trial schools, but no extra funding has been made available for supervision/substitution and schools say they are relying on the goodwill of teachers to use their own time to upskill for the benefit of students.

Despite this, some of the schools involved in the trial report that it is going well and it is about time that something like it was introduced for Irish students. The DES says the Framework will support planning in areas like literacy, numeracy and STEM, which require a cross-curricular focus. It believes that not only should digital technologies be available in the classroom, but that they should be deeply embedded in classroom activities.

The Framework sets out to treat schools differently as they will all be at different levels when it comes to embedding digital technologies into teaching and learning. Schools and teachers can use the school self-evaluation (SSE) process in the implementation of the Framework. The DES says: "It is crucial from the outset that the leadership team in each

DIGITAL LEARNING FRAMEWORK TRIAL

The Digital Learning Framework is being trialled in 20 second-level schools across the country before it is rolled out nationwide in September 2018. *ASTIR* spoke to some of the teachers who are involved in the trial.

Aaron Wolfe, Deputy Principal, Deerpark CBS, Cork city

Aaron says the programme has been going very well: "The students are really engaged with it. They're loving Google Classroom. They're emailing us in work. We are a DEIS school, so it's great to see students from our setting working from home".

Aaron says Deerpark is actively looking for ways to engage students rather than the teacher just talking all the time: "We want our students up moving about the room".

Unfortunately, funding is a big problem as there is no extra funding available to schools participating in the trial. The Department of Education and Skills (DES) has not supplied protected supervision/substitution time either. The school is holding CPD sessions for teachers who are involved in the programme. These sessions take the teachers through different IT tools such as Google Classroom, virtual reality, etc.: "Schools are stretched; we're relying on the further goodwill of teachers".

The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) will provide five additional sessions to participating schools, which Aaron says is good, but the Department of Education and Skills has not provided funding for substitution for this. If he wants to send teachers to these sessions, he must use money from the ordinary substitution budget.

He says they are lucky in Deerpark that teachers are willing to get

involved in new initiatives: "They are willing to go that extra mile, and teachers are nationally".

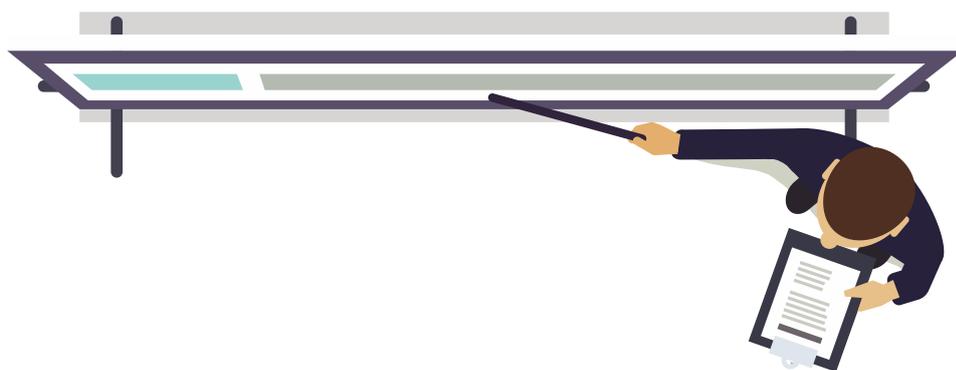
"Our volunteers are a cross section of the whole school community. So you have teachers involved in the programme that have been teaching for 30 years. There are no part-time teachers involved."

Brendan O'Sullivan, Assistant Principal for IT, Gorey Community School, Gorey, Co. Wexford

With the Framework being rolled out nationwide in 2018, Brendan, his deputy principal and the school's IT technician thought it would be a good idea to get involved with the trial. There has been a great response from their colleagues: "We're currently putting teachers into working teams and identifying areas they can work on".

Brendan feels positive about the Framework, as it has made the school look at its ICT use and evaluate how effective it is: "It's also allowed us to share our experiences and to come to a collective vision for the next four or five years".

The school has the help of an adviser from the PDST and while Brendan can't speak highly enough of the quality of the support, he feels the Department should acknowledge the extra demands the programme puts on schools: "There's been no additional funding, there's been no substitution offered, which is disappointing".



school has a shared understanding of why and how the school seeks to embed digital technologies in teaching and learning and is committed to doing so”.

Schools can use the six-step process for self-evaluation in the implementation if they wish to:

1. Identify focus.
2. Gather evidence.
3. Analyse and make judgments.
4. Write and share report and improvement plan.
5. Put improvement plan into action.
6. Monitor actions and evaluate impact.

One of the possible benefits of the Framework is that it could facilitate a whole-school approach to understanding what it means to embed digital technologies in teaching and learning.

The DES hopes that the Framework will help create high levels of student engagement, make teaching student centred, and make students more self directed and motivated in their approach to learning.



The programme was only launched in the school in November and at the moment the school is getting the views of teachers. Focus groups with parents and students will be held in the New Year.

The Framework has made the staff look at what ICT skills they have and training will be available where there is a skills deficit: “Teachers have put their hands up looking for help, which is really positive”.

One drawback is that there are many other demands on teachers’ time: “But overall, people believe there are a lot of benefits and that the positives will outweigh the negatives at the end of the day”.

Brendan says he would recommend the Framework as it’s time the Irish education system addressed the ICT needs of its students: “The fact that it is linked to the European framework also I think is important because it gives us something to measure ourselves against”.

