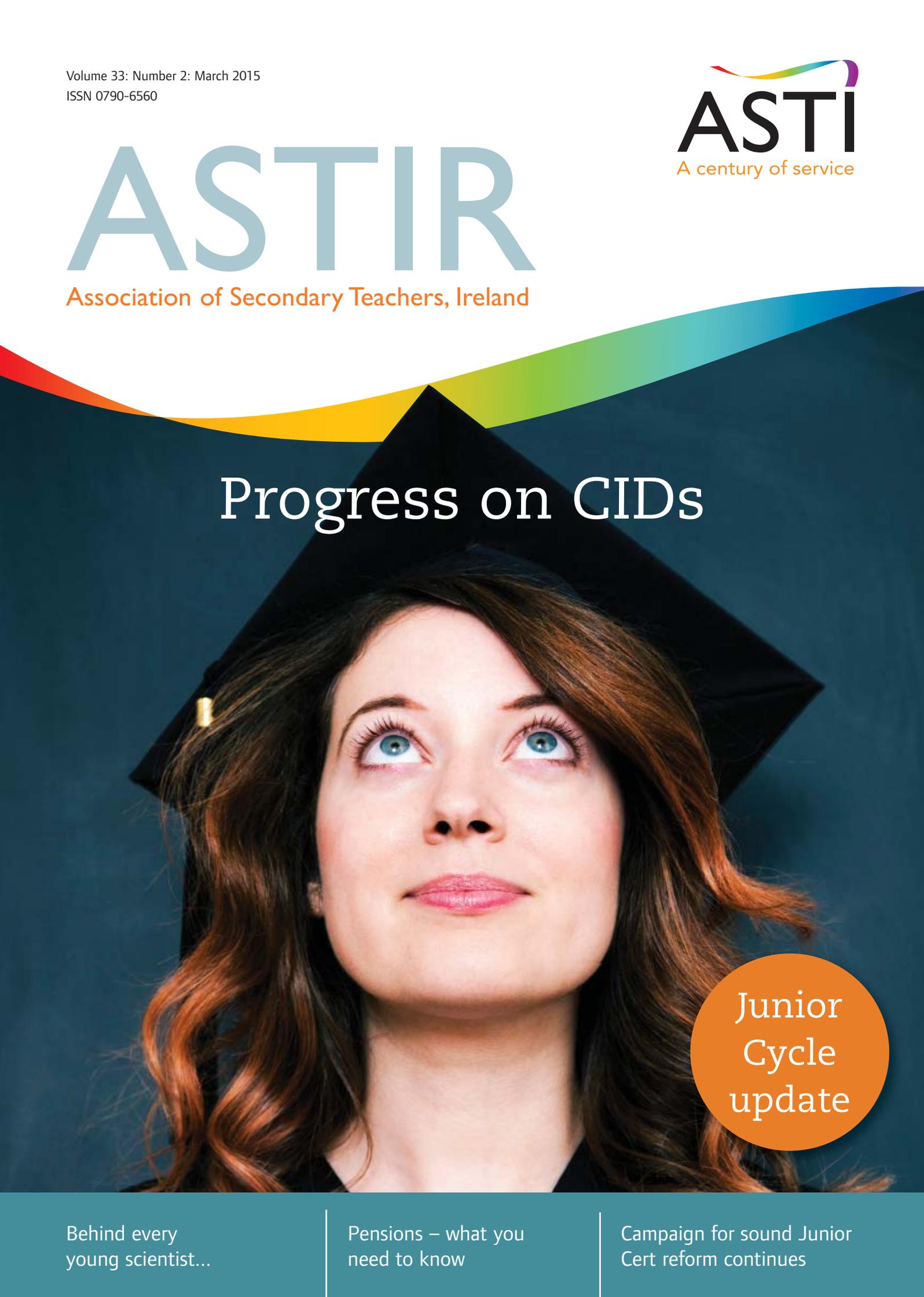


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**ASTI**
A century of service

ASTIR

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland



Progress on CIDs

Junior
Cycle
update

Behind every
young scientist...

Pensions – what you
need to know

Campaign for sound Junior
Cert reform continues

Open a New World of Learning with Edco

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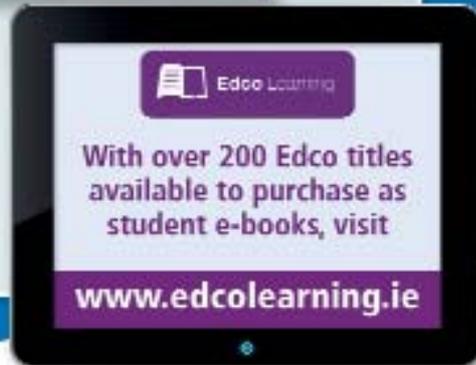
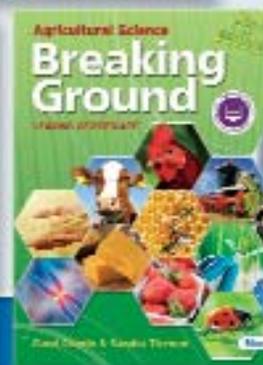
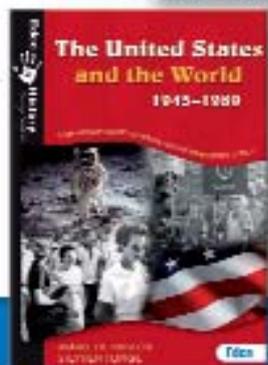
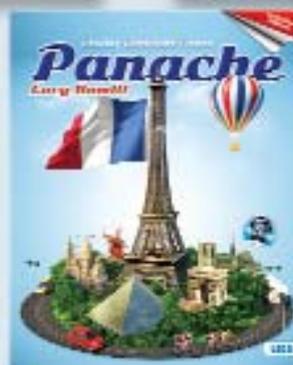
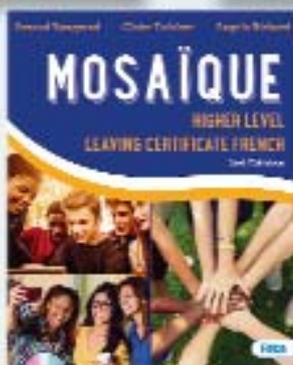
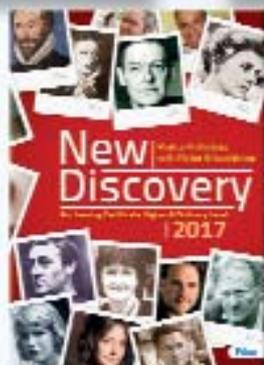
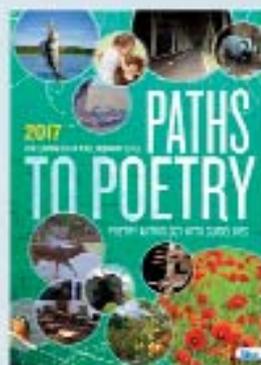
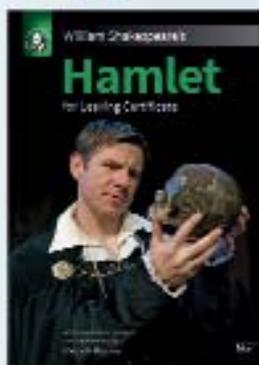
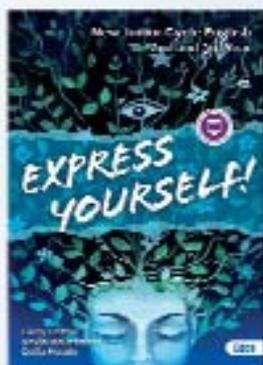
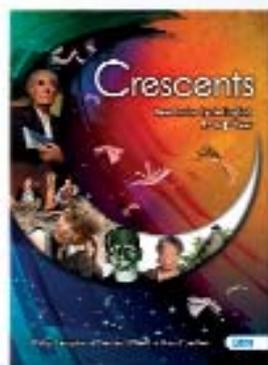
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The ASTIR Editorial Board is interested in receiving feedback on ASTIR. Members can email astirfeedback@astie.ie or text 087-9349956.

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Letters, comments and articles are welcome

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

Junior Cycle campaign – keep steady

“...such ambitious reform requires the wholehearted engagement of teachers – otherwise its chances of success are limited...”

(Introduction to P. Travers, Junior Cycle Reform – A Way Forward)

I agree with Dr Travers' view and further state that the failure of the Department and the previous Minister to gain the agreement of teachers before implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle has been the central problem of this dispute.

However, the Travers proposal on assessment to limit State Certification to the terminal exams is far too narrow a view of State Certification and is not an acceptable solution. At the prompting of union negotiators, he did move somewhat away from the Department's view in proposing that external assessment be retained for project work in technology subjects, art and home economics. This has raised a fundamental inconsistency in his proposals: why not retain external assessment in other subjects that already have it, such as music, CSPE and science? Surely oral tests in Gaeilge and modern languages should be externally assessed and part of State Certification? In short, teachers require that the Junior Certificate be modernised and include projects, practicals and orals across all subjects so that it is fit for purpose into the future.

Even though he was asked to deal specifically with the impasse in the talks on assessment, Dr Travers did also deal with issues such as resources and teacher time. Here he is very clear that “...further detailed discussions...are required to reach agreement on resource issues...” His document is therefore incomplete and yet the Minister has refused further talks unless we accept it as the basis for agreement and remove our industrial action. Contrary to Minister O'Sullivan's views, our industrial action has been measured and responsible. Strike action became necessary because of implementation and to draw public attention to our position and show the resolve of teachers. Both ASTI Standing Committee and the TUI Executive have decided not to call a strike day at this time but to keep our directives in place. The only reasonable basis for a review of this position is an indication from the Minister that she will suspend further implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle (meetings, planning, CPD, etc.) pending the outcome of negotiations.

The centrality of student-teacher relationships and the maintenance of the advocacy role of teachers on behalf of their students has to be understood and supported by the Minister if progress is to be made.

We want to resolve this dispute. We want to ensure the best possible education experience for our Junior Cycle students. We will continue to represent our members on the ground all over the country: classroom teachers who understand what will and will not work in their classrooms and with their students.



