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Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland



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Volume 29: Number 3: May 2011
ISSN 0790-6560

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Published on behalf of ASTI by Think Media.
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Cover photo: PGDE student Aoife Ni Mháille addresses
ASTI Annual Convention 2011 in Cork.

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Letters, comments and articles are welcome

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

Defending teachers and education

The plight of new, part-time and temporary teachers was a key theme at this year's Annual Convention in Cork. Some of our youngest delegates spoke courageously of their frustration at having spent the last few years living from pay cheque to pay cheque in the hope that they will some day find the 'holy grail' that is the full-time permanent teaching position. One delegate highlighted the fact that 27% of second-level teaching jobs are temporary and spoke of the impact this has on the teaching and learning environment. Temporary teachers can find it more difficult to integrate into the life of the school, while student-teacher relations can be affected by a lack of continuity in the classroom.

A 24-year-old student teacher told delegates of her hope of finding teaching work of some kind in the coming year. She also told delegates of her anger about being treated as a 'second-class' teacher with an inferior salary scale and pension scheme (see page 21).

Of course, teachers are not the only profession affected by the jobs crisis. Teachers know this; they work in communities and deal with the realities of recession and job loss every day. But teachers have, like those other professions, lost jobs and hours, and many young teachers are struggling with mortgages and other commitments.

A key concern of the ASTI is the effect of the economic crisis and education cuts on young people's education. Education is a frontline service. It is labour intensive. When you target frontline education staff, you are targeting students.

When the first round of education cutbacks was announced in 2008, the ASTI warned of the impact on young teachers looking for work and on the students sitting in the classroom. Approximately 1,000 teaching posts were lost at second level in 2009. This savage cut came at a time when Ireland was already third from the bottom of the 28-country OECD table for spending on second-level education as a proportion of GDP. Since then more posts have been lost, including resource teachers for Travellers and English language support teachers.

Teachers passionately believe in giving their students the best possible education. Education significantly increases young people's chances of surviving and thriving in all kinds of circumstances. Teachers also believe that education is the key to economic recovery. Without adequate investment in education we will not get the high added-value education service that will protect our young people's futures and bring about sustainable economic recovery.



Jack Keane

ASTI President

Why we need unions

The Irish trade union movement, with 800,000 members, is the largest civil society organisation in the country. It advocates a restructuring of society in the areas of social and economic policy. It is made up of a diverse group of people with common interests – dignity and equity at work, a fair and just economy, and access to quality public services for all.

In Ireland, trade unions are independent bodies, democratically organised, and owned and controlled by their members. They are not subservient to market forces and are not answerable to Government or any political group or party. At a time when almost all Irish institutions have suffered a decline in confidence, trade unions have retained relatively high public trust, as shown by a 2010 Behaviour and Attitudes Survey.

So why then is the trade union movement under sustained attack? The answer is that unions get in the way. Their agenda does not fit into the free market, dog-eat-dog economic model that dominates society. There is a concerted push by powerful interests to target the trade union movement. A consistent line is put forward that trade unions are nothing more than a vested interest, that trade unions' day is done, that they are from another age. But the values, work and goals of trade unions are just as valid today as they were 100 years ago.

In 2011 newly qualified teachers face unemployment, lower pay than their colleagues, and a pension scheme that will see them pay more in contributions than they will ever receive in pension benefits. For the past number of years, the ASTI has been working daily to protect over 2,500 part-time and temporary teachers who are ASTI members. In Head Office we have four industrial relations officials and five support staff working every day to protect, defend and win cases for these vulnerable teachers. New teachers, part-time teachers and temporary teachers are among those who need their union. They need the support of their colleagues. They need a voice.

In my view the need for trade unions is obvious. The real issue is, how should modern trade unions operate; how can we best serve our members and progress our values and goals?

The ASTI is undertaking a review of its structures and organisation, as directed by Convention 2010. This review presents us with the ideal opportunity to step back and ask ourselves some fundamental questions. I have every confidence that we can bring changes to the ASTI that will make it an even better union, even more responsive to its members, an organisation that all members can identify with and be part of.



Pat King

ASTI General Secretary

Pension confusion – cleared up

Under the terms of the Croke Park Agreement, teachers who retire before February 2012 will have their pensions calculated on 'pre-cut' salary. 'Pre-cut' salary is the salary these teachers were on before the public service pay cut imposed in January 2010. These pension payments will be subject to the cut – averaging 4% – imposed on all public service pensions in Budget 2011. Those retiring after February 2012 will have their pensions calculated on the basis of post-cut salary – their actual salary at retirement.

Those currently in receipt of a public service pension have had a cut of an average of 4% in their pension payments since January 2011.

Current pension holders	Retiring before end February 2012	Retiring after end February 2012
Pension and lump sum determined at retirement	Pension and lump sum based on pre-cut salary	Pension and lump sum based on post-cut salary
Average of 4% cut applied to pension payments since January 2011	Average of 4% cut will be imposed on pension payments	

Principals and deputy principals seminar

Two hundred principals and deputy principals attended an ASTI seminar in April to hear presentations on the Croke Park Agreement and the Redeployment Scheme. Attendees were also addressed on dealing with the media and with conflict in schools.



Head Office appointments



Desmond O'Toole has been appointed Executive Officer: Organisation and Development with the ASTI. Desmond has a BA in Classics and Medieval Irish from NUI Maynooth. He previously worked as a senior manager in the global telecommunications and IT industry.



Ann Marie Ryan has been appointed Executive Officer: Industrial Relations with the ASTI. Ann Marie has a BBS from University College Dublin. She previously worked as ASTI Staff Officer: Industrial Relations.

Maths upgrade for registration

Registered teachers who studied maths in at least the first year of their qualifying degree can upskill to allow them to achieve registration status for teaching maths. The ASTI has confirmed that completion of three Open University modules (M121, MS221 and M208) would allow such teachers to achieve standard Teaching Council registration for maths. Registered teachers could also complete a Higher Diploma in maths, but teachers are advised to confirm if a course is suitable for registration prior to commencement. The Teacher Education Section of the Department of Education is currently developing postgraduate maths courses aimed at those teachers who do not have the required qualifications to teach maths or who need additional help with maths content or pedagogy.

ASTI equality seminar



The ASTI held a seminar for Honorary Equality Branch Officers in March. The seminar addressed the topic of mental health and equality. Pictured at the seminar are (from left): Maire Mulcahy, ASTI Assistant General Secretary; Equality; Deirdre MacDonald, speaker; Pat King, ASTI General Secretary; Kahlil Thompson Coyle, speaker; and, Jacinta Kitt, speaker. Read more about the seminar on the events section of the ASTI website.

Science for Development



Winners of the Science for Development Award from Clonakilty Community College, Cork, pictured with Minister of State for Trade and Development, Jan O'Sullivan. The winners – Sean White, Daniel Nyhan and Michael McCarty – and their teacher travelled to Zambia at Easter to field test their project on food production and health awareness. The Science for Development Award encourages young people to examine the issues and challenges facing the developing world and use their scientific skills to aid development.

Want to save money?

How can I find out what tax credits and reliefs I'm currently claiming and how do I claim the credits I am entitled to?

The tax credits and reliefs you are currently claiming are detailed on your Tax Credit Certificate, which can be obtained through Revenue's self-service channel "PAYE anytime" on www.revenue.ie. Your Tax Credit Certificate instructs your employer on how much tax to deduct from your salary and only you have control of ensuring that your allowances are correct. The tax credits and reliefs you can claim rely entirely on your own personal circumstances. Some of the most popular credits and reliefs that ASTI members claim for include:

- flat rate expenses – €518 for teachers/€608 for school principals. An additional €90 can be claimed if you are registered with the Teaching Council and an additional €126 could be claimable if you are a full-time teacher but also involved in PE or guidance counselling (these allowances are available at your marginal rate);
- service charges – tax relief can be claimed at 20% on a maximum of €400 on your refuse or water charges (to be abolished in 2012);
- medical expenses – 20% tax relief on all allowable medical expenses; and,
- college fees – tax relief can be claimed at 20% on a maximum of €5,000 of tuition fees on an approved third-level course.

These are only a few of the available allowances that can be claimed. The more you can claim for, the higher your take home pay. You can check the tax credits and reliefs that may be applicable to you on the Revenue website. You should note that any claims you make through Revenue today will not be backdated for previous years. However, you can file tax returns for each year as far back as 2007 until December 31, 2011. Statistics show that 83% of tax returns prepared by public sector employees in 2010 resulted in a refund. In fact, the average refund for public sector employees who filed a tax return through Cornmarket last year was over €350, so it's worth your while filing a tax return this year.

Advice received by the ASTI from: Damian Wilson, Supervisor, Taxation Division (Midas), Cornmarket.

If you have a financial question you would like answered in ASTIR, send it to astir@asti.ie.