Patrick Curley, Loreto Community School, Milford, Co. Donegal

Patrick says the school has a long history of keeping up with the latest digital innovations and has participated in many different programmes since the 1980s. He says: “There has been and still is a high level of commitment among our teachers and school leaders in Loreto Community School to fully embrace digital technologies in teaching and learning. In applying to participate in the trial, our school expressed its reasons for applying, namely to develop and enhance its existing digital

education practices in any way possible to provide the best quality and experience for our students, and to prepare them for the digital world of study and employment for the future”.

The school has a number of unique factors that made it suitable for the trial, including its rural setting, its mixed cohort and the existing level of infrastructure.

The schools participating in the trial were asked to choose domains of the Framework to focus on. The teachers at Loreto chose ‘Leadership and Management: Leading, Learning and Teaching’ and will do a project under this heading, which they hope will be successful.

“Our present focus is gathering evidence in order to develop a digital vision and plan that will inform best practice in meeting identified future needs.” Patrick says that although the trial is only in the initial stage: “Many practices involved in the trial have already been taking place in the school for a number of years”.

Teachers in the school hope that through the Framework, they will have a revised, coherent plan aligned with the practices and methodologies in the new Junior Cycle. Patrick says there are benefits of students using technology to improve learning but: “It must be remembered that digital aids are merely that – aids. They must promote and enhance learning and be well managed not to become an endeavour in themselves”.

Compiled by Colm Quinn.

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR



While an important new Scheme for Leave of Absence Following Assault commenced at the beginning of the school year, schools have made great strides in dealing with challenging behaviour.



Teachers who have been victims of a physical assault in the course of their duties can now apply for leave of absence under the Scheme for Leave of Absence Following Assault, which commenced at the beginning of the school year, and will operate on a pilot basis for two years.

The Scheme was developed following consultation with the teacher unions, and is part of a wider effort to address health and safety issues in schools. The ASTI played a key role in driving completion of Circular 0061/2017, which sets out the detail of the Scheme.

Leave of absence under the Scheme may be granted to a teacher who is unable to perform his or her duties due to physical injury following an assault in the course of his or her duties and during approved school activities (see panel).

Not a personal issue

The risk of assault is one part of a spectrum of workplace health and safety in schools, and is an issue for the whole school community, not a personal issue for the teacher concerned. Schools as employers must have a policy in place to respond to incidents. There is a legal obligation on schools to carry out risk assessments as part of standard practice for health and safety at work, and to put in place measures to manage any risks identified.

Prevention of assault

A co-operative approach to prevention is essential, and should include:

- risk assessment
- ensuring that adequate supports are in place for pupils
- strategies to reduce challenging behaviour, and
- access to training and professional development for staff on managing challenging behaviour.

In the event of assault

In the event of an assault taking place, the teacher experiencing assault is advised to remain as calm as possible, and use de-escalation techniques to minimise any threat (training in such techniques is, of course, vital). As the person committing the assault may be a child/adolescent, there is an obligation to be proportionate in the response, keeping the young person's best interests (and the safety of other students) in mind.

After an assault

In the immediate aftermath of an assault, appropriate assistance should be offered to the teacher concerned, as this is vital in limiting the impact of the assault. This should include anything from a period of time in a private place to recover, to appropriate medical treatment if necessary.

Once the immediate needs of the teacher and student(s) have been addressed, it is important that a full report be made for the school's records in the form of an incident report. The school's code of behaviour should be utilised, and in the longer term, a revised risk assessment may be necessary. Teachers should also be reminded of the services of the Employee Assistance Service.

Meeting the challenges

While schools need to have policies and guidelines in place to deal with assault should it occur, many schools all around the country have made tremendous progress in changing attitudes towards challenging behaviour in the classroom.

Michael O'Loughlin is Deputy Principal at Presentation Secondary School, Clonmel, where he has held management roles since 2003, both as Acting Principal and as Deputy Principal. He says that since the early 2000s, great work has been done in schools regarding tackling behavioural issues: "Before that time schools were only starting to work on codes of behaviour, and suspension and expulsion policies. This work has meant that schools were able to outline procedures, including expectations, and students and parents became part of the process. In every school now, students and parents must sign up to the school's code of behaviour. They're taking responsibility for their own behaviour".

He says that the establishment of the National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS) in 2006 was a very positive development, and he worked with the

NBSS as a part-time associate for a period: “We helped schools to focus on themselves – to develop strategies to cope with challenging behaviour”.

Billy Redmond is principal of St Laurence College, a DEIS co-educational secondary school in Loughlinstown, Dublin. He says that changes in society are reflected in the classroom:

“Teachers have to meet challenging behaviour every day in the classroom: behaviours such as open defiance to reasonable requests to engage with learning, or using foul language to create distractions that are upsetting and difficult to manage. Parallel to this we are developing a deeper understanding of the relationship between some behaviours and diagnosed conditions such as oppositional defiance disorder, and that many students need intensive support to develop pro-social behaviours”.

St Laurence College has the support of a Behaviour for Learning teacher (a programme set up by the NBSS), who supports the school and students to build the skills needed to understand and respond to very challenging behaviours. The school’s DEIS status means that it also has the support of a school completion programme and a Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) teacher.

Support

Focusing on the triggers of challenging behaviour, and strengthening pastoral care, are part of the process of addressing such behaviour. Michael O’Loughlin says that many schools now have support teams, which look at literacy programmes, or work to build children’s self-esteem. Michael has been involved in projects with the Mid-Munster National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) team to address two specific areas: “The first is the transition from primary to post-primary – trying to make it as positive an experience for the children as we can, so there’s a sense of belonging when they come to school. We also looked at a ‘second-year praise’ project. Research is showing that second year is where a lot of problems can start to emerge, so the Praise Project encourages building a positive atmosphere in the classroom. Again it’s focusing on the relationship between the student in the school and the teacher in the classroom”.