Philip Irwin
ASTI President

The future of teaching

In a recent address entitled 'The Future of Work', President Michael D. Higgins said: “Responding to the needs, the fears and the aspirations of those citizens among us who do not enjoy security of employment is a defining challenge of our times.”*

The unacceptable level of casualisation in the second-level teaching profession has been an issue of serious concern to the ASTI for a number of years. Following a lengthy (and ongoing) campaign by the ASTI and the other teacher unions, we have secured a permanency deal for many of these teachers. As this *ASTIR* goes to print, a Department of Education and Skills Circular is being drafted for distribution to schools, which will set out new entitlements for thousands of temporary and part-time teachers. From September 2015, second-level teachers in temporary positions will become eligible for a CID after just two years of teaching, provided they meet the criteria (see page 16). Under the new deal, teachers covering for those on career breaks or secondments will also qualify for CIDs after two years (again subject to criteria). Watch out for the Circular at www.asti.ie. It is important that all temporary and part-time teachers are familiar with its contents. A key duty of the ASTI in the coming months will be to assert individual teachers' rights in accordance with the Circular.

Despite this significant achievement, young teachers remain vulnerable. While progress has been made on pay for newly qualified teachers, their salaries and pensions are inferior to those of most of their colleagues. These teachers hold the key to the future of second-level teaching and of the ASTI; the restoration of salary scale equality must remain a priority issue.

Annual Convention

Attended by almost 500 delegates, ASTI Convention receives much media coverage, which provides an opportunity to the ASTI to demonstrate to the public (and our members) that we are a unified group of trade unionists and educators working together in the best interests of teaching and education. If you are not attending this year's Convention, please join us by watching/listening out for media coverage, visiting the ASTI website for updates, and/or joining us on one of our social media platforms (see page 8). The next edition of *ASTIR* will contain a comprehensive report from Convention 2015.

Pension levy

With talks on the restoration of public sector pay due to begin shortly, it is timely that a key motion at our Annual Convention calls for the abolition of the public service pension levy. The Government has always stated that the pension levy is a temporary financial emergency measure. The ASTI believes it should never have been introduced and that it is now time to remove this unjust levy.

**Edward Phelan Lecture 2015 – available at www.nui.ie.*



Pat King
ASTI General Secretary

ASTI member publishes fourth poetry collection



Award-winning poet and ASTI member Gerard Hanberry, who teaches English at Colaiste Einde, Salthill, recently published his fourth collection of poetry, *What Our Shoes Say About Us*. This is Gerard's second collection to be published by Salmon Poetry and follows the very successful previous Salmon collection *At Grattan Road*. Gerard Hanberry is also well known for his biography of the family of Oscar Wilde, *More Lives Than One...The Remarkable*

Wilde Family Through The Generations (The Collins Press).

What Our Shoes Say About Us is available in some bookshops or direct from Salmon Poetry online. Alternatively, Gerard can be contacted at gerryhanberry@gmail.com.

Teacher Fee Refund Scheme 2015

Teachers who have successfully undertaken a course or modules during the period between September 1, 2013 and August 31, 2014, may be eligible for a partial refund of fees. Courses that qualify should be of benefit to schools, school management and the improvement of teaching and learning, such as the Professional Certificate/Diploma in Special and Inclusive Education from St Patrick's College, or the Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Leadership from NUI Maynooth. Courses must lead to an award from an appropriate accreditation authority approved by the Department of Education and Skills. Please note that this scheme excludes courses that result in a qualification in respect of which an allowance is payable. Serving teachers who are fully registered with the Teaching Council are eligible to apply under the scheme. Further details are contained in Department Circular 08/2015. The closing date for applications is Friday April 10, 2015. Late applications will not be considered. All enquiries should be directed to: The Administrator, Teacher Fee Refund Scheme, Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9, Tel: 01-853 5102, or Email: refundoffeesscheme@mie.ie.

Holocaust not only for history teachers

The Holocaust Education Trust Ireland (HETI) is keen to let teachers know that you don't have to be a history teacher in order to teach about the Holocaust. The Holocaust is an interdisciplinary subject and can be approached from many different avenues. Teachers of English, RE, CSPE, languages, history, Transition Year, mathematics, media studies and more have been on HETI teacher education programmes.

While it is accepted that it can be a vast subject, it is challenging and fascinating. The HETI works with expert international scholars and educators who are skilled in providing information, tools and methodologies to help teachers. While a teacher might be worried about being overwhelmed by the subject, when you undertake the Certificate in Holocaust Education, the HETI says they support you fully on this fulfilling personal and professional journey. HETI programmes allow you space to expand your knowledge through excellent lectures, informative study visits to Poland and Israel, and practical tuition. They also include meetings with Holocaust survivors whenever possible.

Active School Week



Pupils at Coláiste na Toirbhirte, Bandon (above) and at St Patrick's Secondary School, Castleisland (left) took part in Active School Week.

National Active School Week (ASW) 2015 will take place from April 27 to May 1. The ASW initiative provides schools with the opportunity to reinforce the message that not only is physical activity good for you but it can also be fun.

Schools are encouraged to collaborate with local clubs and physical activity providers to raise awareness among students and their families about the physical activity opportunities that are available to them in their own communities.

There are a number of suggestions for ASW activities, including: introducing a whole school challenge for every student and teacher to get 60 minutes' activity per day; lunchtime novelty events such as tug of war or welly throws; activity breaks like 'drop everything and dance'; setting up an army style obstacle course; teachers vs. students sports tournaments; or, linking with local sports facilities or sports stars who are available to come to the school and talk to students.

Schools that organise ASW programmes could also work towards their Active School Flag status. For more information visit www.activeschoolflag.ie.

NCCA consultation on the background paper for Leaving Certificate economics

The NCCA is undertaking a consultation on the background paper for Leaving Certificate economics. They are looking for teachers' views on the background paper and the brief for the development of the subject published by the NCCA. You can read the background paper and submit a response to the online survey by visiting www.ncca.ie and selecting Senior Cycle, then Current Consultations. The closing date for submitting a response is April 17, 2015.

ASTI Scholarship

If you are thinking about or are currently undertaking further third-level studies, you have until April 30 to apply for the ASTI Scholarship. The annual scholarship of €4,000 is awarded to one ASTI member, with preference given to members who do not hold any other scholarships or financial awards for study. See www.asti.ie for more details.

Pregnancy-related sick leave

Interim improvement for previous pregnancy-related sick leave



Pregnancy-related sick leave is now counted as sick leave. However, for teachers who took pregnancy-related sick leave prior to the new sick leave arrangements, there is a partial alleviation. Circular 0059/2014, which introduced the new scheme, did not clearly address pregnancy-related illness that had occurred under the previous scheme (i.e., prior to September 1, 2014).

Prior to the announcement of the new sick leave scheme for all public servants in 2012, Circulars provided for the full discounting of pregnancy-related leave. A number of members who had taken pregnancy-related illness leave have been in contact with the ASTI. Some are in a position where sick leave limits have been reached and state that they would be on Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration (TRR) or unpaid leave in the event of illness occurring.

Union action

Together with the other teacher unions, the ASTI has for some time raised this matter through the Teachers' Conciliation Council framework. The ASTI has now been advised of an arrangement to discount time spent on pregnancy-related illness under the previous scheme (see below), now being operated by the Department of Education and Skills. However, the position of the teacher unions is that discounting should apply at full pay rate. We will continue to press for this and provide further updates as available.

Current position

The interim arrangement is being introduced for public servants who took sick leave due to a pregnancy-related illness and exhausted their paid sick leave due to this illness. The interim arrangement is: If a woman reaches the four-year paid sick leave limit and pregnancy-related sick leave is listed as an absence on her four-year sick leave record, then she will have access to additional leave (i.e., for the equivalent amount of time spent on pregnancy-related sick leave up to a maximum of 92 days) at half pay only, subject to the overall maximum limits.

Patricia King named as new ICTU General Secretary



The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) has announced that Patricia King is its new General Secretary following the stepping down of David Begg in March. Patricia will be the first woman to succeed to the post of General Secretary in the 121-year history of Congress.

The ASTI is affiliated to the ICTU and there are ASTI representatives on a number of ICTU committees, including the Executive Council.

Currently the vice-President of SIPTU, Patricia also serves as one of two vice-Presidents of Congress. A full-time official with SIPTU for over 25 years, she was the first woman to serve as a national officer of the union when she was appointed vice-President in May 2010. She has represented workers in all areas of the economy, in both the public and private sectors. Patricia King said she was "very honoured" to be named as the new General Secretary and paid tribute to outgoing General Secretary David Begg, saying that he had led Congress in "extraordinary times and circumstances and had shown exceptional leadership. I am conscious that the movement is losing a really effective leader".

She said she would be governed by three clear principles when she takes up the post: "Every worker is entitled to enjoy fair pay and decent conditions; all workers should be entitled to negotiate collectively with their employer without fear; and, every worker is entitled to be treated with respect".

"I think youth and young people generally have been let down and hit particularly hard in recent years and that is another area that has to be addressed," she said.

New sick leave arrangements – Circular

The Department has issued a Circular outlining the new sick leave arrangements for teachers. The Circular and ASTI information are available at www.asti.ie.

This issue in numbers...



NUMBER OF PROJECTS
that make the finals of the BT Young Scientist competition every year
(P.14)



NUMBER OF YEARS ON
fixed-term contracts after which teachers will now qualify for a CID (subject to criteria)
(P.16)

Girls at centre of attacks on education

A new United Nations human rights report seeking to analyse the problem of attacks against girls who are trying to access education has found that schools in at least 70 countries were attacked between 2009 and 2014, with many attacks specifically targeting girls, parents and teachers advocating for gender equality in education.

The paper, which will be presented to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, notes several recent cases of attacks against girls accessing education.

Among the examples are the abduction of nearly 300 schoolgirls in April 2014 by the Boko Haram movement in northeast Nigeria, and the 2012 shooting of education activist Malala Yousafzai by members of the Taliban in Pakistan. The report also points to several incidents of poisoning and acid attacks against schoolgirls in Afghanistan between 2012 and 2014, the reported forced removal of girls from schools in Somalia to become 'wives' of Al-Shabaab fighters in 2010, and the abduction and rape of girls at a Christian school in India in July 2013.

Attacks on girls' education take several forms and in some instances are not explicitly motivated by the desire to deny girls an education but reflect, instead, the violence experienced by girls and women in all areas of their public and private lives.

These attacks affect the lives of the girls and communities directly concerned, but also send a signal to other parents and guardians that schools are not safe places for girls.