Review your taxes

The Revenue Commissioners has informed the ASTI that it is currently conducting a review of payments received by those engaged in the education sector, in respect of other income generated outside their PAYE employment. The review will concentrate on any income earned in a self-employment capacity. The purpose of the review is to provide assurance to Revenue that all income received is being treated correctly for tax purposes.

What should you do?

If you have been in receipt of income other than PAYE-assessed income for the current or prior years, and you believe that you may have a tax irregularity, there are benefits to disclosing this information to Revenue as soon as possible.

2010 income

All taxable income other than PAYE income earned during 2010 must be declared to the Revenue Commissioners before October 31, 2011. See www.revenue.ie for details on how to make a self-assessed tax return.

Prior years

Making a disclosure for prior years in advance of any contact from Revenue in relation to these matters may entitle you to a significant reduction in the penalties applying to any tax settlement. Contact your local Revenue office or see www.revenue.ie for more information on making a disclosure.

For more information see www.revenue.ie or contact your local Revenue office.

Privately paid teachers

ASTI seeks LRC intervention on privately paid teachers' pensions

Since 2010, privately paid teachers are no longer able to join the teachers' pension scheme provided by the Department of Education. The ASTI has referred the matter to the Conciliation Service of the Labour Relations Commission (LRC) seeking its intervention. The LRC has written to the Department of Education and Skills inviting them to be party to a conciliation conference on the matter.

ASTI objects to privately paid teachers being classed as new entrants

The ASTI has strongly objected to the definition of 'new entrants' to teaching determined by the Department of Education, pointing out the impact on teachers who are working in privately paid situations. The Department of Education has confirmed that its working definition of a "new entrant" is "a teacher who was never previously on the Department's books".

Any new entrant to a Department-paid position will commence on the first point of the salary scale and their salary will be cut by 10%. New entrants will not be entitled to claim incremental credit for previous service as a privately paid teacher or for relevant non-teaching service. The ASTI is pursuing this matter with the Department of Education.

Keep updated on these issues on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.

ASTI member principals

In order to keep ASTI school records up to date, we are asking all school principals and deputy principals to let ASTI Head Office know when they are appointed or retire. Please Tel: 01-604 0175, or Email bgalligan@astl.ie.

Athlone retirement function



Pictured at a retirement function held by the Athlone Branch are (from left): ASTI President Elect, Brendan Broderick; Paddy Divilly; Eamon Fitzpatrick; and, Paudraig Lydon.

New PE syllabus – have your say

The NCCA has finalised a draft syllabus for Leaving Certificate physical education. The draft syllabus proposes an assessment arrangement that allocates 50% of marks for a personal performance project and 50% for a written examination.

The ASTI strongly advises all physical education teachers to read the draft syllabus, which is available on the NCCA website – www.ncca.ie – and to submit their views to the NCCA on its contents and assessment components.

PE teachers should note that it is the longstanding policy of the ASTI that its members will not award marks to their own students for the purpose of assessment in the State examinations.



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Please contact Mairead Condon, Course Administrator on 086-4065371 and Mairead.Condon@ul.ie and/or Dr. Geraldine Mooney Simmie, Course Director, Geraldine.Mooney.Simmie@ul.ie.

Teaching Council registration renewal reminder

Teaching Council registration is valid for 12 months from the date of registration. To remain on the Register, a teacher must renew registration before the period of current registration expires. If registration is not renewed in time, the Council will remove the teacher from the Register. A teacher who is removed from the Register may re-apply for registration at any time, but they will have to complete the full application process. If you have missed the deadline for Teaching Council registration renewal, but wish to remain registered, you should return your form and fee without delay or renew online through the homepage – www.teachingcouncil.ie.

Change of details

It is important that teachers have current personal data recorded on the Teaching Council Register so that they receive relevant communications from the Teaching Council. To update your details on the register, download and complete the relevant Change of Details form and return it to the Council with the necessary documentation. See www.teachingcouncil.ie. For more on the work of the Council, see 'What's New?' on www.teachingcouncil.ie.

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Handing over the reins



Former RSTA President Marie Doyle pictured with her successor Henry Collins at the RSTA AGM held in May.

Support service extended to retired teachers

The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) has recently been extended to include access for retired teachers and special needs assistants (SNAs) for up to six months following retirement. The EAS is a free and confidential counselling and support service for teachers, SNAs and their family members to provide them with assistance in coping with a variety of issues. Teachers/SNAs may experience a mix of emotions when retiring and having access to the EAS during the weeks and months following retirement will help with the adjustment.

The EAS is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year – freephone 1800 411 057, or Email: eas@vhics.ie.

Mayo RSTA on tour



Members of the Mayo Branch of the Retired Secondary Teachers Association (RSTA) on their recent visit to Stormont, which was part of a tour of Belfast and the Giant's Causeway.

FOLENS



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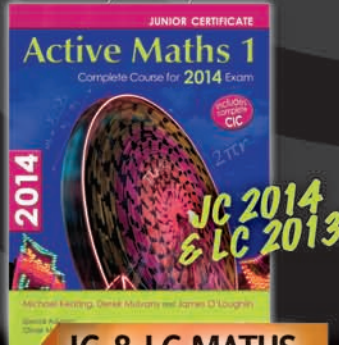
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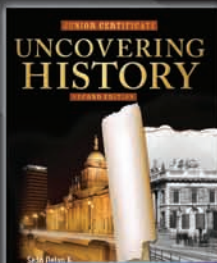
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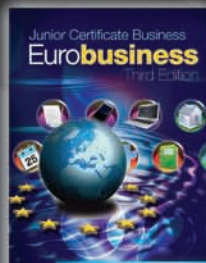
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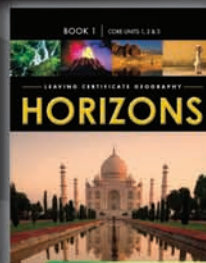
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ASTI President Jack Keane addressing Convention.



Delegates vote on a motion at Convention 2011.

Convention 2011 – the speeches

President's address

Education is the key to the future, ASTI President Jack Keane tells Convention.

"The future of education cannot be left to the economists, the technocrats and the corporate voices. So far these influential voices have got it wrong ... we cannot condemn a generation of children and young people to a third-rate education service because we need to meet financial targets imposed by the bank bailout. If we do this we may not live to see the real rebirth of our country and neither may our children."

"Teachers want to be on the road to recovery ... But we will not be manipulated by a pre-occupation with the economy at the expense of our public services. We will stand up for a quality education service for all ... Our students get one chance to go through the second-level system, so it is imperative that they get as good an education as those who have gone before. Hacking away at education resources – either blatantly or discreetly – will prove to be counterproductive for the State."

The Croke Park Agreement

"As a teacher I can tell you that the Croke Park Agreement fails to understand the work of teachers and schools. An extra hour a week stands in stark contrast to the time and energy given by teachers to extracurricular activities for students. However ... the deal has now been accepted by all sides. It is already being implemented in second-level schools around the country. We have kept our side of the Agreement. We expect the Government to keep its side. A deal is a deal. In the event of any attempt by the Government to deviate from its terms we absolutely reserve the right to withdraw from all aspects of the Agreement."

Young teachers

"Young teachers are one of our greatest assets. Thankfully, second-level teaching in Ireland still attracts high calibre students. A recent survey of PGDE students carried out by the ASTI found that just over half of the class of 2011 expect to have a secure full-time teaching position five years after graduation ... I fear many of our best and brightest graduating teachers will leave Ireland. They are unwilling to spend years in part-time and temporary jobs ... Minister I urge you to ensure that the resource that is our high quality, motivated young teachers is put to its best use in classrooms around the country."

Rounded students not worker bees

"National and international research has reported that in general Irish students are happy at school and enjoy going to school. We believe that this is due to the holistic approach to education adopted by our schools. Despite external pressures to run 'pressure cooker' schools that will perform well in misleading league tables in newspapers, teachers still care deeply about student wellbeing ... This is why teachers become defensive when calls are made for schools to deliver for the labour market above all else. We do not see our main function as producing worker bees for industry. This is why we believe our commitment to extracurricular work is of vital importance to the education and wellbeing of young people. The ill-informed and biased commentary on teachers' work and working conditions shows no regard for holistic education and the development of the whole person."

Literacy and numeracy

"Teachers are immensely concerned about literacy and numeracy standards among our young people. It is a fact that literacy and numeracy skills are key



Convention Guest Speaker Lord David Puttnam delivered a stirring address.



Elaine Devlin, Dundalk Branch.

determinants of young people's future life chances ... It is therefore disappointing that the very students who require the most support with literacy skills are those who are most lacking in support. The most recent education cuts include the withdrawal of resource teachers for Travellers, the replacement of a cap on English language support teachers, and the 'pausing' of resource teaching hours for students with special education needs."