A whole-school approach to discipline is vital, he says, and schools have done tremendous work across a range of targeted interventions to develop social and emotional skills, from literacy and well-being at classroom level, to individualised work for children who need it, including one-to-one counselling, or a shortened timetable that focuses on the child’s strengths. Michael also welcomes the introduction of well-being to the Junior Cycle curriculum: “It all feeds into positive behaviour”.

At Presentation Clonmel, the school community has worked hard to create a culture of good discipline, and a positive attitude, with students and teachers working together to build relationships: “We place an emphasis on

strong pastoral care – that students would have the confidence to approach teachers and teachers would refer them to a year head or guidance counsellor as appropriate. There’s no such thing as a ‘bad child’ anymore – schools are looking at what is triggering behaviour – there’s always a reason and schools are adapting to that and trying to put in supports”.

Follow the evidence

For Billy Redmond, evidence-based programmes that target specific student needs are also important: “The Alert Program for sensory integration, the Friends Programme (DES-supported in all DEIS schools), Why Try, Working Things Out and others can be found on the NBSS website – www.nbss.ie. These, with evidence-informed practice, give us as teachers the information to be able to make informed choices about how to respond to students’ behaviour, and if possible prevent a more difficult outburst”.

Billy has a number of suggestions for schools:

1. Update your school’s code of behaviour. This should include the fact that 25% of students have additional learning needs and much of this has a behavioural element. This does not excuse the behaviour but it will alter the response.
2. Intervene to support students who have challenges with managing anger before the outburst. Check and Connect or Why Try can be very helpful here.
3. Build relationships with the family – the behaviours are often the same if not worse at home, and they need support also.
4. Build relationships with local family supports such as Springboard.
5. Ensure that staff support systems are built into the school’s code, such as class designation systems, to allow cooling off time in a supported way.
6. Balance the amount of interventions and scaffolding you provide with consequences and sanctions – they can both apply at the same time.
7. Support teachers in attending CPD – there are many opportunities on the Special Education Support Service (www.sess.ie) and Professional Development Service for Teachers (www.pdst.ie) websites.
8. Document and account for what you are doing. It is very important that teachers see they are not alone in finding behaviours challenging, and that other colleagues find similar behaviours in a student difficult. It is also important to record all that the school does to support the student.
9. In a very difficult situation, remember to first get help, and create calm using appropriate skills and group management. Policy is key.
10. The school’s response must be inclusive and respectful to the professional as well as responsive to the student and family.
11. Most importantly, take care of your colleagues and help each other when possible. In our school our staff do that very well.

Entitlement to Leave of Absence following Assault

- Only absences medically certified as a physical injury qualify for leave under this scheme.
- The maximum leave available under the Scheme for Leave of Absence following Assault is three months (92 days) at full pay in a rolling four-year period.
- In exceptional cases, such as where a significant period of hospitalisation is required or in situations of a second or subsequent incident of assault, leave may be extended for a further period, not exceeding three months (92 days) at full pay, subject to an overall limit of six months (183 days) at

full pay in a rolling four-year period. Any subsequent absence will be dealt with under the Sick Leave Scheme.

- Leave of Absence following Assault ends on: the ceasing of the certification by a duly qualified medical practitioner of the physical injury; or, the maximum leave limits available under this scheme being exhausted; or, certification of fitness to return to duties.
- For full details on the Scheme for Leave of Absence Following Assault please refer to Circular Letter 0061/2017.

ANNUAL CONVENTION 2018

This year's ASTI Annual Convention returns to Cork, and is an important opportunity for members to debate issues vital to teaching and education.

Every Easter, approximately 500 ASTI members attend Annual Convention to discuss and vote on the Association's policies for the year ahead. This year, Annual Convention will take place in the Clayton Hotel Silver Springs, Tivoli, Cork, on April 3, 4 and 5.

Where can I get information about Convention?

The ASTI website – www.asti.ie – is where you will find all of the information you need about Convention 2018. Go to the Events section, where you will find the Convention 2018 page.

Attending Convention

Delegates to Convention are selected at branch meetings, usually in January. Each branch is entitled to send a number of delegates to Convention depending on the number of members in their branch. Branches must submit the names of their chosen branch delegates to ASTI head office not later than January 31. Branch delegates must be members of the branch they represent and must have been members of the ASTI for at least one year prior to election. In addition to branch delegates, members of the ASTI Central Executive Council and Standing Committee also attend Convention as delegates.

If you wish to attend Convention 2018 you should go along to your next branch meeting. If you are unsure about when or where your branch meets, ask your school steward for your branch's meeting schedule. When attending Annual Convention, you must be either a delegate or an observer. Please note that only delegates are allowed to speak on and vote on Convention motions.

Costs involved

The cost of travel and an overnight allowance is paid to all delegates attending Convention. There is also a registration fee of €30, which is paid directly to head office by delegates' branches.

Where to stay

Convention 2018 is being held in the Clayton Hotel Silver Springs Convention Centre, Cork. Accommodation for delegates to Convention 2018 will be available at the Clayton Hotel Silver Springs. Please be advised that Convention hotel accommodation is limited and is allocated on a first come, first served basis. You can book accommodation directly with the Clayton Hotel Silver Springs by contacting them on 021-450 7533, emailing them at reservations.silversprings@claytonhotels.com, or by visiting their website – www.claytonhotelsilversprings.com. Please use promotion code ASTI010564 to avail of the special ASTI rate.