The report emphasises the need to improve the availability, accessibility, adaptability and acceptability of education for girls, while simultaneously launching programmes to tackle discriminatory cultural and social attitudes and practices.

Noting that transformation of unequal power structures based on gender and age is a lengthy and difficult process, the report also calls for the involvement of boys and men in the process of change.



Girls' education rights campaigner and Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai at Girl Summit 2014.

Teaching Council: Teachers with conditional registration

The Teaching Council has commenced a review of conditions attached to some teachers' registrations. Letters have been issued to a number of teachers whose conditions have an expiry date in 2015. Conditional registration is granted when a teacher has not fulfilled all of the Teaching Council's registration requirements, such as completion of the Induction Workshop Programme or qualification shortfalls such as failure to complete a module or examination. The conditions applied to a teacher's registration, the mechanisms to address them, and the time period afforded, are notified to the teacher when they register. If you have received a letter from the Teaching Council in relation to conditions, please act upon it. It is imperative that you address your shortfalls within the specified time. You can check the conditions attached to your registration, and the deadlines for meeting the conditions, by logging on to the Registered Teacher Login service on www.teachingcouncil.ie. If you have already addressed a condition in full, please send the relevant documents to the Teaching Council. Details about the required documents may be found on the Registration Conditions page of www.teachingcouncil.ie. Should you have any further queries, please email conditions@teachingcouncil.ie or call Lo-Call 1890 224 224 or 01-651 7900 (9.00am-5.00pm).

Retirement grace period extended to 2016

Following representations from the ASTI and the other public service unions, the Haddington Road Agreement grace period has been extended to June 30, 2016. Members retiring on or before this date will have their pension benefits calculated on their salary as at June 30, 2013 (including supervision and substitution allowance). If you wish to avail of the grace period, please ensure that you give adequate notice of your retirement date to your school or your ETB – at least three months for schools or two months in the case of ETBs. Read our article on teachers' pensions on page 22.

80

PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS who participated in DCU research in 2006 who said they were aware of homophobic bullying in their school.

(P.19)

54,000

NUMBER OF REGISTERED teachers who have been garda vetted since 2006.

(P.20)

Join us for Convention on the web!

You can be a part of ASTI Convention 2015, even if you can't attend.



Every year, 500 delegates travel to ASTI Convention to discuss the issues affecting teachers and determine the union's policy priorities for the coming year. Speeches are made, motions are debated, and considerable media attention is brought to bear on teachers and education in Ireland.

This year, Convention takes place in Killarney, and every ASTI branch will be represented. But even if you can't attend, you can still be a part of the Convention experience, by following events as they unfold.

Key issues for Convention 2015

Pay

Budget 2011 slashed new teachers' pay by 10%. In addition, in 2012, most allowances above the basic salary scale were abolished for those entering teaching (as well as for new beneficiaries).

Another motion calls for the abolition of the public service pension levy. This levy reduces teachers' pay by approximately 7.5% and is on top of pension contributions that all teachers pay.

Education cuts and student welfare

Delegates will discuss the impact of key education cutbacks on students and schools. In particular, cuts to the allocation of guidance counsellors and to posts of responsibility have had a severe effect on pastoral care services.

Education standards

Teachers want an independent, objective, transparent and rigorous State examinations model, which maintains public trust, and teachers fully support a move away from an excessive reliance on final written examinations. We believe that the introduction of school-based assessment for State Certification poses a serious threat to the credibility of the examination process.

Teachers' terms and conditions

Schools and teachers are doing much more with much less. Teachers believe impositions such as the Croke Park Hours and compulsory

One of the highlights of Convention 2015 will be the live streaming of the President's speech at 4.25pm on Tuesday, April 7

supervision and substitution place unnecessary constraints on teachers and take away from time for classroom-related work such as planning, marking, and lesson preparation.

Join us online

In recent years, the ASTI has made increasing use of the internet and social media to make Convention accessible to all of our members.

Web

Log on to www.asti.ie for the latest updates and a list of the key media coverage on a daily basis.

One of the highlights will be the live streaming of the President's speech at 4.25pm on Tuesday, April 7.



Facebook

Our Facebook page will carry reports as they happen, with photos and announcements from each day.



Twitter

Live tweeting from #asti15 will keep you informed of the progress of debates.

So join us (virtually) in Killarney for what will be a fascinating and informative Convention.

Joining the Twittersphere

Why not use Convention 2015 as an excuse to join the world of Twitter? You can create an account at www.twitter.com, and then follow @astiunion to get all the latest details. Our hashtag, #asti15, will gather all of the tweets about Convention into one place so you can read all about it, and join in the discussion (in messages of 140 characters or less!)



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Junior Cycle update

At the time of this *ASTIR* going to print, developments in relation to the Junior Cycle were at a crucial juncture. It is important that all members visit the ASTI website to keep themselves up to date on the issue. Updates are also available on the ASTI Facebook page and Twitter feed.

Junior Cycle developments – February 2015

ASTI Standing Committee and the TUI Executive Committee met on Friday, February 27, to consider the clarifications to the Dr Pauric Travers document Junior Cycle – A Way Forward.

This document was originally issued on February 12 and the unions had sought clarifications and amendments in relation to a number of issues contained in the document. Following the issuing of a revised version of Junior Cycle – A Way Forward, the two unions met separately and jointly, and stated that they believed the document, while not representing a comprehensive resolution, represents a basis for further negotiations. The two unions identified the following issues of key importance:

- parity of treatment of subjects;
- external assessment of oral tests, projects, practicals, etc.;
- confirmation of CSPE as a State-certified exam;
- deferral of the second-year English assessment component; and,
- issues relating to capacity, including time, workload and other appropriate resources.

Early March 2015

The unions wrote to the Minister for Education and Skills stating their position. However, the Minister insisted that the document was the basis of an agreement rather than negotiations, with scope for further discussion on some issues, notably the resourcing of the reforms. She made clear her intention to move forward immediately with the implementation of the Junior Cycle Framework and the Junior Cycle – A Way Forward document, including the roll-out of CPD. This resulted in an impasse. The ASTI has serious concerns about the move to implement CPD and other implementation activities at such a sensitive stage of this industrial relations dispute. Further updates on the issue are available on the ASTI website.

On the ASTI website:

- latest Junior Cycle developments;
- the Dr Travers document Junior Cycle – A Way Forward; and,
- the ASTI directive on non co-operation with the Framework for Junior Cycle.



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Cuirfear an clár curmais foghlarna seo ar fáil thar thréimhse dhá bhliain acadúla. Beidh an fhoghlaim chumaisc mar ghné lárnach, i. cuid den chlár curtha ar fáil ar líne agus an chuid eile curtha ar fáil ar láthair. Cuirfear soláthar tar-rochtana san áireamh ag brath ar riachtanais na mac léinn. Mar thoradh ar an gcur chuige cumaisc agus ar dhearadh an chlár, beidh toighdeoirí agus saineolaithe idimáisiúnta i láthair agus pléifidh siad torthaí agus saincheistean nua i réimse an tumoideachais, an oideachais dháttheangaigh agus an dara teanga ar líne leis na mic léinn le linn an chlár.

Glacfar suas le fiche duine ar an gclár sa bhliain acadúil 2015/2016. Glacfar le h-iarrataisí ón lá inniu suas go dtí **31 Bealtaine 2015**. Chun tuilleadh eolais a fháil, déan teagmháil le Dr T.J. Ó Ceallaigh, Comhordaitheoir an Chláir, An Roinn Teanga, Litearhachta agus Matoideachais, Coláiste Mhuire gan Smál, Luimneach ag tj.oeallaigh@mic.ul.ie nó ag 061 204325.

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The campaign continues

The ASTI has maintained a strong media presence as part of the campaign on Junior Cycle reform.

"We also have moved very significantly, in that we do support Junior Certificate reform and we support a move away from the terminal exam to more portfolio work, more project work, etc. But we want to retain external assessment because it's one of the bedrock strengths of the education system, especially in the context of cutbacks. It's one thing that retains equity and fairness across all schools in the country and we want to maintain that."

Philip Irwin, ASTI President, TV3 News – The 12:30, January 22, 2015

"Teachers have shown how educational ideas such as 'assessment for learning' are already part of the culture of Irish schools and are open to having this culture enhanced. Agreement with teachers is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of Junior Cycle reform."

Philip Irwin, ASTI President, The Irish Times, January 22, 2015

"This is about students, this is about the quality of education, this is about our concern for students and ensuring that the standard is as high as it is at the moment."

Pat King, ASTI General Secretary, RTÉ Radio 1, Drivetime, January 22, 2015

"We need clarity on certain aspects of the plan; we're concerned that it doesn't address some important educational issues. We need to go in and meet Dr Travers and possibly the Department. We're worried about protecting standards of education."

Pat King, RTÉ Radio 1, Drivetime, February 13, 2014

"We do not want to be outside the gates of our schools, but we have to stand up for what is right for the students in our care. We are very concerned about the implications of some of the aspects of the Framework for Junior Cycle – particularly those in relation to assessment. Parents have made it very clear to us, as have teachers, that they want a State certificate and a State certificate must be assessed objectively and this must be done externally, as is currently the case."

Máire G. Ní Chiarba, ASTI Vice-President, video in Irish Examiner online edition, January 23, 2015

"We tried letters to the minister, we lobbied politicians, we got a petition signed by 10,000 teachers and handed it in to Ruairi Quinn at the time. We've had lunchtime protests on our own time, at lunchtime, because we didn't want it to be on teaching time...but we absolutely haven't been listened to and this is too serious to let go of as an issue in Irish education today."

Noelle Moran, Standing Committee, Galway Bay FM, Keith Finnegan Show, January 23, 2015



ASTI President Philip Irwin puts forward the ASTI's case on the January 22 strike day.



ASTI General Secretary Pat King being interviewed by media on January 22.



ASTI Vice President Máire G. Ní Chiarba being interviewed by RTÉ News on January 22.

"We have seen corruption over recent years in so many levels of Irish society but the one thing there has never been a shadow of corruption over has been Irish secondary school exam results."

Donal O'Mahony, teacher in Christian Brothers College Cork, *Irish Independent*, January 23, 2015

"Everyone has been very positive,' said English and religion teacher Jessica O'Brien. She described many cars beeping their horns in support as they drove past the teachers on the picket lines. 'It's heartening,' she said."