Education for economic recovery

"I would like to finish on a positive note by paraphrasing John F. Kennedy, who once remarked that the Chinese use two brush strokes to write the word crisis – one brush stroke represents danger, the other opportunity ... Ireland will not get the high added-value education service needed for our recovery with an unrelenting round after round of cutbacks, increased class sizes and demoralised teachers. Let us have the necessary investment and our schools can deliver."

[Read the full text of ASTI President Jack Keane's speech at www.asti.ie.](http://www.asti.ie)

General Secretary's report

The ASTI must grow in strength at a time when trade unionism has never been more important, says Pat King, General Secretary.

"The problem of falling branch attendances has been with us for many years. It is not a new problem but in recent times, it has become critical ... I sense that the problem is no longer just that of members staying away from meetings. I sense that there is an increasing disconnect, with fewer members having a sense of identity with the ASTI; fewer possessing a sense of loyalty to the ASTI; fewer reading ASTI literature; and fewer bothering to vote in what are crucial ballots on conditions of work."

"What is clear is that we cannot afford to let matters drift anymore. This period in the ASTI's history when we have seen dismantled many of the conditions dearly won in the past, a period when some are questioning the very point of being in a union, when trade unions throughout the country are

being assailed by powerful interests ... This period is the ideal time to step back, ask ourselves some fundamental questions about our purpose; amend and create structures and an organisation that are fit for purpose; set up a communications structure that will leave us confident that we, in the leadership, or we at Convention, or we on CEC, accurately reflect what members really want and what members are really saying."

Importance of trade union movement

"Trade unionism is about working people, standing side by side, defending their working conditions, looking out for their colleagues, looking at the workplace – not from a self-interest perspective but rather for the good of their working community. Above all, the trade union movement is about service – colleagues serving each other and bringing some balance to the employer–employee relationship."

"Trade unions are independent bodies, owned and controlled by their members. They are not subservient to market forces and are not answerable to any political group or party. Trade unionists have and should have loyalty only to the interests and service of all their colleague members and their union ... So why then is the trade union movement under sustained attack? The answer to that question is that unions get in the way ... There is a concerted push by powerful interests to target the trade union movement." "I welcome the fact that the Irish Congress of Trade Unions has now set up and is staffing an Economic Research Unit. That Unit will, we hope, begin to respond to the anti-union propaganda and the celebrity economists who have been given free rein in the media."

Economic crisis

"I support the ICTU General Secretary David Begg, when he called last week for the State's bailout deal to be renegotiated. This view has now become more popularly supported, but David Begg has been saying this for months, from the very day that the Government published its four-year austerity plan."



Dungarvan Branch delegates (from left): Pat Collins; Michael McGrath; Margo McGann; and, Liam O'Mahony.



From left: Gloria Helen, Carbery; Noelle Moran, Tuam; and, Niamh Carroll, Navan.

"At this Conference, we are not going to solve the problems that beset our economy ... Our debate is about defending the trade union movement, about defending the right to belong to a trade union, about protecting our working conditions, about fighting for education resources, about promoting investment in education, about helping to create a better life for our children through education. It is not only our right to discuss these matters; in fact, it is our duty to discuss these matters."

"And to the Minister for Education and Skills, I would say: no Minister, we will not stop asking for greater investment in education, we will not stop demanding school resources for disadvantaged children, we will not stop asking for more teachers in order to give children a better chance in life. That Minister, is our responsibility, that is our role, that is the dynamic in which we operate."

Croke Park Agreement

"ASTI members voted to accept Croke Park. I have no doubt that every Yes vote was a reluctant Yes vote. But the members made a choice. The members have changed their minds on Croke Park since this time last year. To change your mind, to alter your position, is a very intelligent thing to do when you have new information and when the context has changed and, my word, has the context changed since last May."
"What we will say in any talks [with the DES] is that education is a frontline service; it is labour intensive; and its quality depends on teachers being there and available for students. There is no fat or waste in the education service. Schools are run on a shoestring and overall investment in education in Ireland has always been pathetic – well below the OECD average. Cutting education resources is short-sighted in the extreme. It is bad enough that the current generation of young people are going to inherit massive debt repayments without also denying them the best possible education. Education is an investment in individuals, communities, society and our economy. Knowledge is the central driver of economic recovery."

Protecting new and vulnerable teachers

"The governments (both old and new) have targeted new entrants to the public service and new teachers for special treatment ... Combine [the 14% pay cut for new entrants] with the dishonest career-averaging pension scheme coming for new teachers and we will end up with a second tier of low paid and demoralised teachers."

"We have been campaigning for the new entrant teachers as no one else will speak for them. We will continue to argue for better working conditions for them and for all teachers, particularly those in part-time and temporary positions."

"The place for these teachers, indeed for all teachers, is in their trade union. That is where they will have a voice; that is where they will find protection; that is where they will find supportive colleagues. Trade unions and trade union membership have never been more important and I ask you to repeat this to your colleagues at every opportunity."

[Read the full text of the General Secretary's report at www.asti.ie.](http://www.asti.ie)

Minister Ruairi Quinn

The Minister for Education and Skills tells Convention that painful decisions and educational reform are necessary for Ireland's recovery.
"I want to begin by being totally frank with you about the resources that are likely to be available for education in the coming period. I am not going to pretend that those resources can be improved, that earlier decisions can be reversed, or that further difficult measures can be avoided. The bottom line is that Ireland has to reduce its expenditure on public services and that means further difficult and painful decisions."
"I know that you have all had to deal with significantly reduced income and living standards, and that there are particular anxieties for your members who do not have permanent positions ... I also know that you are not insulated from the wider impact of the current recession on those children and families with whom you relate in your daily working



Minister for Education and Skills Ruairi Quinn addresses Convention.



PJ Kennedy Award recipients (from left): Phelim O'Doherty; Mary Crowley; Margaret Buckley; Mary Guerin; and, John Molloy. Missing from photo is Joe O'Neil.

life ... I want to acknowledge and thank you for the very valuable support, encouragement and stability that you provide in the daily lives of children in your care at a time of great uncertainty."

Public service and Croke Park

"The core purpose of the Croke Park Agreement is to allow us to manage better with less. Because, make no mistake about it, we have to manage with less ... I think that it is vitally important, and I am sure you will accept, that implementation must be real and meaningful on the ground, bring real value to our education system and that the changes must be clearly visible to pupils and parents."

"The Government ... has decided to adopt the specific budgetary targets under the EU/IMF programme that must be met in 2011 and 2012. The importance of meeting the targets cannot be overstated. It is only by meeting those targets that EU/IMF funding will continue to arrive in this country. It is only by meeting those targets that teachers and other public servants can continue to be paid and that those relying on social protection can continue to receive weekly support ... While the Government is committed to protecting frontline education services to the greatest extent possible, we must not underestimate the challenge in doing so against rising enrolments."

Literacy, numeracy, junior cycle review

"...the road ahead is not simply about saving money. It is about making sure we deliver the best education we can for all our children ... It is not sufficient to claim that we have a good education system – we must strive at all times to ensure that we do."

"Improving literacy and numeracy skills is vital for the future of this country ... The issue is not about whether teaching methods have been adequate in the past or entering any blame game. Rather what we have to do is work collectively to ensure we do much better in future ... I want to stress that improved literacy and numeracy outcomes are a

challenge for schools and teachers at all levels and for all teachers in all schools. This is not just a primary school issue and not just the task of teachers in particular subject disciplines or those providing remediation support."

"I believe ... reform of the junior cycle is very necessary and I want to progress the necessary changes. The current Junior Certificate will not meet the needs of future cohorts of students ... We cannot afford to leave things as they are – they must change. Our students have to be provided with more active learning opportunities that promote real understanding, creativity and innovation. We need to make sure that key skills such as literacy, numeracy, critical thinking skills, team working and social skills are firmly embedded within the curriculum. This is essential if we are to support the growth and development of well-rounded young adults, ready to participate fully in further education, work and society. Teachers recognise this need for change."

"I am under no illusion that making changes will be challenging, not only in financial terms, but also in the change in thinking and professional practice that will be required of students, parents, teachers, school support services, the State Examinations Commission and my Department. We cannot afford to duck those challenges, however, and I am confident of your support and that of the other education partners in bringing about the necessary changes in the interests of our young people."

"I am confident that if we focus on our common objective – that of providing the best education for all children – we can make great progress. You occupy that precious space of providing hope for the future for each child you teach by ensuring the best educational outcomes you can for that child. You help shape and equip young minds to meet the future head on. You impart the skills and preparation they require to make their way in a different world where higher levels of educational attainment will be needed."

Read the full text of the Minister's speech at www.asti.ie.

The Motions

Five hundred delegates gave up the sun during this year's Easter break to attend ASTI Convention in Cork, where they voiced their views on a wide range of important topics including protection of new and vulnerable teachers, the Teaching Council and curriculum reform.