There are several other accommodation options in Cork. Details of other hotels and guesthouses located in the surrounding area are available on www.asti.ie.

Childcare

The ASTI play centre is available for delegates' children aged between two and

12 years. It will be located in Newbury House Family Centre, Mayfield, Cork. The play centre will be run by Newbury House Family Centre's experienced, qualified childcare team. If you are interested in booking a place(s), please do so as early as possible. Registration forms are available on www.asti.ie, and forms must be returned to ASTI Head Office before March 2, 2018.

Convention Dinner

A Convention Dinner is organised for Tuesday, April 3, in the Clayton Hotel Silver Springs Convention Centre. The cost of a banquet ticket is normally €48, but if your branch reserves a table of ten before March 16, it will cost you only €380 – a saving of €100. If your branch wishes to join with another branch for a table, please book under one branch's name by emailing info@asti.ie, referencing 'Annual Convention Dinner'. Book early to avoid disappointment.

Education in the spotlight

Key debates on education, teachers' terms and conditions, and the ASTI's role as a trade union, take place during Convention. The ASTI Annual Convention attracts significant media attention and provides opportunities to highlight some of the key issues for second-level teachers, for example, conditions for recently qualified teachers. Coverage focuses on key speeches made during Convention, including the President's address on Tuesday evening, and on key debates throughout the conference.

Topics for debate

Topics for debate are dictated by motions, which are submitted and selected at ASTI branch meetings. In other words, ASTI members get to decide what is debated at Annual Convention. Motions are presented to Convention and delegates speak to these motions. Branches normally decide on the topics they would like to see discussed at Annual Convention at their November branch meetings.

A Convention Steering Committee, which consists of classroom teachers elected by Annual Convention each year, prepares a list of motions received from branches. The list is circulated to all branches before January 7. Branches are asked to prioritise motions for inclusion on the Convention agenda not later than January 31. They can also propose amendments to any of the motions circulated. Motions and amendments are considered again by the Steering Committee in early February and a final agenda is drawn up.

Connect at Convention

The ASTI encourages the use of social media during open debates (some debates are closed sessions and delegates may not discuss these debates on social media). Social media platforms Twitter and Facebook allow the ASTI and delegates attending Convention to spread the news to their colleagues who cannot attend, and to highlight important Convention issues to their followers.



Education Matters

Could you help a young person stay in school by volunteering 60 or up to 90 minutes a week of one to one tuition?

We are looking for volunteer tutors in Dublin. Education Matters is a service by Focus Ireland for young people aged 12 to 18. We work to help them to stay in full time education by offering one to one tuition.

We support students over their final year in Primary School and with preparation in two to three subjects

Challenging homelessness. Changing lives.

at Junior and Leaving Certificate level. If you could volunteer up to 90 minutes a week of your time and professional knowledge, you could help us make a real difference in young people's lives.

Please call the Education Matters Programme Coordinator on 086 855 4347 or email bernie.boyle@focusireland.ie to find out more.

www.focusireland.ie

FOCUS
Ireland

MY RESEARCH: FIGHTING STRESS

In a new series, *ASTIR* talks to teachers who are doing, or have completed, postgraduate studies. In this issue, Pat Glover was determined to find out the causes behind teacher stress, so based his master's around researching the issue.



Pat Glover was the recipient of this year's ASTI Centenary Scholarship, an annual scholarship to assist ASTI members in undertaking further third-level studies. He is pictured with his students at Marian College in Dublin.

Where were you studying and what was the title of your research?

I started my master's in 2014 in DCU, which was an MSc in Education and Training Management. There are two streams in the programme – an e-learning stream and a leadership stream – and I was in the leadership stream, which is mostly teachers. It's preparation for anyone who wants to go into management roles in schools. It's the ideal preparation. It was a part-time course over two years and there were also a lot of online lectures, so it's kind of a hybrid system. You go to lectures and then other things are posted online. It was very user friendly, particularly when you're a busy teacher.

Could you tell me about your research?

The topic I chose was 'Occupational stress and job satisfaction among teachers in a Dublin-based secondary school'. The objective was to look at the teachers on my staff. There are 33 and I invited them all to participate in an online questionnaire examining stress and job satisfaction. Out of the 33 that were invited, 29 took part. What I found in the questionnaire directed my main themes and I used that then to formulate a focus group. Five of the 29 teachers were selected for the group using purposive selection. This is where you look at age cohorts and you get a gender balance that is representative of your staff. In the focus group, we sat in a room and thrashed out the different causes of stress and the manifestations of stress, how people feel when they're stressed. Basically, the things in their day-to-day work that bother them or cause them anxiety.

What were the main findings?

Occupational stress was a significant problem affecting the study population; most teachers measured in the medium range. Some teachers reported very high levels of stress in certain categories. For example, time management was a major cause of stress. Lack of pupil motivation caused higher stress than pupil indiscipline or behaviour issues.

One of the interesting findings was that levels of stress vary throughout your career and they reduce the longer that you're in the profession. Young teachers have the highest levels of stress. The causes of stress for them range from getting used to the curriculum, to teaching in general and to classroom management.

Experienced teachers are well used to managing their classrooms and are familiar with the curriculum. Teachers in mid career, so those who have taught for 15 to 25 years, one of their big stressors is the lack of promotional opportunities. For many teachers, there's no real avenue for promotion or advancement so you could be a classroom teacher for 40 years. Occasionally, a deputy principal or principal's job comes up but traditionally there's only ever been one deputy principal and principal post in schools. The moratorium imposed on A-posts and the disappearance of many B-posts during the recession has greatly curtailed opportunities for career progression for many teachers.