Jessica O'Brien, English and religion teacher in Marist College, Athlone, *Westmeath Independent*, January 31, 2015

"Teachers are prepared for change, but just because it's new doesn't necessarily mean it is good. This system is ill thought out and ill conceived: it has been rushed without adequate resources."

Jim McGovern, teacher at St Mary's CBS, *Enniscorthy Echo*, January 27, 2015

"We really don't want to be on strike, but we do feel very strongly about the integrity of the Junior Certificate. We really don't think that assessing our own students is going to advance the students. We think the Minister has to look at that and we are really against assessing our

own students. That is really the bottom line. We feel the standards we have been upholding for years on the Junior Certificate will be lost and that is the big issue. The Junior Cert will be worth nothing if we throw our hat at this – we really feel that this is worth fighting for."

Jane Craig Elliot, English, art and religion teacher in St Patrick's College, *Anglo-Celt*, January 29, 2015

"We will not correct our own students' work for a State exam. That's certainly our feeling, we feel very strongly about it. The fact that we're here demonstrates that... You have secondary schools in every small town in the country. It's too small to have students' work being judged by their teachers."

Philomena Lynch, art teacher in Ursuline College, *Sligo Champion*, January 27, 2015

"Our campaign for a sound Junior Cycle reform [plan] has been going on for more than two and a half years. Throughout this time we have sought to minimise the impact on our students. Initially we engaged in low-level industrial action and a lunchtime protest. However, this industrial action has not resulted in teachers' key concerns being addressed."

James Connell, teacher in Moyle Park College, *Clondalkin Gazette*, January 29, 2015



Cuirfidh I n-ionad de Bhaldraithe do Léinn na Gaeilge, UCD Scoll na Gaeilge, an Léinn Chéiltigh, Bhéalóideas Éireann agus na Teangeolaíochta, cúrsaí máistreacht/ dioplóma iarchéime ar fáil i Meán Fómhair 2015 le freastal ar na deiseanna fostaíochta do chéimithe le sainscileanna Gaeilge:

MA / Dioplóma Iarchéime: Scríobh agus Cumarsáid

- Aistriúchán agus Ateangaireacht
- Dlí, Aistriúchán agus na Nuachtangacha
- Cóipeaqarthóireacht agus na Meáin Ghaeilge

Tá líon áirithe scoláireachtaí ar fáil do na cúrsaí seo.

Spróclá Iontrála: 30 Meitheamh 2015

Gheofar eolas breise faoi na cúrsaí agus faoi na scoláireachtaí ó:

Dr. Regina Uí Chollatáin, Stiúrthóir an Chúrsa
Ríomhphost: regina.uichollatain@ucd.ie

Is cúrsaí iad seo atá á gcur ar fáil mar chuid láimhne de gheallúint UCD chun oideachas ceannródalach ceathrú leibhéal a sholáthar agus a n-éanú camhardú orthu tríd an Scoll Iarchéime, Coláiste na n-Alainn agus an t-Áin i hEiligh, (II). Tá na cúrsaí seo á gcur ar bun le tacaíocht ón Roinn Coláim, Dúshreachtu agus Gaeltachta tríd an tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas.



Behind every young scientist...

JENNY DUNNE spoke to two teachers who support their students through the BT Young Scientist Competition every year.



The BT Young Scientist competition has been running for over 50 years, allowing second-level students in Ireland to benefit from the experience of creating their own 'hands-on' science project. The competition receives thousands of entries, 550 of which are selected to exhibit at the finals in the RDS each January. Nearly all of these projects are supported by dedicated teachers, helping students to produce the best work that they can. We spoke to two teachers about how things work in their school, and what it means to them as teachers to be involved.

Behind every one of the 550 projects chosen to take part in the BT Young Scientist exhibition is at least one dedicated teacher.

"I don't consider it work"

Sean Foley has been co-ordinating the Young Scientist project with students in Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal, Co. Cork, for 33 years. Two of his students have won the overall competition, and he's helped many more to put together projects that were chosen to exhibit at the final in Dublin. It's a lot of work, but I really love working with them on their Young Scientist entries. It's funny really, but I don't consider it work because I enjoy it so much, even though, as the exhibition date is always early January, my Christmas always has a lot of Young Scientist stuff going on. A lot happens in those last few weeks; there are always things to be finished up.

Planning

In recent years, we've started thinking about the projects very early as we try to enter the projects first in the SciFest competition the March before we enter them in the Young Scientist competition. SciFest is a one-day science competition run by Intel. It was started by a teacher who was then taken on by Intel to run the competition full time. It's much the same format as Young Scientist, but every student gets to exhibit their

project in the first round and then the winners move on to the regional and national rounds. Any students in the school who are interested in taking part in the Young Scientist competition are welcome to take part, no matter what year they're in. It's all done on an extra-curricular basis, so in September we invite any interested students to come to a meeting about it and then they can start thinking about ideas.

Guidance

As with anything, the amount of work different groups put into their projects varies enormously. There are some that are very keen and enthusiastic, but most students need quite a lot of guidance when putting together their project. I try to set up a regular meeting time with each group, so that they feel like they have a regular opportunity to ask any questions they have or to discuss problems they're having.

Ideas

It really helps a project's chances of being chosen to exhibit in the RDS if it's an unusual or original idea. When helping students to decide on an idea, it helps to consider their outside interests. For example, there was a student one year who was a very keen darts player and so we designed their project to relate to darts and that turned out very well. Obviously, if someone's interested in their topic, they work much harder at it.

Exhibition

As we're a country school, there's a lot of responsibility in going with students to the exhibition. They stay in a hotel and we have to make sure they're safe getting to and from the RDS. During the day while they're in the exhibition hall, we have to make sure they're looking after themselves, remembering to drink enough water and eat regularly.

Effects on students

I think it's really well worth getting your students involved. I've had students that may have had difficulties in other areas of school, but taking part in Young Scientist was the making of them. Even for quieter students, having to present their project to the judges can bring them out of themselves and be a great help to them.

A whole school effort

Kate Walshe teaches in CBS Synge Street, Dublin, a school that is well known for its success in the Young Scientist competition. This success first came under renowned maths and physics teacher Jim Cooke, who passed the role on to Kate when he retired. Kate was part of the teacher team that helped Eric Doyle and Mark Kelly to win the overall competition in 2012.

Over the last few years, the number of teachers working with students on the Young Scientist project has expanded greatly. Last year there were nine teachers working with 15 students on their entries – Shane Freeman, Martha Nolan, Ger Davin, Stephanie O'Sullivan, Deirdre O'Neill, Leslie Plunkett, Sean McQuaid and myself. There were eight projects entered by the students and all of them were chosen to exhibit at the RDS.

Mentoring

We hold a meeting before the summer for students interested in participating, and also for teachers interested in mentoring. Once students have their idea, they approach a particular teacher and ask them to mentor them for the project. Usually students pick a teacher who they get on well with and then they stay in touch with their mentor by email over the summer.

Ideas

A big part of the effort is helping students to come up with a good idea for their project. Projects are always evolving; often a group might take a project from the previous year by a group from the school and continue to work on it, to do the next step in the research. The best ideas are usually something that shows originality and is attractive to the students themselves. If it can connect with some element of their schoolwork that's even better and projects with practical applications are always well received.

Work during the year

Once we get back in September, we'll have lunchtime meetings to help the participants with different aspects of their projects, things like presentation skills, helping them to practice presenting their projects to the judges or proofreading their written report of their project. For a lot of our students, English isn't their first language, so the English teachers will often help them to make sure that there are no mistakes in their report or their display.

Past pupils

Before Christmas, we have a day where past participants and winners come in and this year's participants present their projects. Afterwards, the past pupils give comments on the presentations and this kind of advice is really invaluable. It's really a whole school effort; there's a history of doing well in the competition in the school and now we're trying to expand this across the staff.



Sean Foley with his two winners from Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal, Richard O'Shea and Sarah Flannery.

Science competitions

Nowadays there are several competitions for budding scientists and their teachers to participate in:

BT Young Scientist

Established in 1965 as a way to encourage Irish students to get involved with 'hands-on' science, the final 500 projects are exhibited in the RDS Dublin each January. Teachers are well supported by the competition, including a special teacher area at the exhibition. For more information, visit www.btyoungscientist.com.

SciFest

SciFest is a series of science fairs held at local, regional, national and international level. The format means that every entry can be exhibited in school at the local level before some projects are chosen to progress to the regional stage. For more information visit www.scifest.ie.

Google Science Fair

The Google Science Fair is an online science competition open to students aged 13 to 18 from around the globe. Students are encouraged to create a project on a topic they're passionate about before submitting it online in May to be in with a chance to be chosen as one of the 20 finalists who will present their work at Google's Californian headquarters. For more information and a starter pack, visit www.google-sciencefair.com.



Jenny Dunne

Jenny works in the ASTI Communications Office.

Improving job security for teachers

A Department of Education and Skills Circular will issue to schools shortly setting out significant new entitlements for thousands of temporary and part-time teachers.



This announcement follows a deal secured by the ASTI and TUI, which aims to address casualisation in the second-level teaching profession, and improve job security for thousands of temporary and part-time teachers. More than one-third of second-level teachers are on temporary contracts; half of those under the age of 30 are on contracts of one year or less. Therefore, these new entitlements are a significant step forward as they will make permanency available to a much greater cohort of teachers.

Permanency deal for second-level teachers

From September 2015, second-level teachers will be able to qualify for permanency after just two years' teaching. This is far better than the legal requirement of four years of fixed-term contracts, and will result in the conversion of thousands of temporary contracts to contracts of indefinite duration (CIDs) in the coming years. The Department Circular will make it clear that teachers in continuous fixed-term employment for in excess of two years, in a post that is viable for a reasonable period into the future, must be awarded a CID rather than a further fixed-term contract. The awarding of a CID is subject to specified criteria. A "reasonable period" is defined by the Department as at least a full school year.

Awarding of CIDs

Under the permanency deal, fixed-term contracts will be terminated by the end of the teacher's first year in the school, even where the post continues into another school year. The post must be advertised as a fixed-term contract, and an interview must be held. If the teacher who taught in the post for the previous year obtains the second fixed-term contract, then he or she becomes eligible for a CID without interview, if the post remains viable for a third year.

For teachers entering their third continuous year in a post in September 2015, the awarding of a CID will not require an interview. Hundreds of temporary teachers are set to benefit from this. Any teacher in this position who is asked to re-apply for their position next year should contact ASTI Head Office for advice as soon as possible.