New and vulnerable teachers

ASTI commitment to non-permanent and incoming members

Proposing a motion that the ASTI reaffirm its commitment to non-permanent and incoming members in terms of pay and conditions, Sally Maguire, Stillorgan, said: "On top of the pension levy, on top of the USC, and all the other things, we now have a situation where if a new teacher is lucky enough to get a job, they will be starting off earning 14% less than a colleague in the same staffroom who started last September – that is an outrageous situation. Where is the equality in that?" She urged that: "Every single teacher who has a permanent job should be fighting in our own schools for vulnerable teachers". Speaking to the motion, Waterford delegate Paul O'Reilly said: "All members should be aware that allowing the weakest of our members to be hung out to dry, it is only a matter of time before the treasured permanency of those members that do have it will also be up for grabs".

The motion was carried.

CIDs

Proposing a motion that called for the ASTI to negotiate to ensure that service in different schools accumulates towards the calculation of eligible years for a CID in view of cross-sectoral redeployment, Dermot Brennan, Carbery, said: "If the Department of Education and Skills wants flexibility and movement across the spectrum of second-level education, then logically all reckonable service should be calculated towards a CID". Ciaran Murphy, Galway, asked why, as permanent status is no longer linked to one school due to redeployment, should a CID depend on four years' service in one school.

The motion was carried.

Teacher panels

Sheila Marie Herlihy, Carbery, proposed a motion that the ASTI demand that panels of registered teachers be established for the purpose of filling vacancies within schools. She said that part-time work has implications for teachers' morale as they have no financial security, and cannot build career or life plans. A panel system, such as is in operation at primary level, would help to alleviate this, she said. Gloria Helen, Carbery, said a panel system would be the fairest way to lessen the uncertainty of the situation for upcoming and non-permanent teachers. It would, she said, "encourage the dedicated non-permanent non-full-time teaching professionals of this country that their day will come".

The motion was carried.

FÁS Work Placement Programme

James McGovern of the Enniscorthy Branch spoke on a motion that the ASTI vehemently opposes the introduction of the FÁS Work Placement Programme for qualified teachers because of its potential to expose teachers to exploitation, and because it would be detrimental to the professionalism of teachers. In doing so, he asked: "If we allow this, what is next? What will the public perception of teaching be if we allow this? Jack of all trades but truly master of none". Maire Ní Laoire said the FÁS programme would give the impression that anybody could teach. Veronica Lavin, Limerick North, spoke against the motion asking delegates: "Please do not refer to these people as 'yellow pack teachers'. They are teachers. They may not have a choice; they see this as their only option for getting experience". However, Sean O'Neill, Dublin South County, argued that the WPP is not about creating experience, but about saving money.

The motion was carried.

The Teaching Council

Section 30 Amendment

A motion to endorse the Teaching Council's objection to non-qualified persons being employed in teaching positions and condemning an Amendment to Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act, which allows for unregistered teachers to be employed in a teaching capacity, was proposed by Noel Buckley, Tipperary, who said: "This motion is attempting to stop the educational abuse of our children ... it calls on you as professionally trained teachers to support your own regulatory body in their opposition to Amendment to Section 30". Fergal Canton, Kilkenny, speaking to the motion, told delegates that passing the motion would amount to teachers supporting themselves.

The motion was carried.

Teaching Council subscription

Martin Francis, Wexford Tony Boland, proposed a motion that in light of recent cutbacks, the ASTI seek a substantial decrease in the annual subscription to the Teaching Council. He said it is "insensitive to teachers to not consider their salaries in the calculation of the price ... 2011 is a completely different financial scenario to when the fee was decided in 2006 ... This motion is not about questioning the merits of the Teaching Council; it is about the idea of giving a reprieve to

teachers who are struggling financially". Margaret Walsh, Wexford Tony Boland, pointed out that new and non-permanent teachers must pay their subscription even if they do not have a full-time or any job, while Kevin Brogan, Drogheda Sean Higgins, said: "The Teaching Council is there to serve our needs, well we are asking them to serve our needs for less".

The motion was carried.

State exams

SEC appointments

Jerry McCarthy, Carbery, proposed a motion that the ASTI negotiate with the SEC to ensure that serving second-level teachers be given priority in the appointment of superintendents and assistant examiners. In doing so he said: "The loss of this work is a serious issue for our current members, already affected by the pension levy, pay cuts, and tax increases". He continued: "Serving teachers are clearly the best qualified to take on the roles as they deal with students and the relevant curriculum on a daily basis". Micheál O'Neill, New Ross, told delegates that there are working teachers who are having difficulty paying their mortgages and are in negative equity, and argued that this SEC work must be made available to these people. Meanwhile, Jim O'Dea, Dublin South 1, noted that qualified unemployed as well as serving teachers should also be prioritised.

The motion was carried.

Assessment of orals

Sally Maguire, Stillorgan, proposed a motion that the ASTI reassert its vehement opposition to teachers assessing their own students for State Examinations. She said language teachers are in favour of the oral component to exams but that the ASTI has fought for years to maintain, for the protection of students and teachers, the transparency and integrity of the exam system. "We cannot let that go by starting to assess our own students, it would be sheer madness," she said. Meanwhile, Joe Moran, Tipperary, called it a "disgrace" that the current 'ad-hoc' arrangements would be accepted for an exam in this country.

The motion was carried.

Curriculum reform

Junior Cert reform

Breda Lyons, Kerry, proposed a motion that in view of proposed changes to the Junior Cert examination, the ASTI call for the retention of the full examination after three years, not a modular system. She said: "We would, of course, encourage change, but it does need monitoring," adding that in any reform it is important that the confidence of the public and the integrity of the exam is preserved. Fergal Canton, Kilkenny, spoke against the motion arguing that: "Our country is going to have to confront rapid changes, social and cultural forces swirling around in a storm that's besetting the leaking and creaking lifeboat that is Ireland in the global economy". He argued for the acknowledgement of the extra-curricular activities undertaken by students, which are not currently recognised by the exam system, and urged delegates to separate the financial issue from the pedagogical issue and consider what is going to be good for students.

The motion was carried.

Resources for science

John Kinnarney, Dublin South 2, proposed a motion that the ASTI resist changes to the science syllabi or the introduction of project work at senior cycle until all schools have adequate resources. Brendan Broderick, ASTI Vice President, spoke to the motion, putting his view plainly: "If you don't have the resources, you just can't compete". Peter Keaney, Mullingar, urged the development of a common stance between the unions to avoid pressure on schools and within schools. Speaking against the motion, he said: "With this motion we could drive ourselves into a cul-de-sac. There is no sense in taking a stand and having to back down".

The motion was carried.

Teaching conditions

Pupil-teacher ratio

Pupil-teacher ratio is a very important issue, when teachers are leaving our shores day in day out, said Michael Barry, Cork North, who proposed a motion that the ASTI seek the immediate restoration of the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) to 18:1. While some might accuse the motion of paying lip service, Michael Barry said: "We must keep saying it, we can't say it often enough". In seconding the motion, Micheál O'Neill, New Ross, detailed the many educational benefits for students if the PTR was restored. Peter Quinn, Clare, urged a joint attack with the other teacher unions and parents' associations, while Fergal Canton, Kilkenny, backed the call to involve parents, reminding delegates: "This is a class size issue. We should not talk about jobs but about our greatest resource: young people".

The motion was carried.

Classroom inspections

On behalf of the Wexford Tony Boland Branch, Martin Francis proposed a motion that unannounced classroom inspection be opposed. He said such inspections would cause a lot of stress and anxiety for teachers, not knowing when or if they were to be inspected. The idea, he said, shows "a lack of professional respect" and, if put in place, would bypass the agreed procedures in place, which allow for respect for both sides. The model would apply unnecessary pressure to teachers during their working day and would be unbalanced as teachers would be "on the back foot" at all times, he continued. Deirdre MacDonald, Wexford Tony Boland, in seconding the motion, said: "Our working conditions have been eroded enormously over the last number of years. It is time for us to say no more!"

The motion was carried.

Pensions

Henry Collins, Waterford, proposed a motion that Convention affirm its commitment to parity between pensions and salary and oppose the calculation of pension benefits based on career averaging, and that the ASTI be proactive in furthering the aims of the Trident Report. In so doing, he said the fact that the motion was prioritised by so many branches indicates the relevance and urgency of the matter for members throughout the country. He said: "Members pay contributions on the firm understanding that on retirement their pensions will continue to attract pro-rata increases in line with increases attaching to salaries of serving teachers". Bernadine O'Sullivan, Dublin North West said: "In any war you need ammunition. The Trident Report is our ammunition".

The motion was carried.

Resolutions adopted at Convention 2011

Motion 31 – Section 30 of Teaching Council Act

That the ASTI endorse the Teaching Council's objections to non-qualified persons being employed in teaching positions and condemn the Minister for Education and Skills' Amendment to Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act, which allows for unregistered teachers to be employed in a teaching capacity.

