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**ASTI**
A century of service

ASTIR

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland



TEACHERS' TERMS AND CONDITIONS MUST IMPROVE

Annual Convention 2019

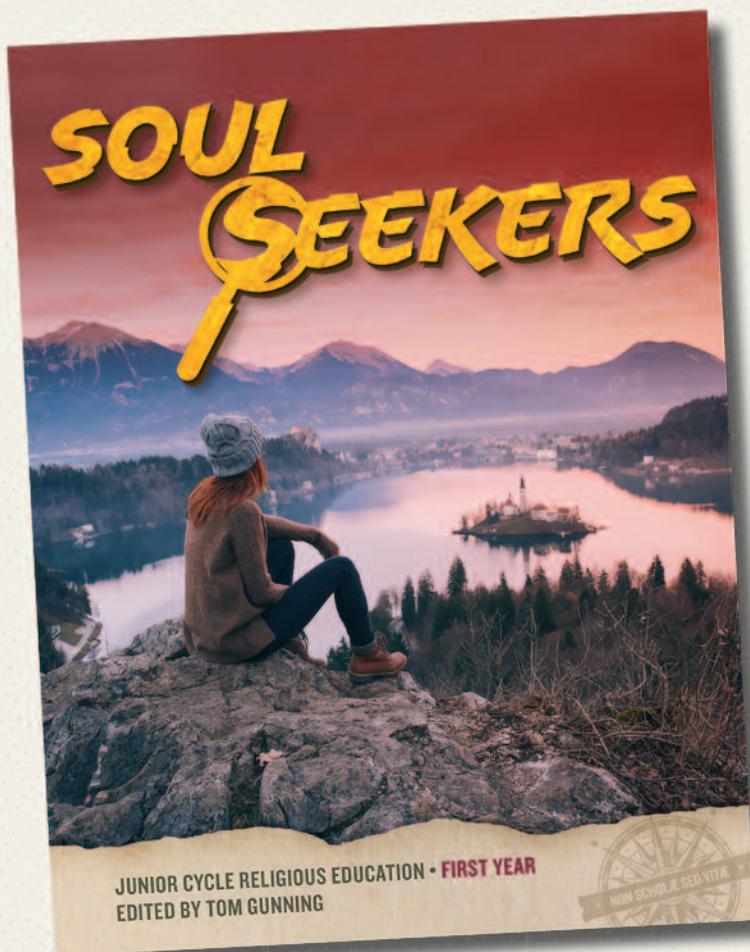
ASTI survey on special
education

Post-2010 teachers' pay

Approved
by the Irish
Catholic Bishops'
Conference

SOUL SEEKERS

THE NEW SERIES FOR JUNIOR CYCLE
FROM VERITAS



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SOUL SEEKERS ...

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- ✓ Is inclusive of diverse faith traditions
- ✓ Is written in student-friendly language
- ✓ Supports online learning
- ✓ Is approved by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference

AVAILABLE SUMMER 2019

For more information, contact Caroline Teehan: caroline.teehan@veritas.ie



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A SUCCESSFUL CONVENTION

It is hard to believe I am writing my last editorial as ASTI president. School years can go by quickly but I assure you a year as President of the ASTI goes even quicker. I hand over the reins to my successor Deirdre Mac Donald on August 1. I would like to start by congratulating our new Vice President, Ann Piggott of Cork South Paddy Mulcahy Branch, and our new Treasurer, Pádraig Murphy of Kildare Branch, on their elections. I would also like to thank our outgoing officers, my predecessor Ger Curtin and the Honorary Treasurer Ray St. John, who held the position for 14 years.

Our Convention allowed us to formulate policy on many issues and to change two of our rules regarding the election of the Honorary Treasurer. Through the motion put forward by Wexford Tony Boland Branch, we restated our commitment to pay equality. Arriving at Convention Minister Joe McHugh was met by a protest of members demanding the same. In my address I acknowledged the Minister's positive attitude towards teachers and his understanding of this issue for us. Convention sought to support teachers in the early stages of their careers by passing motions demanding payment for substitute teachers attending in-service on a day they would otherwise be teaching. We also sought assurances that PME students would not be timetabled for classes without an officially assigned co-operating teacher and full remuneration for additional hours.

My guest speaker, Professor Kathleen Lynch, addressed inequality in education and challenged the language of neoliberal policies. Her address was inspiring and thought provoking and I encourage you to watch it on www.asti.ie.

Other issues discussed included concerns around curriculum change at both Junior and Senior Cycle. A timely motion called for the Department of Education and Skills to delay changes at Leaving Cert until the Junior Cycle Framework is fully implemented and reviewed. My speech challenged the view that 'successful Junior Cert reform' should be the basis for change at Senior Cycle, citing the fact that many teachers are unconvinced it is a better model of education.

Motions concerning teacher well-being, changes to the supervision and substitution scheme, and changes to teachers' sick leave and bereavement leave were unanimously supported. There is huge concern among teachers about workload and the future of the profession. The Minister in his speech acknowledged this and committed to setting up a forum on workload. Hopefully this can improve working conditions for teachers and address some of the recruitment and retention issues.