There were very high stress levels in certain subject areas like maths, science, Spanish, history, music and art. In many of these subjects, there was either a new curriculum introduced recently or there have been practical components brought in in the last couple of years. The introduction of new curricula elicits anxiety, as do research studies, field studies, project work or classroom-based work that goes towards final grades. For many of the teachers, trying to get this work done, chasing students for the work, was particularly stress inducing.

The other interesting finding was that although stress levels were medium to high, job satisfaction was really high. You might expect because stress is high that job satisfaction would be low but in fact, and this mirrors other studies done by the ASTI, job satisfaction among teachers in Ireland is really high. The main cause of job satisfaction for teachers is when they feel or they see that they're helping their students to progress and develop.

PARENTAL AND PATERNITY LEAVE

ASTIR answers your questions about parental leave, and about the new paternity leave entitlement.

Parental leave

What is parental leave?

Parental leave is a period of unpaid leave available to teachers for the purpose of the care of children. It is provided for under the Parental Leave Acts 1998 and 2006, and the European Union (Parental Leave) Regulations 2013 (S.I. No. 81 of 2013).

Who is entitled to parental leave?

Each parent has a separate entitlement to parental leave from his/her job and such leave is available to each parent who is the natural/adoptive/adopting parent, or acting *in loco parentis* to a child.

How much parental leave am I entitled to?

A teacher is entitled to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave in respect of each child up to the age of 13 years, or the age of 16 years in the case of a child with a disability and/or long-term illness.

Am I obliged to take parental leave in a continuous pattern of 18 weeks?

A teacher may avail of parental leave in blocks of at least one week up to a maximum of 18 weeks. Please note that each period of parental leave must be a minimum duration of seven consecutive days including weekends, school closures, and days on which a teacher is not timetabled for attendance occurring within that period.

Where a teacher applies for parental leave for six or more weeks, the minimum period that must be granted by the employer is six weeks, except in the cases of postponement and refusal of parental leave.

Special pattern in exceptional circumstances

In certain circumstances, a teacher may avail of parental leave in the form of individual days, where a child has particular medical problems that require the attendance of a parent with the child at a hospital, clinic or therapeutic appointment on a regular basis. In such cases, certification from the hospital or clinic in respect of the absence must be submitted to the employer and retained on the teacher's personnel file.

How do I apply for parental leave?

A teacher must apply to his/her employer six weeks in advance of the commencement date of the leave on the prescribed application form, which is located in the Terms and Conditions of Employment of Registered Teachers, Chapter Six, Appendix A.

The employer, in granting parental leave, should, four weeks prior to the commencement of the leave, prepare the confirmation document with the teacher, which is located in the Terms and Conditions of Employment of Registered Teachers, Chapter Six, Appendix B. This document constitutes a legal agreement between the parties. A teacher may revoke the application at any point prior to the signing of the confirmation document by both parties.

For full details on the Parental Leave Scheme for Registered Teachers please refer to the Terms and Conditions of Employment of Registered Teachers – Chapter Six.

Paternity leave

What is paternity leave?

With effect from September 1, 2016, registered teachers are entitled to a single period of two consecutive weeks' paid paternity leave.

The leave is to allow the relevant parent to provide or assist in the care of the child, or to provide support to the mother or adopting parent of the child concerned as the case may be, or both.

Who is entitled to paternity leave?

Paternity leave is available to a relevant parent on the birth/adoption of a child, where the date of birth/day of placement falls on or after September 1, 2016. The term relevant parent refers to a teacher (other than the mother of the child) who is one of the following:

- father of the child
- spouse/civil partner/cohabitant of the birth mother/adopting parent of the child
- spouse/civil partner/cohabitant of the sole male adopter of the child
- parent of the child under section 5 of the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015, where the child is a donor-conceived child.

Paternity leave is available for stillbirths after 24 weeks of pregnancy. This leave is available to permanent/fixed-term/non-casual substitutes and regular part-time teachers.

How much paternity leave am I entitled to?

With effect from September 1, 2016, registered teachers are entitled to a single period of two consecutive weeks' paid paternity leave. In the case of multiple births, or where more than one child is being adopted at the same time, the maximum of two consecutive weeks' leave still applies.

When can I take paternity leave?

Paternity leave may commence at any time from the date of birth or date of placement of the child to 26 weeks thereafter.

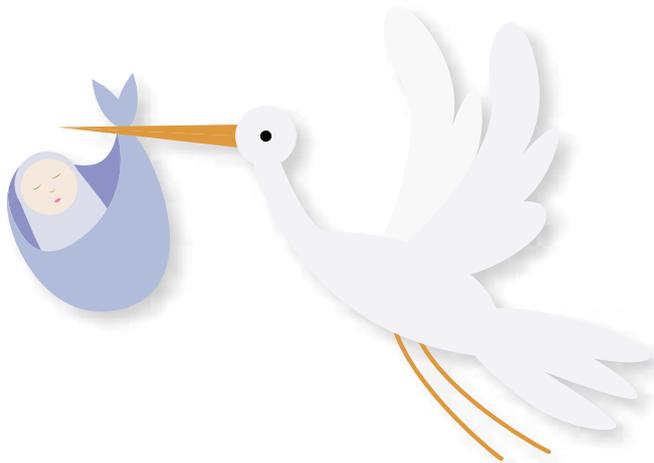
When planning my paternity leave dates, could I use expected date of birth as commencement date?