For teachers entering their third continuous year in a post in September 2015, the awarding of a CID will not require an interview. Teachers in this position who are asked to re-apply for their position should contact ASTI Head Office as soon as possible.

Teachers covering career breaks/secondments

Under this new permanency deal, teachers covering for those on career breaks or secondments will also qualify for CIDs once they have in excess of two years in the post (subject to the specified criteria). Up to now, career breaks and secondments could be used as objective grounds for not awarding CIDs; however, from September 2015 this will no longer be the case. Furthermore, where a teacher acquires a CID as a result of a secondment or career break, and the teacher on secondment/career break then returns to the post, the CID teacher will be liable for redeployment if their subjects become surplus to the curricular requirements of the school. This means that the teacher will retain their CID status, regardless of whether their subjects are needed by the school. They will continue to be paid and will be redeployed in accordance with the redeployment scheme. This represents a significant improvement in the terms and conditions for temporary teachers covering career breaks and secondments.

Topping up hours

Where a teacher has a part-time CID, but is teaching additional hours in a temporary capacity, and the temporary hours continue to be available/allocated to the school, then these hours become subject to a

CID after one year. This is another significant improvement on the previous requirement of three years.

Appealing CID decisions

The existing CID adjudication system, which deals with disputes about the awarding or non-awarding of CIDs, will continue to operate. If you wish to challenge a decision about your CID or lack of a CID, please contact your industrial relations official at ASTI Head Office.

Fixed-term and temporary teachers are advised to read the Circular on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Expert Group on Fixed-Term and Part-Time Employment [in teaching], which is available at www.asti.ie.

What is a CID?

A contract of indefinite duration (CID) gives a teacher the same rights as permanent teachers. The only differences are that the salary is based on the number of hours teaching (which can be less than full hours) and the awarding of a contract is normally the result of the teacher acquiring the requisite amount of teaching service (two years from September 2015) in the same school and in a post that is viable for at least another school year. Some 88% of CID holders are on full hours. For many new teachers, CIDs provide job and income security, and a viable career path. The ASTI has helped thousands of ASTI members to achieve CIDs in the past few years.

Criteria for CID from September 2015

1. The teacher must have a period of continuous employment with a school in excess of two school years (i.e., two concurrent fixed-term contracts).
2. The post should be "relevant and reckonable", i.e., viable based on curricular needs and lasting at least one school year.
3. The post must be Department/ETB paid.
4. There should be no objective reason why the post should remain temporary. Objective reasons include maternity leave cover, sick leave cover and job-sharing. Career breaks and secondments are no longer considered to be objective reasons.
5. The teacher must be registered with the Teaching Council.

Jargon decoder

Casualisation: The trend towards the increased use of fixed-term and/or part-time contracts instead of full-time permanent contracts.

CID: Contract of indefinite duration – is a permanent contract, but not necessarily full-time.

Redeployment: Redeployment happens when a school has more teachers than it is entitled to under teacher allocation arrangements. The school must establish its curricular needs and a redeployment list must be drawn up in line with agreed procedures. Teachers can be redeployed to schools within a 50km radius of their current school (or home address, if the teacher wishes and subject to criteria). For more information, visit the redeployment section of the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.

ETB school: A school under the patronage of the Education and Training Board (formerly the VEC).

Seminar at Yad Vashem, International School, Jerusalem

Continuous Professional Development

12-20 July 2015



Ruins of the Grand Synagogue, Yad Vashem

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 can avail of resources, expertise and personal testimonies.

Fee: On application.

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For information and details about all our teacher education programmes, contact:

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Teachers of History, RL, English, CSPE, Drama, German and other Foreign languages, Mathematics, Music, Sports and Transition Year have all benefited from participation in this programme, presented by international Holocaust educators.

- The historical context and development of the Holocaust
- Teaching the Holocaust to Junior and Senior Cycle
- Choosing and using age-appropriate resources
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- Participants will draw together a comprehensive portfolio of resources by the end of the course

This programme can be taken independently or as part of the Certificate in Holocaust Education awarded by Trinity College Dublin.

Venue: Trinity College, Dublin 2
Fee: €295 (includes lunch each day)



For information and details about all our teacher education programmes, contact:

Holocaust Education Trust Ireland, Clifton House, Lower Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.
Tel: +353 1 8890593 Email: info@hctireland.org www.hctireland.org

ASTI continues to demand repeal of Section 37

Section 37 of the Employment Equality Act allows schools to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, lifestyle choices and religious beliefs. DIARMAID DE PAOR explains that while a proposed amendment to the Act is to be welcomed, it is not enough.



Section 37 of the Employment Equality Act 1998 is a statutory provision that undermines fairness and diversity.

Section 37.1 of the Act reads as follows:

“A religious, education or medical institution which is under the direction or control of a body established for religious purposes or whose objectives include the provision of services in an environment which promotes certain religious values shall not be taken to discriminate against a person. . . .if

- (a) it gives more favourable treatment, on the religion ground, to an employee or a prospective employee over that person where it is reasonable to do so in order to maintain the religious ethos of the institution, or
- (b) it takes action which is reasonably necessary to prevent an employee or a prospective employee from undermining the religious ethos of the institution.”

In other words, Section 37.1 allows most of our schools (and also our hospitals), whose objectives include the provision of services in an environment that follows certain religious values, to discriminate by giving more favourable treatment to an employee or potential employee, or to take action against an employee or potential employee, in order to maintain its religious ethos.

Many ASTI members feel that the existence of Section 37 creates an atmosphere of fear, silence and secrecy.

Presumption and prejudice

This clause flows from the presumption or prejudice that teachers (and other workers) might actively seek to undermine the ethos of the school or institutions in which they work, and that additional special protections are needed to immunise the schools from their influence. The ASTI's central argument is that teachers are professionals and special measures such as these are not necessary. This goes for all teachers, including those who are gay and lesbian, those in non-traditional relationships, and those of different or no religious faith.

Many ASTI members feel that the existence of Section 37 creates an atmosphere of fear, silence and secrecy among those who fear its use. While most people don't use the workplace as a window onto their private lives, the right to be open about who you are and to celebrate everyday aspects of your life should not be taken for granted. The fact that Section 37.1 may never have been used (i.e., cited in any employment/equality/industrial relations case) is not enough to allay teachers' fears. Its very existence and the capacity for its use in retaining, or not retaining, temporary teachers, or for selecting persons for promotion is a deterrent to openness and inclusivity. This is an

affront not only to teachers, but to all workers, and indeed all citizens, in the Republic of Ireland.

Research published in 2006 by Dublin City University (DCU) into homophobic bullying of students in second-level schools shows that 80% of the teachers who responded said they were aware of incidents of such bullying. But the same survey revealed that teachers found it difficult to deal with the issue among students because of fear of disapproval from their boards, their trustees, from their colleagues, and from other students. How does Section 37.1 help schools to promote the need for inclusiveness in the school community, and in society, if it legitimises difference in treatment on the grounds of sexual orientation, lifestyle choices and religious beliefs?

It remains the position of the ASTI that nothing short of the total repeal of Section 37 will be adequate to protect teachers.

Proposals to amend

At the time of writing, proposals to amend Section 37 are progressing through the Houses of the Oireachtas. These proposals if enacted would qualify the legal right of an institution, such as a school or a

hospital, which is funded or partly funded out of public monies, to discriminate on the grounds of protection of ethos. However, the proposed amendment does not entirely remove this legal right. While the proposed amendments are helpful and are to be welcomed, it continues to be the position of the ASTI that nothing short of the total repeal of the section will be adequate to allay the genuine and deeply felt concerns that many teachers and other employees feel as a result of the section's existence.

The ASTI Gay and Lesbian Network is a group of gay and lesbian ASTI members who meet regularly in ASTI Head Office. The meetings offer gay and lesbian members the opportunity to share their experiences, which in turn helps to identify what the ASTI needs to do to promote equal treatment for gay and lesbian teachers. Contact the ASTI Gay and Lesbian Network at 01-604 0174, or email: depaord@asti.ie. All calls, texts and emails will be treated in confidence.



Diarmaid de Paor

Diarmaid is ASTI Deputy General Secretary.

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Closing Date: 8th May 2015



FURTHER INFORMATION:

School of Education, UCC. Tel: **021 4902467**

Anita Cronin: a.cronin@ucc.ie

Claire Dooley: c.dooley@ucc.ie

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/ckc18/>



Further Study Opportunity:

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Fitness to Teach – what it means for teachers

ASTIR explains what's involved in the Teaching Council (Amendment) Bill, 2015, specifically the Fitness to Teach provisions.

The publication of the Teaching Council (Amendment) Bill, 2015, was announced on January 21 this year. The purpose of the Bill is to give statutory authority to:

- the Fitness to Teach provisions of the Teaching Council Act, 2001; and,
- vetting arrangements for teachers, including the retrospective vetting of teachers who have not yet been vetted.

Fitness to Teach

Part 5 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001 relates to Fitness to Teach. The Amendment Bill clarifies the Fitness to Teach provisions of the Teaching Council Act, including criteria for Teaching Council investigations.

In summary, the Amendment:

- sets out a number of areas in which a complaint may be made, such as professional misconduct, poor professional performance or medical unfitness;
- expands the list of parties from which evidence can be required as part of a Fitness to Teach inquiry;
- makes clear that conduct which raises child protection concerns and which occurred prior to the enactment of this Bill can be examined in a Fitness to Teach inquiry provided the conduct concerned would have constituted a criminal offence when it occurred;
- enables a Fitness to Teach inquiry to be undertaken if information in a vetting disclosure, which has been received by the Council in its role as conduit for schools, indicates a risk of harm or a potential risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult;
- augments the capacity of the Teaching Council to deal with complaints which indicate a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult by empowering it to seek a vetting disclosure in respect of the teacher concerned as part of a Fitness to Teach inquiry; and,
- removes the requirement for a finding of “unfitness to teach” to be made before any sanction can be imposed, and adds a new sanction of “advice, admonishment or censure”.

Fitness to Teach hearings will, in the main, be held in public. The ASTI's position is that they should be held in private, as the default position. However, despite a recommendation from the Teaching Council that hearings be generally held in private, the Minister has decided they will be public, unless there is an overwhelming reason for a private hearing.