Motion 18 – Examiners and superintendents

That the ASTI negotiate with the State Examinations Commission to ensure that serving second-level teachers would be given first priority in the appointment of examinations superintendents and assistant examiners for the State Examinations.

Motion 65 – Classroom inspections

That the practice of unannounced classroom inspections, as evident in the current model of inspection in primary schools, be opposed.

Motion 11 – Posts of responsibility moratorium

That the ASTI demands the immediate end of the post of responsibility moratorium, seeks to ensure that all posts are restored and that no teacher is expected to carry out post of responsibility duties without remuneration.

Motion 13 – Pension parity and Trident Report

That Convention affirms its commitment to the policy of:

- (a) Parity between pensions and salary
- (b) Opposing calculation of pension benefits based on career averaging, and that the ASTI be proactive in furthering the aims of the Trident Report.

Motion 57 – Assessment of orals

That in light of NCCA proposals on curriculum and assessment changes, and in view of the proposed introduction of an oral component in Junior Certificate language subjects, the ASTI reassert its vehement opposition to teachers assessing their own students for State Examinations.

Motion 26 – Pupil-teacher ratio

That the ASTI seeks the immediate restoration of the pupil-teacher ratio to 18:1.

Motion 59 – Junior Certificate examination

In view of the proposed changes to the Junior Certificate examination, that the ASTI call for the retention of the full examination after three years, not a modular system.

Motion 54 – School resources

That the ASTI resist changes to the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate science syllabi or the introduction of project work at senior

level until all schools have adequate resources, fully equipped laboratories, laboratory technicians, and until teachers are provided with the necessary training and guidelines.

Motion 21 – Non-permanent teachers – pay and pensions

That the ASTI reaffirm its commitment to our non-permanent and incoming teachers in terms of pay and conditions, particularly in the light of the proposed changes to the pension scheme.

Motion 22 – CIDs

That the ASTI will negotiate with the Department of Education to ensure that service in different schools accumulates towards the calculation of eligible years for a contract of indefinite duration in view of the cross-sectoral redeployment.

Motion 24 – Panels of registered teachers

The ASTI demands that the Department of Education establishes regional panels of registered teachers of at least three years' service who have not yet secured full-time employment for the purpose of filling vacancies within schools in the region.

Motion 1 – Pay and conditions of new teachers

That the ASTI vehemently opposes any attempt to diminish the pay, pensions and conditions of new teachers.

Motion 39 – FÁS Work Placement Programme

That ASTI vehemently opposes the introduction of the FÁS Work Placement Programme for qualified teachers because of its potential to expose teachers to exploitation and because it would be detrimental to the professionalism of teachers.

Motion 90 – Rule 71

Convention shall appoint annually a reputable firm of accountants who shall carry out an annual audit of the accounts of the Association. Such firm of accountants shall be entitled to charge and be paid for such audit at their usual rates.

Delete Rule 71 and replace it with a new rule to read as follows: "The Trustees shall annually nominate, for adoption by Convention, a reputable firm of accountants who shall carry out an annual audit of the accounts of the Association. Such firm of accountants shall be entitled to charge and be paid for such audit at their usual rates. The Trustees shall cause the annual audit to be held".

Motion 95 – Rule 147

So much of the funds of the Association as may not be required for

immediate use, or to meet the usual day-to-day expenditure, may at the discretion of the CEC or Standing Committee be invested in any investment in which Trustees are for the time being authorised by law to invest trust funds.

Amend Rule 147 as follows:

- (i) by deletion of the words "in which Trustees are for the time being authorised by law to invest trust funds" after the word "investment", and by insertion of the words "authorised by law" after the words "investment".
- (ii) by insertion of the letter "(a)" immediately before the words "so much".
- (iii) by addition of the following at the end of the rule:
 "(b) The Trustees shall meet with the Honorary Treasurer and the Investment Committee to review finances and investments at least twice annually."

Rule 147 shall then read as follows:

- (a) So much of the funds of the Association as may not be required for immediate use, or to meet the usual day-to-day expenditure, may at the discretion of the CEC or Standing Committee be invested in any investment authorised by law.
- (b) The Trustees shall meet with the Honorary Treasurer and the Investment Committee to review finances and investments at least twice annually.

Motion 96 – Rule 150

The Trustees may attend the Conventions of the Association and may speak at Convention on matters pertaining to their duties but they shall not act as delegates to Convention.

Amend Rule 150 by addition of the following:

"An annual report by the Trustees, which records their account of their duty to safeguard the ASTI property and funds, shall be included in the Convention Handbook and such report may be presented to Convention by the Trustees".

Rule 150 shall then read as follows:

"The Trustees may attend the Conventions of the Association and may speak at Convention on matters pertaining to their duties but they shall not act as delegates to Convention. An annual report by the Trustees, which records their account of their duty to safeguard the ASTI property and funds, shall be included in the Convention Handbook and such report may be presented to Convention by the Trustees".

Motion 101 – Teaching Council subscription

In light of the recent cutbacks, that the ASTI seek a substantial decrease in the annual subscription to the Teaching Council.

Election Results 2011



Brendan Broderick
President



Gerry Breslin
Vice-President



Ray St. John
Honorary Treasurer

Trustees

Michael Corley
Tom Gilligan
Michael Kilbride

Carmel Heneghan
Agnes Keane
Anne Loughnane
Tony McKernan
Mary Ohle

Steering Committee

Noel Buckley
Eilis Casey
Susie Hall
Paul McGrath
Maire Ni Chiarba

Sickness Benefit Committee

Michael Freeley
Sheila Jennings
Tony Waldron

Education Committee

Noel Buckley
Pat Deery
Christina Henehan
Margaret Kent
Jerry McCarthy
Noelle Moran
Maire Ni Chiarba
Peter Quinn
James Staunton

Rules Committee

John Byrne
Robbie Cronin
Pat Deery
Paul McGrath
Sheila Parsons

Investment Committee

John Byrne
Patrick Collins
Michael Freeley
Tony Waldron

Equal Opportunities Committee

Kevin Brogan
Rosabelle Crampton
Jim Duffy
Maura Greaney

Business of CEC Sub-Committee

Eilis Casey
Elizabeth Cooney
(One more to be elected by CEC)

Vox pop – how can we encourage more members to get involved in the union?



Don Morgan, Dun Laoghaire

Simply through persuasion, through talking to members, letting them know what people are doing, showing them that people are busting their asses every day for the members, that what they do is well meaning and well intentioned, even if it's not always as effective as it could be – that is only because it's an uphill battle every day. If they can see the action people are taking, others will join in. You have to be out there

showing it, in the same way you have to be in a classroom persuading students. Get in the car, drive around the country and drum up interest. That's difficult to sustain but it is needed because not everybody is going to go on the website every day. Face to face is important: "My name is Pat King, this is what I do", "My name is Brendan Broderick, we are fighting for you and these are the things we are doing". It's a daily canvass. Speak plainly, that's what people want to hear. I've heard a lot of that here at Convention.



Ronan Gallagher, Fingal

I think it's important for younger teachers or newer entrants to the ASTI to know who the leadership is. I know their time is short, but if Pat King or Brendan Broderick made themselves known in schools, people would have a greater sense of ownership of their union and its processes.

In terms of signing up new members, it might be a good idea for ordinary active members to visit schools to encourage teachers to join, rather than the local Standing Committee member or an older branch member: somebody new members would have more in common with and, as a result, might be able to connect with that bit better.

Incentivising might be a bad word, but it can't hurt to give people another reason to join. Maybe form links with companies to offer a starter pack of discounts, coupons, etc., like when you start university. New members would get this pack – nothing too fancy but with helpful things and perks so there is something tangible there for joining the union, as well as the services the union provides.

Text messaging works very well in our school to get the message out because it doesn't fail. Obviously, now with the iPhone culture, everybody can be contacted instantly so when you have people hooked in, being able to keep them updated about events, etc., by text would work really well.



Risteard Mac Liam, Dublin North Central

There should be a stronger link between the union and its younger members. Head Office staff could visit schools and outline the duties of top management and CEC, and tell young people how they can be more involved.

Media-friendly reps should be provided with a list of clear irrefutable facts to respond to the ridiculous accusations made about teachers in the media. Young people respond to certain

media-savvy personalities, like Michael O'Leary, etc., and we need to counter that.

Greater belief in one's profession and one's union can be achieved if we stop comparing ourselves to other public servants and start comparing ourselves to our graduate peers and fellow academic professionals. The parents of children want educators to be as qualified as doctors and teachers do have third-level education experience of between four and eight years.

The process for change within the ASTI needs to be clearer and more flexible. For example, at Convention other methods of discussing change could be utilised. Issues that need to be discussed urgently could be discussed in separate fora. Waiting around for a motion to be discussed at some distant CEC meeting doesn't wash.