In certain circumstances, the expected due date can vary; therefore, when planning the paternity leave commencement date this should be taken into account, as paternity leave can only be availed of from the actual date of birth to 26 weeks thereafter.

How do I apply for paternity leave?

There are two steps involved in applying for paternity leave:





Step 1:

The relevant parent must notify their employer of their intention to take paternity leave not less than four weeks before the commencement of such leave, and provide their employer with the following:

In the case of a birth:

- copy of the medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner confirming the pregnancy and specifying the expected date of birth of the child concerned, or
- a copy of the birth certificate where notification is given after the birth.

In the case of an adoption:

- declaration/official placement order, or
- copy of the placement certificate, where notification is given after the date of placement.

Step 2:

The relevant parent must complete the Application Form at Appendix A – located at the back of circular letter 0057/2016 – as soon as possible, but no later than seven days after the commencement of the leave, and forward it to their employer with a copy of the birth certificate/official placement order for the child.

Am I entitled to be paid while on paternity leave?

In order to claim Paternity Benefit from the Department of Social Protection, Class A PRSI contributors should complete the PB1/PB2 form and submit it directly to the Department of Social Protection six weeks prior to the commencement date of the period of paternity leave.

For full details on the revised Paternity Leave Scheme for Registered Teachers, please refer to circular letter 0057/2016.

**Seminar at Yad Vashem,
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An eight-day programme for teachers at Yad Vashem International School for Holocaust Studies. This course is specifically tailored for Irish teachers, providing an in-depth exposure to the many facets of the Holocaust. Working at the exceptional Holocaust Museum and Archives Centre, participants are avail of resources, expertise and personal testimonies.

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For information and details visit our website or contact our contact:

Holocaust Education Trust Ireland, Clifton House, Lower Mount Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.
Tel: +353 1 8990998 Email: info@holocaustedun.com www.holocaustedun.com


Holocaust Education Trust Ireland
Learning from the Past - Honour for the Future

Berlin Study Visit

03 April - 06 April 2018



Photograph by the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin

Arrive in the city of Berlin in the country where National Socialism originated. It includes an overview of Jewish Berlin and its history and site visits to authentic Holocaust sites. Working with Holocaust scholars and educators, the programme allows participants to grasp the severity of the Holocaust and its resonance within the city.

Visit includes:

- Tour of Jewish Museum, Topography of Terror Exhibition, Walking Tour with a focus on Jewish historical sites and commemoration of Nazi victims; Memorial for the murdered Jews of Europe; House of the Wannsee Conference; Grunewald Deportation Site; Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp; The Anne Frank Centre; Otto Weidt House and the Silent Heroes Archive.

Cost: €170 (includes of travel, food, transport, hotel and entrance fees)

For information and details visit our website or contact our contact:

Holocaust Education Trust Ireland, Clifton House, Lower Mount Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.
Tel: +353 1 8990998 Email: info@holocaustedun.com www.holocaustedun.com

ASTI EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The ASTI Education Committee looks at the major issues in Irish education and ensures that ASTI members are fully informed.



Back row (from left): Anne Loughnane, Jane Craig Elliott, and Ciara Kinsella. Front row (from left): James Howley, Ray Silke (chairperson), Moira Leydon (ASTI Assistant General Secretary, Education and Research), and Sarah Withero.

The members of the ASTI Education Committee are:

- Jane Craig Elliott
- Granu Dwyer
- James Howley
- Anne Loughnane
- Ciara Kinsella
- Patrick Knightly
- James McGovern
- Ray Silke
- Sarah Withero
- Ger Curtin - President
- Breda Lynch - Vice President

The ASTI President and Vice President are *ex officio* members of the Education Committee.

Elected biennially by Convention, the ASTI Education Committee discusses matters referred to it by Standing Committee on ongoing educational policy developments and concerns.

Meeting up to seven times a year, the Education Committee looks at and works on motions referred to Standing Committee by Convention or CEC relating to education policy, teaching and assessment, teacher education, and youth policy and well being. It then reports its findings to Standing Committee, who take action as necessary.

Another important function of the Education Committee is receiving reports from ASTI representatives on the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) structure, for example subject representatives. This ensures that the Committee is aware of ongoing developments at NCCA level and of the broader, systemic picture of what is happening at NCCA level. This means that if there are any issues that come up at this level that relate to the broader concerns of the ASTI, the Education Committee can identify these issues and communicate

their concerns to representatives on the NCCA Council or to Standing Committee as appropriate. This ensures that the work of NCCA representatives is supported.

Recent work

Some recent areas of work of the Committee include a detailed submission to the Centre for School Leadership on its continuum for teacher learning, as well as looking broadly at the issue of teacher supply and developing a set of recommendations for the ASTI on the issue.

The Committee has also spent time closely examining the National Action Plan for Education, in particular the 21 core actions that the Minister highlighted as being of most importance. This is done with a view to making sure that the Committee is aware of the developments coming down the road and that the ASTI is able to formulate a response, for example, in terms of resources for schools, teacher upskilling or resources in relation to teacher workload.

The Committee is also making a submission to the Teaching Council's consultation around its next three-year strategic plan, in the hope of core ASTI messages being included in the plan such as greater cognisance of the realities of teachers' working lives, in particular their work intensity, and the overall issue of teacher well-being and the broader question of the extended professional role of teachers and how they can better support it.

Profile by Jenny Dunne.



Education Committee members (from left): Granu Dwyer, James McGovern, and Patrick Knightly.

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RSTA MAKING PROGRESS

The RSTA is pleased to report that progress is being made on its initial goal of pension restoration, as most public servants will have full restoration by 2019. CARMEL HENEGHAN reports.