It is important to note that the Teaching Council's Fitness to Teach



For more information on
Fitness to Teach, visit the
Teaching Council website –
www.teachingcouncil.ie.

provisions will not displace the existing disciplinary procedures in operation in schools. Normally, these disciplinary procedures will have had to be exhausted before the Teaching Council will conduct an inquiry. The ASTI, which is represented on the Teaching Council, will work to ensure that investigations of teachers by the Teaching Council are conducted fairly and with due process.

Vetting of all teachers

Under the National Vetting Bureau Act, 2012, a person involved in “any work or activity which is carried out by a person, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with children ... in schools” must be vetted by the National Vetting Bureau. The National Vetting Bureau Act, 2012, will commence in spring 2015. This means that the school/employer will be under legal obligation to ensure that all employees are Garda vetted. The Teaching Council (Amendment) Bill makes provision for Garda vetting of all teachers on a statutory basis. This includes all Teaching Council-registered teachers who have not been vetted to date. While existing Garda vetting arrangements have been in place since 2006, these are non-statutory arrangements and have applied mainly to teachers taking up new employment in a school. About 54,000 of 90,000 registered teachers have been vetted. The remaining 36,000 are typically permanent teachers who have been in the same school since prior to the introduction of the non-statutory vetting arrangements. While a key Teaching Council objective in the first year following the implementation of the Teaching Council (Amendment) Bill will be to ensure that the vetting of this cohort is completed, there is as of yet no information as to the duration of the vetting.

Soft information

Under the National Vetting Bureau Act, 2012, vetting outcomes can now include “specified information”. Typically referred to as “soft information”, this is information other than criminal convictions held by the Garda Síochána or relevant organisation as per Part 2 of the Act, where such information reasonably gives rise to a bona fide concern that a person may harm a child or vulnerable person.

It is intended that the Teaching Council (Amendment) Bill will, when enacted and commenced, operate in tandem with the Vetting Act.

For more information, visit the Teaching Council website – www.teachingcouncil.ie.

Life's most valuable lessons don't always come from a book

Electric Ireland is proud to support SVP and its National Youth Development Programme.

As a teacher, there are two types of social action groups you can set up within your school:

- A Youth Conference is a school committee of volunteers who meet after school hours, plan projects and volunteer within their communities.
- A Youth for Justice project is available in some regions for Transition Year students and takes place during the school day throughout the year.

For more information please visit svp.ie, contact youth@svp.ie or phone 01 829 9033.



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Pensions – what do you need to know?

DESMOND O'TOOLE explains the key features of the teachers' pension scheme and some of the more important issues to look out for.



Every year the ASTI hosts a series of seminars across the country for members considering retirement. This is usually the first time that members are presented with comprehensive information about how the teachers' occupational pension scheme works. However, knowing about your pension scheme is important at every stage in your career because decisions you make during your career can have a significant impact on the value of your pension benefits when you come to retire.

Defined benefit

The main teachers' pension scheme is a 'final salary defined benefit scheme'. Teachers are not dependent for pension benefits on the performance of anonymous pension fund managers, but have

Since 2013, NQTs are members of the United Public Service Scheme. This will be dealt with in a future article.

guaranteed benefits determined by salary on the day of retirement, and the length of service earned or bought in the individual teacher's pension scheme. Once you know your final salary and your pensionable service, you can calculate your pension benefits. These pension benefits include a fortnightly pension for the rest of your life, a tax-free lump sum and, generally, a survivors' pension for your spouse or civil partner and qualifying children in the event of your death.

There are, in fact, three different pension arrangements that cover teachers depending on when you joined the teaching profession. The first arrangement covers teachers who joined the pension scheme before April 1, 2004. The second arrangement commenced from April 1, 2004, and members of this

scheme are referred to as “new entrants”. There are different early retirement options for these post April 1, 2004, new entrants. Since January 2013, newly qualified teachers are members of the Unified Public Service Scheme, with significantly reduced pension benefits. This article does not cover this new scheme. We will deal with this in a future article.

Ways to go

There are six ways to retire from teaching:

1. Compulsory retirement: teachers must retire by the end of the school year in which they reach 65 years of age. New entrants (post April 1, 2004) have no compulsory retirement age and may continue to teach as long as they are fit to do so.
2. Early retirement at 60/65: teachers may retire without penalty at any point from their 60th birthday based on their salary and pensionable service at that date. This facility is available for new entrants from their 65th birthday.
3. The 55/35 Scheme: this is available only for teachers who joined the scheme before April 2004. Such teachers may retire from 55 years of age without penalty providing that they have 35 years’ “actual teaching service”. The Department of Education and Skills (DES) will include up to two years for teacher training when calculating “actual teaching service” and will also treat job share years as full years. Remember, this added service is for the purposes of qualifying for the

55/35 Scheme only and is not used to calculate pension benefits.

4. Cost-neutral early retirement (CNER): this is available for teachers from 50 years of age, and from 55 for new entrants. This early release scheme enables teachers to retire even earlier, but pension benefits are actuarially reduced by up to 40% for the rest of a retired teacher’s life.
5. Deferred retirement: teachers who resign can opt to defer taking their pension benefits until age 60, or 65 for new entrants.
6. Medical retirement: teachers under 60 years of age whose illness or disability means that they are “permanently unfit to return to teaching” may apply for retirement on medical grounds. If granted, pensionable service is enhanced by up to six and two-thirds years, and pension benefits are paid immediately without penalty. If you or someone you know in your staffroom may be a candidate for medical retirement, please call the ASTI as soon as possible. The application process is quite onerous and it is essential that such members are advised by their union in order to properly prepare an application for medical retirement.

These then are the main features of the teachers’ occupational pension scheme: what it is, how you calculate pension benefits and when you can retire.

How to maximise your pension

Here now are some of the things that teachers need to look out for in



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their pension scheme, especially when making pension-affecting choices during their careers.

Grace period extended

Teachers whose pay was cut by Government legislation in July 2013 can have their pension benefits calculated on their higher, pre-cut salaries if they retire on or before June 30, 2016. They will also have their pensionable supervision and substitution payments (previously €1,769) included in their pension calculations if they retire within the grace period. Any pay increase a retiring teacher has received since the pay cuts were introduced (a new post of responsibility or long service allowance for example) is also included for pension purposes.

Calculating pension benefits

The salary figure that is used to calculate your pension benefits is your salary on the date you retire or, if a grace period applies, your salary on the day before pay cuts were implemented, uprated by any pay increases received in the interim. Allowances have to be held on the day you retire and must be held for three full years in order to have the whole value of the allowance included for pension purposes. If you are a job-sharer, the salary used to calculate your pension benefits is your equivalent whole-time salary. You do not have to go back to full-time work in your retirement year to preserve the value of your pension. Work for the State Examinations Commission is not superannuated and hence does not count towards your pension benefits.

PRSI and supplementary pensions

Teachers who have been continuously employed from before April 5, 1995, generally pay the D1 class of PRSI. All of the pension benefits for such teachers come from the teachers' pension scheme and they are not entitled to a State Contributory Pension when they reach 66 years of age. Teachers employed since April 1995, or teachers that have a break in service since April 1995, generally pay the A1 rate of PRSI. These teachers are entitled to a State Contributory Pension when they reach State retirement age, but that State pension is not in addition to their teachers' pension. Their teachers' pension is reduced by the approximate value of the State pension they are entitled to, so that when you add them together they come to the approximate value of the pension received by a similar teacher on the D1 rate of PRSI. If such teachers retire before the State retirement age, the DES will pay a supplementary pension in lieu of the State Pension until they reach State retirement age. There are, however, certain restrictions on the payment of a supplementary pension, especially if you retire on the CNER scheme.

Enhancing pension benefits

Teachers earn pensionable service by paying superannuation contributions every two weeks from their salaries. It is not possible to make independent contributions to the pension scheme if a teacher is on unpaid leave of absence. However, teachers can 'buy back' teaching service, including part-time service, that they gave in the Republic of Ireland before they joined the pension scheme, for example during their HDip year or before securing a permanent position. This facility also includes service where a teacher was paid by a VEC or privately by a school. If you have any such service, it is important that you contact the ASTI

The team at ASTI Head Office is available to assist you with any queries regarding retirement.

before you retire in order to ensure that you apply in sufficient time to buy back this service. In addition, teachers may top up their pensionable service by purchasing notional service, a kind of pension savings contract that matures at either 60 or 65 years of age. This is a very effective way of building top-up service, especially if you have at least 10 years to retirement. Teachers can also take out private pension arrangements called additional voluntary contributions (AVCs), such as the ASTI-endorsed scheme offered by Cornmarket. These are private arrangements, however, outside of the teachers' pension scheme, and as such depend on the performance of pension fund managers to secure an additional gratuity and/or pension in retirement.

Membership of the pension scheme

A teacher who is on an approved period of unpaid leave (for example, career break, unpaid maternity leave or unpaid sick leave) ceases to generate pensionable service during that period but remains a member of the scheme. A teacher who interrupts their teaching service (e.g., because a temporary contract is not renewed, to undertake a full-time course of study or to travel) is allowed a break of 26 weeks until their membership of the pension scheme is terminated. If such teachers return to teaching they join the pension scheme that is prevailing at that time, which from January 2013 means the Unified Public Service Scheme with its severely reduced benefits. Such teachers need to undertake at least a day of pensionable employment in every six months during their break from teaching in order to ensure that when they return to teaching they return to the scheme that they were in before their service was interrupted.

Privately paid teachers

In July 2010, the DES barred school-paid teachers, typically employed in fee-charging schools, from joining or re-entering the teachers' pension scheme. This has had a significant impact on the many privately paid teachers that the ASTI represents across the country. Teachers whose membership of the pension scheme has been interrupted, or whose application to join has been refused, should contact the ASTI urgently to discuss their situation. The ASTI will shortly commence legal action against the DES in defence of the previous rights of privately paid teachers to join and remain members of the teachers' pension scheme.

So, whether you are retiring in the next year or so, or are at an earlier stage in your career, remember that the team at ASTI Head Office is always available to assist with pension queries. It is especially important to call the ASTI when you are preparing for retirement, but also when you are considering a significant change in your career. Don't wait until retirement to discover that you should have acted earlier.



Desmond O'Toole

Desmond is Organisation and Development Officer for the ASTI.