Siobhan Davis, Dublin North Central

Allow members to gain an understanding of what Head Office actually does for them.

Members would like to know how their subscription is being spent on a daily basis. Allow them to hear how the union protects its members. Maybe tell them about 'case studies' around the country to illustrate what the union is doing for teachers.

It might help to explain the structure of the union to younger members, like what the various committees actually do. If younger members had that explained to them they might become more interested and feel they could contribute to such committees and then start putting themselves forward for them.

At branch level, meetings could be held at times more convenient for all members. It would help as well if the lingo used regarding rules, acts, etc., was explained to new members. Otherwise, they may lack the confidence to ask for explanations and any lack of understanding will put younger members off returning to meetings.



Greg Mannion, East Galway, and Carmel Colman, Mullingar

The ASTI should be making more use of technology to communicate with members more effectively and directly.

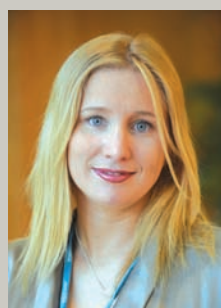
Everybody checks their email and Facebook regularly, so if you get the message out that way, you know it gets across. The website is a great resource – we should build on that towards more regular and immediate communication with members.

We can't control the media, but we can try to influence what teachers think about their union. Members should know what the union can do and what it is doing for members. Use direct marketing, like fliers or posters, to let teachers know what the union is achieving day to day and what the union can do for you individually if you ever need help.

At school level, it's important that members know the school steward is there to back them up, that they are a point of contact for concerns. Some teachers might be afraid that being active in the union marks them as a hassle to management, especially if their job is not secure. School stewards should make sure that those teachers know the union is there to support

them. The most important part of the school steward's job is to look after part-time teachers and more vulnerable members, and those members need to know that the union, through the school steward, will support them if they need it.

There is a lot of apathy among members, a sense that the union is separate to the ordinary teacher. We need to improve understanding of why a union is formed in the first place. A union is a group of people who work together for the good of that group. The battle is to convince people of that, to let them know that the union is there to help them individually and collectively, and that they can play an active part in that aim.



First impressions

Margaret Kinsella, Stillorgan

Coming to Convention is truly an 'eye-opening' experience. I have to admit I was very naïve as to what exactly was involved with Convention. Over the three days, I have learned a lot about pensions, pay, and resources – or lack thereof, as the case may be. The true benefit of Convention for me was the other members of the Branch, who guided me through the procedure and introduced me to many delegates, which in itself was a great learning experience.



An bhfuil céim mhaith agat sa Ghaeilge?

Ar mhaith leat cur le do dheiseanna fostaíochta?

Cuirfidh *Lárionad de Bhaldraithe do Léann na Gaeilge*, Scoil na Gaeilge, an Léinn Cheiltigh, Bhéaloideas Éireann agus na Teangeolaíochta, UCD, cúrsaí diplóma iarchéime/máistreachta ar fáil i Meán Fómhair 2011 le freastal ar na deiseanna fostaíochta do chéimithe le sainscileanna Gaeilge:

- **Diplóma larchéime/MA: Scríobh agus Cumarsáid na Gaeilge (Dlí agus aistriúchán)**
- **Diplóma larchéime/MA: Scríobh agus Cumarsáid na Gaeilge (Aistriúchán)**
- **Diplóma larchéime/MA: Scríobh agus Cumarsáid na Gaeilge (Aistriúchán agus Ateangaireacht*)**
- **Diplóma larchéime/MA: Scríobh agus Cumarsáid na Gaeilge (Eagarthóireacht & Cóipeagarthóireacht)**
- **Diplóma larchéime/MA: Scríobh agus Cumarsáid na Gaeilge (Riarachán)**
- **Diplóma larchéime/MA: Scríobh agus Cumarsáid na Gaeilge (Iriseoireacht)**

Tá líon áirithe scoláireachtaí ar fáil do na cúrsaí seo.

Sprioclá Iontrála: 30 Bealtaine 2011

Gheofar eolas breise faoi na cúrsaí agus faoi na scoláireachtaí ó: Kathleen Clune, Riarthóir na Gaeilge, nó Cathal Billings
Ríomhphost: kathleen.clune@ucd.ie, cathal.billings@ucd.ie Teileafón: + 353 1 7168385

Is cúrsaí iad seo atá á gcur ar fáil mar chuid lárnach de gheallúint UCD chun oideachas ceannródaíoch ceathrú leibhéal a sholáthar agus a ndéantar comhordú orthu tríd an Scoil Iarchéime, Coláiste na nEalaíon agus an Léinn Cheiltigh, UCD. Tá na cúrsaí seo á gcur ar bun le tacaíocht ón Roinn Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta tríd an Údarás um Ard-Oideachas.

*nua i Meán Fómhair 2011

www.ucd.ie/icsifl

Teacher graduates pessimistic about the future

Graduates are motivated and enthusiastic about their teaching careers, but poor prospects and inferior pay and conditions will impact on their commitment to the profession, according to a recent ASTI survey.

Only 6% of teacher graduates believe that they will be able to secure a full-time teaching post in Ireland next year, according to the ASTI survey of 660 teaching students. The unfortunate fact is that they are probably right. A 2008 OECD report showed that over a quarter of teachers in Ireland are in temporary employment. Add to that Higher Education Authority reports, which show that only approximately 10% of teacher graduates find permanent employment following graduation, and the future doesn't look bright for these graduates.



Uncertain future

These highly educated teaching graduates want to teach, and they want to teach in Ireland. The great majority – 88% – of respondents intend to seek a job in Ireland next year, most often citing their interest in teaching a subject they love, their wish to work with young people and their desire to make a difference to young people's lives as the reasons behind their career choice. Yet, asked where they see their careers in five years' time, one-quarter of graduates believe they still won't have a permanent teaching job. Worryingly, more than one in ten said they would consider a career change if they do not have a permanent job.

The 12% of students who have no plans to look for teaching work in Ireland blamed the shortage of teaching posts and an unwillingness to spend years in part-time/temporary teaching jobs for their decision. Most of these teachers plan to change careers and/or emigrate. Speaking in reaction to the survey, ASTI General Secretary Pat King said: "Young teachers are the lifeblood of second-level schools. After spending four or five years studying and training they enter schools anxious to make a positive contribution to the lives of the young people in their care. It is a travesty that, instead of making that vital contribution, the majority will be forced to emigrate or change profession. We are not only losing committed teachers, we are losing football coaches, camogie coaches, organisers of musicals and debates, and co-ordinators of projects like the Young Scientist and Gaisce – The President's Award".

Singled out

Those graduates who are lucky enough to secure employment face inferior pay and conditions to the colleagues they will be working alongside. While all new entrants to the public service have been singled out for a 10% pay cut, new teachers will suffer a 14% pay cut because they will now be appointed to the first point of the scale instead of the third point. This is on top of the pay cuts already applied to existing public sector workers.



MSc in Education and Training Management Programme

The programme consists of two strands - Leadership & E-Learning. Candidates elect to take one strand only.

Leadership

- Extend knowledge & skills in management.
- Learn about innovative approaches to leadership.
- Carry out research into organisational leadership.
- Acquire the advanced knowledge and skills to take a leadership role in an organisation.

E-Learning

- Improve teaching and learning through the creative use of digital technologies.
- Design and develop eLearning resources that can be used in a range of workplace contexts.
- Carry out systematic action reflection cycles and evaluate the effectiveness of changing practice.

For further information on the MSc in Education and Training Management Programme contact:

Dr. Margaret Farren, Programme Chair,

Tel: 01 700 5539

Email: margaret.farren@dcu.ie

http://www.dcu.ie/education_studies/index.shtml

Most graduate teachers are aware of the planned changes to new teachers' pay and conditions, which also include a greatly diminished pension scheme. Over 90% of these graduates are angry that they will be expected to do the same job for less pay. The great majority of graduates – 82% – believe that these diminished conditions will discourage graduates from choosing teaching as a career, while 81% believe that the changes will undermine the status of teachers in society.

"It is shameful to think that this group of valuable but vulnerable people are being treated as second class," said Pat King. "Young teachers who are lucky

enough to pick up six or eight hours' teaching work in a school may find that they have insufficient contact with pupils, which impacts negatively on teaching and learning. Many of these teachers will find it difficult to integrate into the school community and will have fewer professional development opportunities than their full-time colleagues. All of these issues ultimately affect the quality of education delivered by schools."

For more on the ASTI campaign 'New Teachers Deserve Better', see www.asti.ie.

A student's perspective



Aoife Ni Mháille is one of over 1,000 students who began their teacher training last September unaware that by the time they finished their potential salary would be reduced by 14% and their pension prospects severely diminished.