The Alliance of Retired Public Servants, of which the RSTA is a founding member, has expressed disappointment at the failure of the Government to respond to its strong appeal for an immediate end to pension cuts. A very strong case had been made by the Alliance. One welcome outcome of the Public Service Pay Commission was the ending of discrimination for the cohort of retirees who retired post 2012; they will have their pensions realigned. The tables below illustrate the impact of the Public Service Pay and Pensions Bill 2017 on both the pre-2012 and post-2012 cohorts:

For the pre-2012 cohort, the following table applies:

Annualised amount of public service pension (2019)	Annualised amount of public service pension (2020)	Reduction
Up to €39,000	Up to €54,000	Exempt
€39,000-€60,000	€54,000-€60,000	12%
€60,000-€100,000	€60,000-€100,000	17%
Over €100,000	Over €100,000	28%

For the post-2012 cohort, the following table applies:

Annualised amount of public service pension (2019)	Annualised amount of public service pension (2020)	Reduction
Up to €60,000	Exempt	Exempt
€60,000-€100,000	3%	1%
Over €100,000	8%	6%

The second priority for the RSTA is the retention of pay and pension parity. This is guaranteed for the duration of the Public Service Stability Agreement until 2020. This is to be welcomed, as a break with parity could result in a devaluation of pensions.

The third goal is acquiring negotiation rights. While the Alliance is a recognised representative association representing retired public servants, and had access to the Minister and his officials after the Public Service Pay Commission reported, and after the publication of the Public Service Pay and Pensions Bill 2017, it does not have negotiation rights. It made a comprehensive submission to the Pay Commission in advance, as did the Retired Workers' Committee of the ICTU, upon which the RSTA has representatives. The Alliance has requested that retired public servants be included in the proposed legislation that would enable An Garda Síochána and the army to access such bodies as the Workplace Relations Commission and/or the Labour Court.

While the RSTA is very active within its kindred associations, it requires every retired secondary teacher to join, as there is strength in numbers. It appeals to any teacher about to retire to join and encourage others to do so in the campaign to defend the conditions of retirees and promote their welfare.

For general information and branch news see the website – www.rsta.ie.

RSTA Membership Application/Renewal

Please complete in **BLOCK CAPITALS** using black or blue pen.

First Name: Surname:

Address:

Home Phone:

Mobile:

Email:

RSTA Branch:

Annual Subscription €24. Payment options:

- Standing Order:** Please complete the set-up form and send to the RSTA National Treasurer.
- Cheque:** Please make the cheque payable to "RSTA" and send with this form to the RSTA National Treasurer.
- Online Bank Payment:** To make a transfer or set up a Standing Order online please refer to the Standing Order Form for details of the RSTA Bank Account.

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO:

RSTA National Treasurer: Mrs Muriel McNicholas, Cordarragh, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo.
 E: rstatreasurer@gmail.com M: 085-118 1330.

Standing order set-up form

Please complete in **BLOCK CAPITALS** using black or blue pen.

To The Manager

(Name of Member's Bank)

Bank Branch and Full Address

I hereby authorise and request you to DEBIT my account:

Name/s on Member's Account

IBAN

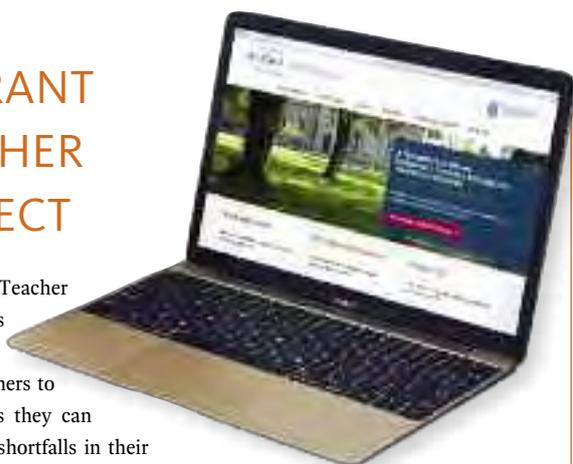
and to CREDIT the account of:

RETIRED SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION (RSTA):
 IBAN: IE55 AIBK 93236112729080 with the amount of €24 (Twenty Four Euro)
Start Date for Payment: ____/____/20____
Frequency: **Annually** until further notice
Reference to identify member's payment on RSTA bank statement:
 Member's Name
 RSTA Branch
 Signature
 Date

Please return completed form to RSTA National Treasurer

MIGRANT TEACHER PROJECT

The Migrant Teacher Project aims to work with migrant teachers to identify ways they can address any shortfalls in their qualifications and increase their participation in the Irish primary and post-primary education sectors. Funded by the Department of Justice and Equality through the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration, the project provides information, advice and training to teachers who have qualified outside of Ireland, to help them to continue their profession in Irish primary and post-primary schools. All teachers who wish to work in publicly funded schools in Ireland must register with the Teaching Council of Ireland. The Council examines the qualifications of teachers who qualified outside Ireland, and sometimes identifies shortfalls that must be addressed prior to full registration. The Project also provides a bridging programme to further enhance teachers' professional development and qualifications, and their opportunities for securing employment in Irish schools.



If you wish to register your interest in the Migrant Teacher Project, please complete the form at www.mie.ie, or email a member of the team at mtp@mie.ie.

WAYS TO WELL-BEING

ASTI member John Doran has developed a well-being programme designed to help 15 to 18 year olds explore how to maintain their own sense of well-being, leading to improved academic outcomes in school and a sense of accomplishment in life.