Meet the branches: Kerry

JENNY DUNNE spoke to John O'Donovan, Chairperson of the ASTI Kerry Branch.



Matthew O'Connor, Standing Committee Representative for Region 5; Gavin Daly, Branch Treasurer; John O'Donovan, Branch Chairman; Kevin P. McCarthy, Branch Secretary; and, Bernard Moynihan, Executive Officer: Industrial Relations, ASTI Head Office.

Members: 600
 Schools: 23
 Chairperson: John O'Donovan
 Secretary: Kevin P McCarthy
 Treasurer: Gavin Daly
 Standing Committee Representative: Matthew O'Connor

Meetings

The Kerry Branch holds six branch meetings a year. The Standing Committee representative for our region is Matthew O'Connor and we always liaise with Matthew to make sure that he can attend.

We sometimes find it difficult to get a big turnout; at one of our recent meetings there were only about 16 people present. However, when we invite people in to speak on topics that are of interest to our members we can get a lot of people attending.

At our last meeting we had a speaker from Commarket. He spoke to us about the new sick leave arrangements and that was very interesting. In a few weeks' time, Bernard Moynihan, an ASTI official, will be attending our meeting to talk to us about the rights of part-time teachers.

Bernard came down to us before to talk about this, and the part-time teachers in our branch were delighted; they found it really helpful so we've asked him back again. There will probably be around 100 people at the meeting.

Last year, we invited Pat King [ASTI General Secretary] to our meeting and we got a very big crowd at that; there were people we'd never seen before at it. He spoke to the members and answered all their questions, and people found it very beneficial. I'd recommend to other branches that they invite speakers to meetings.

Convention

This year Convention will be held in Kerry and we'll have 11 delegates attending. There's a mix of delegates; the branch officers are going of course, and there will also be a few first time attendees, as well as some members who are retired.

Important issues

Like most other branches, the big issue we've been discussing is Junior Cycle and assessment. We've also talked a lot about the change to CIDs, which means that from September 2015 teachers will be entitled to a CID after two years' service. Members in our branch are very happy about that, and very grateful for the work of the ASTI in securing that. The other big issue, and this is probably the biggest bone of contention, is the Croke Park Hours. Teachers don't like doing them and that comes up often at our meetings.

Interested in having your branch profiled? Email us at astir@asti.ie.



Jenny Dunne

Jenny works in the ASTI Communications Office.



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Application deadline 10th May
- Degree of Master of Education MH51G
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- Degree of Master of Education (School Leadership) MH159G
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Application deadline 17th May
- Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Leadership [Tóraitheacht] MH61G
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For further details on our programmes visit:
 Website: https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/education/our_courses
 All applications must be made online via the Postgraduate Applications Centre, www.pac.ie

Reaping the benefits of ASTI membership

Membership of the ASTI means access to a range of valuable financial benefits. *ASTIR* looks at a selection of these.

Membership of the ASTI means that you are part of an organisation that works hard to protect standards in education, and to defend and improve teachers' pay and conditions. But that's not all. ASTI membership also gives you access to a range of financial benefits, which are of real value in these challenging times.

ASTI Credit Union

Membership of the ASTI Credit Union is open to all members and their families. Credit Union members can:

- avail of competitive interest rates as low as 5.75% APR;
- get a quick decision on loan applications, often over the phone;
- request that transactions be carried out through Credit Union online;
- apply for a Credit Union Money card (ATM) and pay no charges;
- pay bills with no charges;
- enter 13 cash draws and four car draws per annum for €2 per fortnight;
- open a junior account for children; and,
- earn an attractive return on your savings through a yearly dividend.

For more information, contact ASTI Credit Union Limited, Tel: 1850 443 131, or 01-675 0670, or log on to www.asticu.ie.

Travel insurance

Annual travel insurance for ASTI members has been agreed with QuickCover.ie. QuickCover.ie offers annual family multi-trip cover for €77.49. However, if the member has approved private medical insurance, this reduces to €54.24. Premiums for members aged over 64 and less than 75 years amounts to €146.65, or €102.66 with the appropriate medical insurance. This policy will cover an ASTI member, their spouse/partner (either sex) plus all unmarried dependent children aged under 19 years, or under 23 years if still in full-time education. It covers a wide range of activities, including winter sports and scuba diving. For further details or to apply, Tel: 1890 929 373, or 01-406 1666, or log on to www.quickcover.ie.

ASTI AIB affinity visa card

The ASTI has partnered with AIB to offer an affinity credit card with a reduced rate, exclusively for ASTI members and staff. Benefits include:

- up to 56 days' interest-free credit;
- special introductory annual interest on purchases and balance transfers;
- cash advance facility;
- available to non-AIB customers;
- no annual bank fee; and,
- share benefits with a second card.

To apply, please Tel: 01-668 5500.

AVCs

The ASTI Additional Voluntary Contribution (AVC) scheme is available to teachers through their ASTI membership. The scheme provides teachers with a way to make additional contributions towards their retirement benefits while cutting their tax bill now. Tax relief, at a teacher's higher rate of tax, is allowed on AVC contributions, subject to Revenue regulations.

Other ASTI benefits

Optical, dental, hearing aid benefits

Applications for the Sickness Benefit Scheme must be made on the official form, available from your school steward or Head Office.

Study grants

The ASTI offers grants to members pursuing certain diploma, certificate or degree courses in trade union studies. Contact the General Secretary.

Benevolent fund

A grant of up to €10,000 may be paid to members or their dependents in the event of extreme hardship, illness or death, subject to certain conditions. For an application form, please contact Maura Harpur, Tel: 01-604 0164.

Other negotiated schemes

Car insurance

Both you and your partner can insure your car(s) through Cornmarket at a competitive price and avail of excellent benefits. Tel: (01) 470 8065.

Home insurance

Cornmarket offers home insurance to members at a very competitive price, and with a range of additional benefits. Tel: (01) 470 8065.

Salary protection (PHI) and death scheme

A private disability and death benefit insurance preferential scheme for ASTI members. Tel: 01-408 4166 or log on to the Cornmarket website.

Legal aid

Last year, ASTI spent €125,127 on providing legal aid for our members.

For further information on any of these schemes, check out the Services and Benefits section on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.

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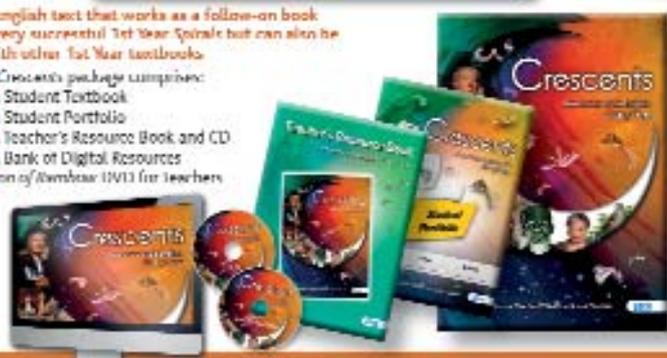
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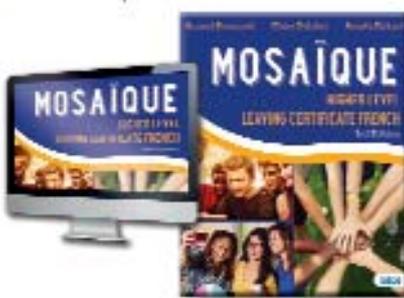
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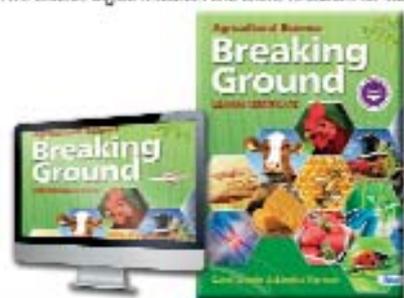


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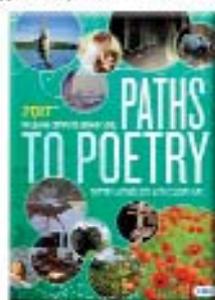


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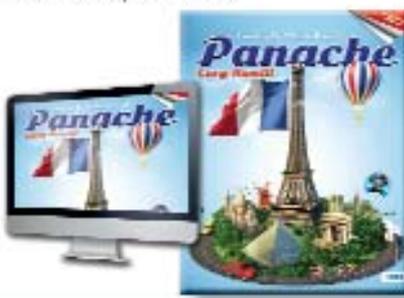


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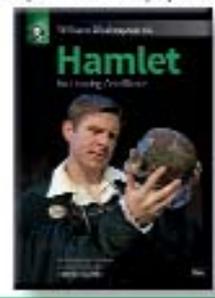


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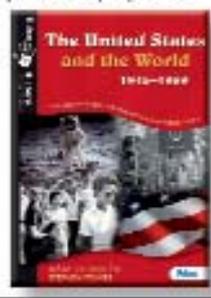


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Join the RSTA in the fight for pension restoration

Once again the RSTA reiterates the urgent need to continue the recruitment campaign given the challenges facing retired public servants. As 2015 dawned there were various reports of economic recovery and attendant speculation about the possibility of a reduction in the pension levy. However, there are no specifics as yet. The RSTA, as a constituent group of the Alliance of Retired Public Servants, must avail of this short window of opportunity. To be effective in negotiating it needs to maximise its membership, so we appeal to all retired secondary teachers to join, any

lapsed members to return to the fold, and anybody contemplating retiring to consider it seriously for the benefit of all.

RSTA Spring Break

The RSTA Spring Break, incorporating the National Conference, will take place in the Sheraton Hotel, Athlone, on May 12, 13 and 14, 2015. An exciting programme of events is guaranteed, details of which will be published in the next Newsletter and online at www.rsta.ie.

RSTA Membership Application/Renewal

First Name: Surname:
Address:
Home Phone: Mobile:
Email: RSTA Branch:

Annual Subscription €24. Payment options:

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

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO:

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

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS using black or blue pen.

To The Manager: Date:

(Name of Member's Bank)

Bank Branch and Full Address:

I hereby authorise and request you to DEBIT my account.