The first Aoife heard of any targeting of her future earnings was through rumblings in the staffroom about the changes to new teachers' pensions. At the time, she didn't fully realise the impact that would have

on her future. Then in November last year came the shock announcement of a 14% cut in pay for new teachers. That's when she got angry: "I felt it was so unjust. It's not about the money; it's about fairness and equality. It is unacceptable to expect the same work with the same qualifications for different pay. It's very tough as a new teacher, working hard to build up experience and trying to prove yourself so you might eventually get a permanent job. To know that you're being treated less favourably than others during that time and for the rest of your career will be very hard to take."

Harder still when getting that first job will be a trial in itself – a full-time salary is probably years off for most teaching graduates, and even temporary jobs are very scarce. "We understand that it's not easy for any graduate at the moment, but on top of a very tough jobs market, new teachers who have no voice are being targeted for unfair cuts and unequal treatment," explains Aoife.

Pay and pension were not factors in Aoife's choice of career; nevertheless, as she points out, it is not reasonable to simply impose changes to those things without warning midway through an expensive and time-consuming course. Having completed a Masters in Irish, Aoife subbed for a year to make sure teaching was the right move for her. Now, incredibly, because she took the time to gain experience and a Masters degree, she may be paid less than if she had not.

Between rent, travel costs, living expenses and teaching supplies, Aoife says that if she does get a teaching job, she will be happy just to break even. She's resigned to that situation, but worries about its effect on the teaching profession and education: "Teaching is an important profession in society and its quality should not be put at risk by providing only a break-even salary and poor promotional prospects. I'm only talking about providing a basic wage that reflects the time, effort and money we spent on our education. You can't downgrade new teachers and expect the same level of enthusiasm and endeavour.

We know it's going to be tough, but we need an end in sight. Instead of

always talking in negatives like cuts and reductions, the Government needs to be thinking of opportunities. They need to consider positive action to enhance our options and provide for the future of education. Thousands of teaching professionals are trained, at high expense to themselves and the State; the smart thing to do is to use them. The money may not be there for more jobs, we understand that, but there are other options that might satisfy all sides."

Aoife has a number of potentially workable, minimal-cost suggestions as to how that can be done, such as incentivising career breaks or providing work in education planning and administration to allow for more vacancies in classroom teaching. The one measure the Government has tried, the Work Placement Scheme, doesn't actually give young teachers the chance to use their teaching skills or provide any long-term opportunity, she explains. A far better option, she suggests, would be an internship programme to prepare a new teacher to take over the job of a teacher nearing retirement.

The Government's current operating principle seems to involve training large numbers of teachers for jobs that don't exist in the hope that they will be there to fill gaps in the system when these do arise. But if graduates don't have the chance to get meaningful experience, it won't be replacing like with like, says Aoife: "You need to implement what you learn and build on it. You need continuity of experience and continuity with your classes to build strong student-teacher relations. I know from my teaching practice that that is difficult to do in a few hours a week. Communication with students, organising and planning, as well as class structure, are all compromised, and it is difficult to integrate into the school community."

The unequal cuts threaten to create a divide in that school community, warns Aoife: "It's difficult not to be competitive when so few jobs exist. It might not be conscious but it's hard not to feel victimised. I would worry that instead of looking up to experienced teachers you might find yourself begrudging them."

Despite everything, Aoife is optimistic of getting some teaching hours next year but the question is where and how many. While other graduates may choose to emigrate to find work, that's not an option for Aoife, who teaches Irish. Even if she doesn't find teaching work, she is determined to stay in Ireland. As she points out, she and other PGDE students chose to study in Ireland when to study abroad might be cheaper and offers incentives like 'golden hello' payments and guaranteed first jobs: "We chose to stay here, we want to teach here, and yet incredibly this is how we are being treated".

"Young teachers don't have a voice. We need the support of established teachers to work together to protect education and teaching."

Exciting resource for TY, CSPE, LCA and LCVP

Do you teach Transition Year, CSPE, LCA, LVP, history, economics or business? Then a new project from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions might interest you. FIONA DUNNE tells us more.

In 2007, as a result of research and anecdotal evidence, a need was identified to revive and review the Irish Congress of Trade Union's (ICTU) youth programme and to re-engage with young people. This is not only about connecting with young people as potential union members, but is also about recognising young people as our future leaders, workers, teachers, business entrepreneurs and, most importantly, citizens and active members of our communities and society. It was envisaged that a project be developed that would actively engage and interact with second-level students and teachers, and develop ongoing relationships.

YouthConnect

YouthConnect has been developed and led by Congress with direction and support from all three teaching unions and their representatives. The project is also fully supported by the Executive Council of Congress and the future development of this project was endorsed by Congress BDC 2009. The project is a core strand of the Congress Youth programme, which aims to develop different strands for different audiences in education and the workplace. It seeks to establish a new framework focused on teachers and students by providing a range of ongoing interactive supports and materials. The programme is dedicated to engaging students with the world of work through a series of lesson plans, activities and projects. It encourages students to consider the issues of concern to them and learn more about the elements that make up the working world, and assists them in becoming more actively involved in their local school student councils. It hopes to spark the interest of students in the world of work and encourage them to pro-actively find out how it operates and what rights and responsibilities they have within it. The project has a number of support materials for teachers and students, including a teaching resource book, a website and a youth pack.

The teaching resource has five modules:

- the working world;
- trade unions and solidarity;
- working rights and entitlements;
- globalisation and global solidarity; and,
- an unequal society .

These five modules deal with such diverse topics as workplace responsibility and exploitation, rights in the workplace and beyond, climate change, child labour, ethical trading, income distribution and inequality, and the value of education.

The lesson plans are activity based and focus on students developing a set of life skills that will help to make the transition from school to the workplace



easier. It encourages them, through individual and group work, to identify their rights and learn how to assert them for themselves and others.

Support for schools

As part of the project we are offering all schools a visit by an ICTU-trained YouthConnect champion who will deliver an introductory lesson to a class of your choice and leave you with a free copy of the teaching resource book. Information leaflets will also be made available for your students. We can provide a general introductory lesson on the world of work or a lesson specifically tailored to your needs or curriculum requirements. Each class will be as interactive as possible, providing opportunities for your students to ask questions, learn about real-life issues and discuss key aspects in more detail.

All you have to do is tell us when you would like us to come to your school and any specific requirements you have, and we will do the rest.

We are now in the process of signing up schools and classes for these lessons, which will be scheduled to take place from September 2011. Get in touch now by email to Fiona.dunne@ictu.ie and book in time for next term.



Fiona Dunne

Fiona is Project Manager of UnionConnect and YouthConnect with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.



Take a bow

The ASTI Achievement Awards recognise the outstanding contribution teachers make to schools, students and society.

Nominate an outstanding teacher or teaching team for their achievements in school or outside of their professional life.

The ASTI Achievement Awards recognise teachers in three categories:

The Outstanding Teacher Achievement Award recognises the contribution of individual teachers to their schools and education.

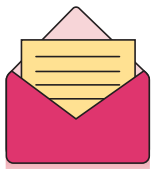
The Outstanding Teacher Team Achievement Award recognises the contribution made to schools and education by groups of teachers.

The Outstanding Individual Achievement Award recognises the outstanding achievements of individual teachers outside of their professional life.

Log on to the ASTI website to find out more or to nominate a colleague

The closing date for nominations is Friday, June 17.

www.asti.ie
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Noticeboard

Summer volunteering opportunities

A-Z Children's Charity has vacancies for second-level teachers to volunteer in Uganda this summer. See www.azkids.ie for further details.

Win-win with Jack and Jill

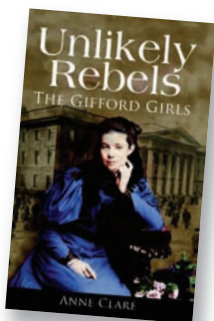
Donate old mobile phones to The Jack and Jill Children's Foundation and you'll not only help the charity to provide care and support for children with severe neurological development issues, but you could also get an interactive whiteboard for your school. Register your school today at www.jackandjill.ie.

Unlikely Rebels

Former ASTI member Ann Clare has recently published *Unlikely Rebels*, a fascinating book telling the story of the Gifford sisters, who were heavily involved with the Irish Republican movement and with the fight for Irish freedom in the early 20th Century.

Ann taught in Wesley College, Skerries Holy Faith Convent, and finally in St Mary's Secondary School, Holy Faith Convent, Glasnevin, until her retirement.

To find out more or to purchase the book, log on to www.mercierpress.ie.



Study visits

Study visits provide teachers with an opportunity to spend up to one week in another European country, learning about practices and approaches in education. Participants meet with guest speakers and visit organisations relevant to the topic in the host country. The deadline for applications for visits taking place between March and June 2012 is October 14. Find out more at www.leargas.ie/studyvisits.