The accompanying student workbook, *Ways to Well-being*, may be used with the programme or independently. The content is designed around five core areas of life that affect well-being:

- our relationship with life
- our relationship with emotions
- our relationship with mind-set, meaning and purpose
- our relationship with past, present and future
- our relationship with personality, talent and performance.

Each lesson has a mixture of information points, reflective pieces, advice and interactive exercises, where the young person is given the opportunity to reflect on and record the key learnings for themselves in the 'Takeaway' section.

John Doran has worked as a teacher and now guidance counsellor in the Patrician Secondary School, Newbridge, for over 20 years. He is passionate about education, lifelong learning and maximising performance.

ANTI-RACISM CREATIVE COMPETITION

Anti-racism organisation Show Racism the Red Card is inviting second-level classes to register for the Anti-Racism Creative Competition 2018. Schools must register online in order to receive a DVD education pack. Participants are then invited to create written, visual or audiovisual entries on the theme of the DVD. The deadline for entries is March 30, 2018.

For more information visit: www.theredcard.ie/competition.php.

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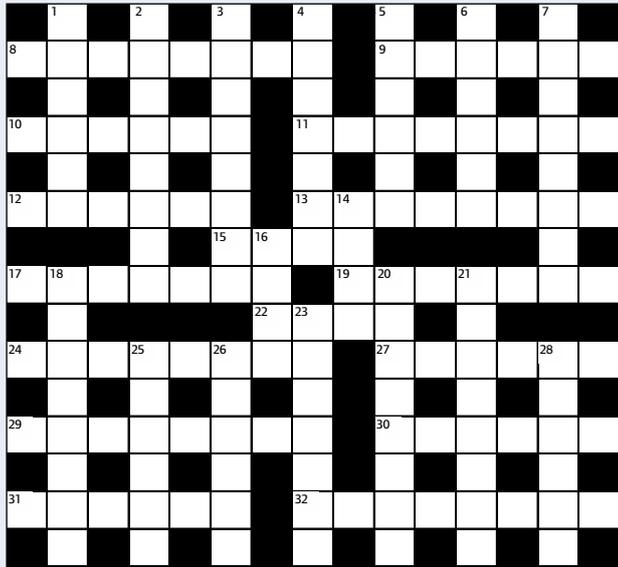


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ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 1801

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.1801, Think Media,
The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, February 16, 2018

CLUES ACROSS:

- 8 Minister for Education Richard Bruton has insisted the new Leaving Cert grading system does not the exam (4,4)
- 9 See 22 across
- 10 Protection for broken bone (6)
- 11 ASTI Honorary National Organiser (4,4)
- 12 Sets my modus operandi (6)
- 13 Ornate centrepieces (8)
- 15 Proposed extension of the Lansdowne Road Agreement (1,1,1,1)
- 17 Some men today have a reminder of past events (7)
- 19 Reluctantly acknowledge (7)
- 22 & 9 across: Gone too far into no man's land (4,3,3)
- 24 Remade to be within reasonable limits (8)
- 27 A drama provided by a fleet of warships (6)
- 29 Get up and note so you can remember (8)
- 30 One metrically is approximately 0.035 ounces imperially! (6)
- 31 Fishy March sign (6)
- 32 Cancel the boat gear (8)

CLUES DOWN:

- 1 & 28 down: Wall faller! (6,6)
- 2 Convert this bean into a strong liqueur (8)
- 3 Disrespect for the rules of a court of law (8)
- 4 See mine adversaries (7)
- 5 Fast (6)
- 6 Takes ages to be part of (6)
- 7 Keep it in an emergency! (4,4)
- 14 "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow Creeps in this petty from day to day" (4) (Shakespeare: *Macbeth*)
- 16 So otters could be found in the chimney too, could they? (4)
- 18 Arcane (8)
- 20 This symbol of prestige was not just a greenhouse! (8)
- 21 ASTI ... for equal pay continues (8)
- 23 A vet near an old warhorse! (7)
- 25 Beethoven's third (6)
- 26 Admits to being in the middle of (6)
- 28 See 1 down

Solution to ASTIR Crossword No. 1705

Across

- 1. Pick-up
- 4. Achieved
- 9. Refill
- 10. Pastoral
- 12. Breda
- 13. The Donald
- 14. Lynch
- 15. Ossify
- 20. Addled
- 21. Astro
- 24. Kim Jong Un
- 27. Equip
- 28. Politics
- 29. Hotpot
- 30. Exterior
- 31. Skater

Down

- 1. Parabola
- 2. Caffeine
- 3. Unleashed
- 5. Chase
- 6. Intro
- 7. Vernal
- 8. Delude
- 11. Stroll
- 16. Sedans
- 17. Framework
- 18. Strumpet
- 19. Computer
- 22. Skopje
- 23. Amulet
- 25. Otter
- 26. Gecko

Did you miss?

- Recruitment crisis in teaching 14
- Digital Framework for schools 16

Congratulations

Congratulations to the winner of
Crossword No.1705:
Michael Mulvihill, Scoil Mhuire,
Trim, Co. Meath.
Navan Branch member



New Special Education Model

Are you involved in the new Special Education model in your school?

Would you like to know more about preparing a School Provision Plan for your students?

Where do you fit in on the 'continuum of support' process?

The seminar will provide step-by-step guidance on the new teacher allocation model and on implementing new Departmental guidelines – Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools.

The seminar is open to any ASTI member who is currently involved in the new model or who wishes to find out more.

Saturday 3rd February 2018

**in the Ashling Hotel, Dublin 8
from 11am – 2pm.**

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