Bank Account No: National Sort Code (NSC):

Account Name: with the amount of €24. Amount in words: **Twenty Four Euro**

Frequency: **Annually Until Further Notice** Start Date for payment:

And to CREDIT the account held in the name of: **Retired Secondary Teachers' Association AIB Bank, Sutton Branch**

NSC: 93-23-61 Account Number: 12729-080 IBAN: IE55 AIBK 9323 6112 7290 80 BIC: AIBKIE2D

Member's Name & RSTA Branch:

(To identify the member's payment on the RSTA bank statement)

Member's Signature: Date:

(You can cancel this Standing Order instruction at any time by writing to your Bank. The amount of the payment authorised above may not be altered except by your instruction to your Bank.)

Asthma e-learning programme for transition year students

The Asthma Society's Transition Year E-Learning Programme is entering its second year and the Society is seeking schools and teachers to take part. The Programme consists of four 40-minute modules, which can be run on four different days or in a single day, depending on computer access. The student 'passes' each module by completing a short multiple choice question test, and they are awarded a certificate on completion of the entire Programme. The Programme is offered free of charge to schools, but places are limited. For more information or to sign up, visit www.asthma.ie.

Maths Counts Conference

Maths Counts 2015 – Learning and Teaching Mathematics in Irish Post-Primary Schools will take place on Friday and Saturday, April 17 and 18, 2015, in University College Dublin. For further information contact Project Maths Development Team, Drumcondra Education Centre, Tel: 01-857 6422/857 6428, or Email: graineh@ecdumcondra.ie; racheld@ecdumcondra.ie.

New editor for *Education Matters Yearbook*

Brian Mooney has been appointed as the new editor of the *Education Matters Yearbook*. An ASTI member, Brian is Guidance Counsellor at Oatlands College, Mount Merrion, Dublin, and is a regular contributor to *The Irish Times* on education issues.

The *Education Matters Yearbook* is published each year in December and provides an accessible record – in one location – of the key developments and changes during the year in education, along with commentary on their implications for the year ahead.

Brian takes over as editor from Dr Tony Hall, NUI Galway, who held the position for the past three years.

Ireland needs more trees

Retired teacher Pat Walsh would like to hear from teachers who are interested in growing trees and who would like to get their pupils growing trees. Pat can supply small trees (certified and from registered nurseries) at a very reasonable price, for schools or for students to take home. For further information, contact Pat Walsh, Killeenarna, Claremorris, Co. Mayo, Tel: 087-925 2111, or Email: patwal@eircom.net.

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Survey on dyslexia

The Dyslexia Association of Ireland is undertaking a major survey of primary and second-level teachers in Ireland. The Association hopes to learn about teachers' current experience of dyslexia in the context of the Irish education system. You can complete the survey online at www.surveymonkey.com/s/DAlteacher. The link can be shared with other teachers, and the survey will be open until April 15, 2015.

Bookswap

St Patrick's College Cork is looking for a Cork school engaged in a student book club to swap books. Please contact fbarry@stpatrikscork.org.

European Commission Video Competition

The European Commission is launching a video competition called 'What does a united Europe mean to you?' for young people aged 13 to 15. Young people are invited to make a one-minute video on this theme. One winner from each country will be invited to Brussels, where they will have the opportunity to explore the city, learn about the EU and meet young people from all over Europe. The closing date for entries is April 10, 2015. For more information see http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/news_corner/video_competition/index_en.htm.



Development Education funding for post-primary schools 2015-2016

Open for Applications: 2nd March 2015
Deadline for Applications: 20th April 2015

Are you a school, a school network or an (digital) NGO that wishes to increase student engagement with global development?

If yes, then you may be interested in applying to WorldWide Global Schools for funding under our Grant Call for the 2015 - 2016 academic year.

Apply online at: worldwiseschools.ie/funding

Tel: 01 8652078 | Email: info@worldwiseschools.ie
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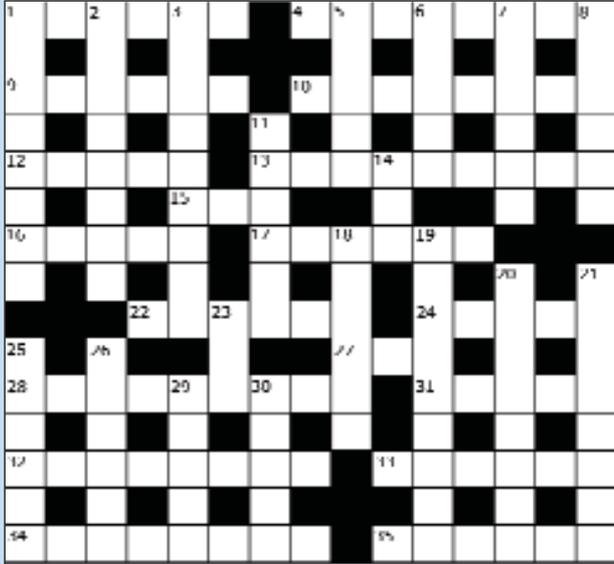


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The winner will receive €200

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. 1502, Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, April 17, 2015

CLUES ACROSS:

- 1 Ice could turn the cat to acid (6)
- 4 Charm one on the way in (8)
- 9 Fluffs up lumps as in pillow (6)
- 10 You might find this stork in the officers' mess (8)
- 12 & 17 ACROSS: Generally in the DES! (4,1,6)
- 13 Realise 'tis about the descendants of Jacob (9)
- 15 Another version of WSE (1.1.1.)
- 16 Twit, nitwit, ninny (5)
- 17 SEE 12 ACROSS
- 22 Leader wrapped in her fur (6)
- 24 Protective layer (5)
- 27 Smartphone download (3)
- 28 Step right in cement (9)
- 31 Laughing animal (5)
- 32 Is filthily in an evasive, deceitful way (8)
- 33 A colourless type of TV (2)
- 34 Looking back, cover the alien creature with thin layers (8)
- 35 The spirit of Cupid's love (6)

CLUES DOWN:

- 1 It could be pertinent if you pop up on a site (8)
- 2 Acted due to being learned (8)
- 3 On the spur of the moment I'm up to time with you (9)
- 5 How low can you get in the drain? (5)
- 6 Wondrous Ellen could stir to action (5)
- 7 B vitamin in Abel's brother (6)
- 8 Answer, I see, met with high regard (6)
- 11 Give lip to the referee when you want to nick something (6)
- 14 A tree could result in fire residue (3)
- 18 Get Ray to spin around (6)
- 19 Ambiguities (9)
- 20 Kind of cone bearing evidence used in courts of law (8)
- 21 Distinct or keep apart depending on your pronunciation (8)
- 23 She makes the border to the garment (3)
- 25 See lid for the correct fuel at the pumps (6)
- 26 His MSc could cause a division (6)
- 29 Food down the hatch! (5)
- 30 Ostentatious display (5)

Solution to ASTIR Crossword No. 1501

Across

- 8. Salivate
- 9. Eponym
- 10. Soiree
- 11. Opulence
- 12. Street
- 13. Offering
- 15. Able
- 17. Ravioli
- 19. Earache
- 22. Disc
- 24. Nepotism
- 27. Radius
- 29. Chickpea
- 30. Notify
- 31. Espied
- 32. Sombrero

Down

- 1. Mahout
- 2. Disraeli
- 3. Parental
- 4. Aerosol
- 5. Rebuff
- 6. Poseur
- 7. Hyacinth
- 14. Fees
- 16. Bids
- 18. Amethyst
- 20. Acronyms
- 21. Auditors
- 23. Impasse
- 25. Orchid
- 26. Impede
- 28. Unfurl

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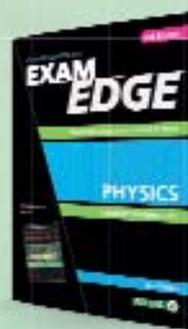
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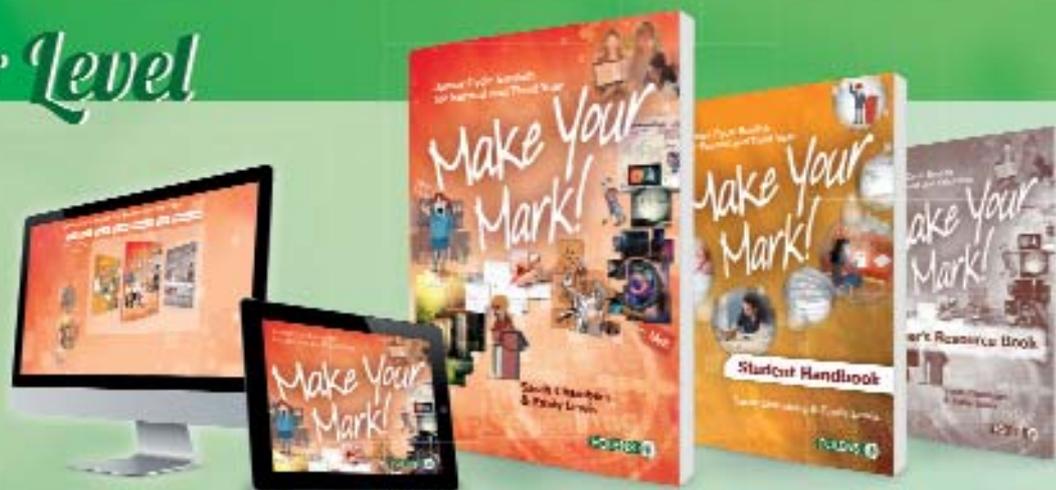
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Absolute A material

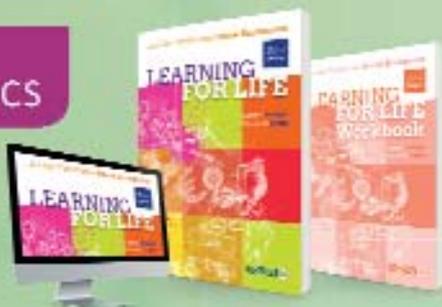
Junior Level

ENGLISH



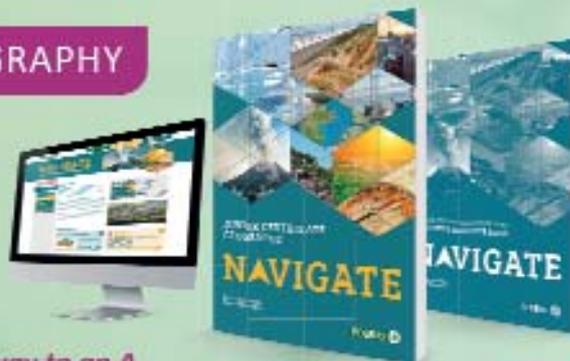
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