Eucharistic resources

The 50th International Eucharistic Congress takes place in Ireland from June 10-17, 2012. Resources for second-level schools for both junior and senior cycles are currently in production. In addition, a dedicated youth space will feature at the RDS for the full week of the Congress. For more information on how to get your school involved, keep up to date by logging on to www.iec2012.ie and clicking on the Pastoral Preparation - School Resources section.

Teachers on TV

Former second-level teachers Peadar King and Mick Molloy have produced a third series of their documentary television series 'What in the World?', currently showing on RTÉ. This series focuses on the Millennium Development Goals and was shot on location in Bangladesh, Vietnam, Malawi and Zambia. Check it out on RTÉ One television on Thursday nights.

Development education conference

The IDEA Annual Conference will bring together those involved in the formal education system to engage in constructive conversation about development education in Ireland. IDEA will invite speakers from within and outside the Irish education system and participants will be invited to engage in discussion with speakers and each other. Find out more at www.ideaonline.ie.

Pavee Point DVD

A DVD to raise awareness within the Travelling community of the importance of engaging with and remaining in second-level school until completion of the Leaving Cert has been developed by Pavee Point. For more information see www.paveepoint.ie.

Win a trip to the Caribbean

All union members are invited to log on to www.cornmarket.ie to enter a draw to win a trip to the Caribbean.

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INTERVIEW COACHING WITH EILEEN CORRIGAN, ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST

If you're good enough to do the job, you're good enough to get the interview. I have helped many candidates successfully through the interview process. Let me help you! Contact me on 087-236 9639, or Email: corrigancoaching@gmail.com.

Certificate/Diploma in Special/Inclusive Education

The Special Education Department of St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra and the Institute of Child Education and Psychology, Europe (ICEP Europe) invite applications to the online Certificate/Diploma in Special/Inclusive Education.

Commencing: September 2011
Closing Date for Applications - 31st August 2011

- ★ Open to all qualified teachers / graduates or those with equivalent experience and qualifications
- ★ Option to take individual modules
- ★ Ease of access regardless of location
- ★ Daily support from tutors
- ★ Live online classroom sessions
- ★ 24/7 access to materials for busy professionals

This programme was part-funded by the Special Education Support Service, Teacher Education Section, DES, under the National Development Plan

For further information & application forms contact Admissions Office, St. Patrick's College on (01) 8842025, email courseinfo@spd.dcu.ie or log onto www.spd.dcu.ie/admissions or contact ICEP Europe on (01) 6510618 or visit www.icepe.eu



Ciara Grehan Kennedy 1974-2010

On Thursday November 11, 2010, a storm threatened over the West of Ireland and the community of Presentation College Galway woke to the loss of our dearly loved and respected colleague Ciara Grehan Kennedy. A young woman with everything to live for, her loss was numbing by its very suddenness. Ciara joined the staff of our school in 1999 and very soon endeared herself to students and fellow staff. During her time, she filled a variety of roles, which included mainstream maths and English teaching, Traveller liaison, resource teacher, special needs teaching and year head. In dealing with students having difficulties with subjects or classroom behaviour, her general approach involved kindness to the student without saying or doing anything that might undermine a teacher.

Inevitably, when a staff loses one of its number, minds become focused and memories flood back that might otherwise have headed for oblivion. There

was the time of the ASTI strike in 2000/2001 when Ciara, one way or another, kept inadvertently tripping a fellow picketer. She accompanied the girls on school tours and the citizens of Galway often saw her on O'Brien's bridge, bringing one class or another to the city library. Meeting her on the corridor generally involved an exuberant greeting as if she hadn't seen you in months – well, it might have been half an hour. Her vivacious personality rubbed off on others and it would be no exaggeration to say that she was a light of our school. She had a wonderful sense of humour and was not one to take offence.

While in the Pres, she married the love of her life, Denis Kennedy. She brought the same commitment to her marriage as she had to her teaching career. Ciara and Denis were blessed with three children – Jack, Luke and Eve – all of very young and tender years. A loving mother, Ciara will not be around to see them grow. She passed away suddenly at her home in the company of her husband and children. Our sincerest sympathy goes to Denis and her children, her father J.J., sister and brothers.

Ciara was buried in Moycarkey, Co. Tipperary, next to her mother Kay. The day of her removal was a very wet one and the day of her interment a frosty one. Two days of bad weather did not deter her friends, pupils, colleagues and ex-colleagues who came in large numbers to pay their last respects. She touched every one of us – Ciara, we really miss you!

"There are flowers and Ciara was a rose"



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For further details, including application deadlines, visit:

www.dcu.ie/law_and_government and www.dcu.ie/~cis,
contact the school office at 01 700 7720 or e-mail: paula.smith-meaney@dcu.ie

To apply for any of the above MA programmes, visit the Postgraduate Applications Centre (PAC) at www.pac.ie to complete an online application.



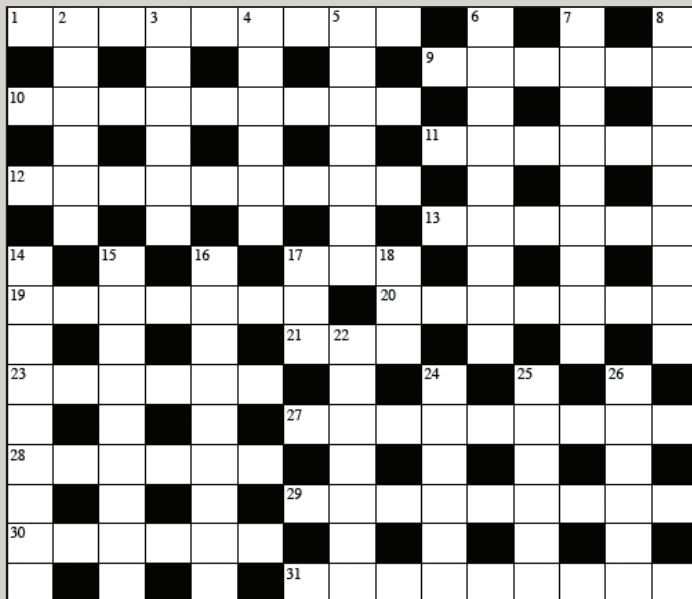
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ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 1103

€200 prize for the first fully correct answer drawn from the entries.

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courtesy of the ASTI Credit Union.

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. 1103, Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.**

To arrive by: **Friday, July 15, 2011**

CLUES ACROSS:

- 1 "Above the cloud with its shadow is the star with its light. Above all things thyself." (Pythagoras) (9)
- 9 Could be a case in point for cheese! (6)
- 10 Relating to an enactment of a legislative body (9)
- 11 Also known as the Dog Star (6)
- 12 A driver led tearaway! (9)
- 13 New Minister (6)
- 17 Female supporter! (3)
- 19 Spanish tenor on a Sunday (7)
- 20 Event for which one is late (7)
- 21 Modifier key on computer keyboard (3)
- 23 Could be a claret business syndicate (6)
- 27 A nice roll in a straight line (9)
- 28 Could be from Amsterdam? (6)
- 29 A carbon one is a measure of the impact activities have on the environment (9)
- 30 Musical based on a novel by Dickens (6)
- 31 At ten Dante could be a companion (9)

CLUES DOWN:

- 2 Lure the parent into danger (6)
- 3 The eponymous heroine of one of the books of the Bible (6)
- 4 There I find the one or the other (6)
- 5 An erratic jewel could set you up for life! (7)
- 6 Also known as cannabis (9)
- 7 If you're cooking, approximately 0.4 US cups or 0.2 pints is equivalent to one (9)
- 8 See 14 down
- 14 and 8 down: 13 across is in charge here (9,3,6)
- 15 "Were it not better don as others use, To sport with in the shade" (Milton) (9)
- 16 Winter pretends to give an explanation (9)
- 17 You might find this python under AOB (3)
- 18 "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men Gang ... agley" (Burns) (3)
- 22 Crow's Nest? (7)
- 24 Put into gear! (6)
- 25 Rooted in Breda? (6)
- 26 Does the Minister for State have the training and skills for firing heavy projectiles? (6)

Solution to ASTIR crossword No. 1102

Across

1. Charge
4. Emphasis
9. Titian
10. Filleted
12. Goats
13. Introvert
14. Retro
15. Animus
20. Seeker
21. Issue
24. Odometers
27. Erase
28. Raindrop
29. Usages
30. Salaries
31. Elated

Down

1. Category
2. Attracts
3. Gladstone
5. Moist
6. Hello
7. Sitter
8. Sedate
11. Hijack
16. Inrush
17. Universal
18. Escargot
19. Deceased
22. Boards
23. Social
25. Elder
26. Elope

Congratulations to the winner of Crossword No. 1102:

Thomas Flynn, Westport, Co. Mayo. West Mayo Branch member.

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