It was great to see many new faces at Convention and many first-time speakers at the podium. The variety of experiences brought richness to the debates. I would encourage members to get involved at branch level and to consider being a delegate for next year.



Breda Lynch

ASTI President

TIME TO UNDO UNJUST TREATMENT OF ASTI

In 2016 ASTI members were subjected to an assault on their terms and conditions. This occurred following two democratic ballots of ASTI members. In the first ballot, members voted to reject the Lansdowne Road Agreement (LRA). A key reason behind the rejection of the LRA was its failure to deliver pay equality for post-2010 teachers. In the second ballot, members voted to withdraw from the Croke Park 33 hours.

To say that the Government's response to withdrawal from the 33 hours was disproportionate is a gross understatement. This action did not close schools or disrupt students' education. Despite this, Financial Emergency in the Public Interest (FEMPI) legislation was used to impose a range of punitive measures, including a freeze on annual increments, withdrawal of access to CIDs after two years' teaching, and withdrawal of members' access to the redeployment scheme. It has now transpired that FEMPI was used against ASTI members in a singularly targeted and inequitable fashion. In the recent nurses' dispute the Government did not resort to such oppressive tactics. No worker should ever have been subjected to this draconian legislation. ASTI members have been left to bear an unacceptable legacy, particularly in relation to their incremental dates.

The ASTI has raised this unjust treatment at the highest levels within the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU). It is now the case that any public sector union that exercises its right to ballot its members on industrial action has no certainty as to how those members will be treated by the Government. Will the FEMPI provisions be applied as they were to ASTI members, or will they escape the provisions, as did the members of the INMO? The very viability of unions and their modus operandi is challenged.

We have lodged a complaint with the International Labour Organisation – the United Nations agency charged with promoting decent work and social justice for workers – and with the European Committee on Social Rights, which works to guard against breaches to fundamental social and economic rights. We are also working with our legal team to explore avenues open to the ASTI. We have written to the Minister for Education and Skills, who has indicated that he is willing to engage on the matter. The Government has stated that the imposition of FEMPI measures on ASTI members saved €15 million. There is a now an unanswerable case for reimbursement.

Teachers' pay

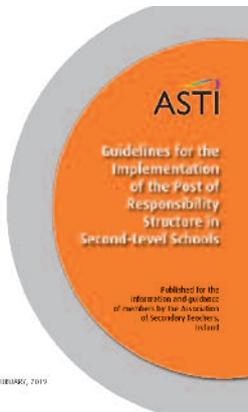
We welcome the Minister for Education and Skills' statement that there is "unfinished business" in relation to post-2010 entrants' pay, and look forward to pursuing the PME/HDip allowance and closing the gap between the pre- and post-2010 scales. The wider issue of teachers' pay must also be addressed. The recession is over, the economic outlook is good, and there are cost of living increases, yet teachers' pay is still below 2008 levels. Improving teachers' pay is clearly on the horizon as we head towards Budget 2020.



Kieran Christie

ASTI General Secretary

ASTI guidelines on leadership posts



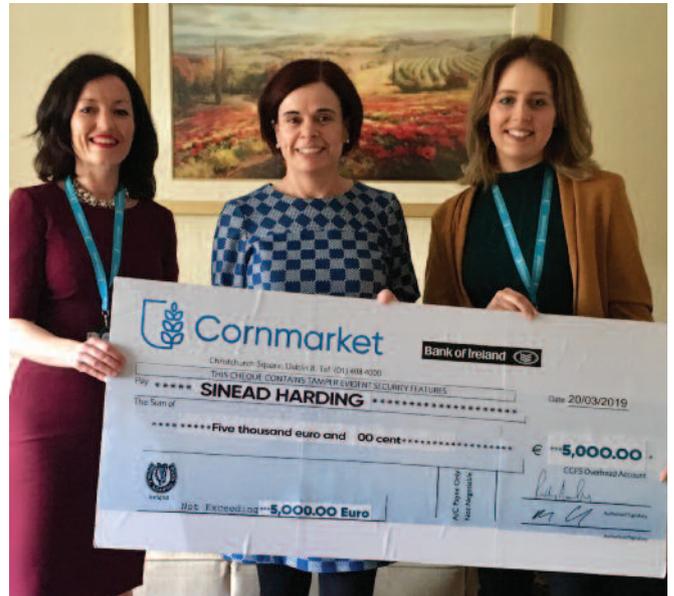
The ASTI has issued a new digital information leaflet, 'ASTI Guidelines for the Implementation of the Post of Responsibility Structure in Second-Level Schools'.

This document provides information and guidance to ASTI members regarding appointments to posts of responsibility in second-level schools following the publication of the new Circular 'Leadership and Management in Post-Primary Schools' (CL 0003/2018) in January 2018. The document also provides

information and guidance on the reviewing of posts.

This Circular superseded all previous Circulars in relation to posts of responsibility at Assistant Principal and Special Duties level, and Programme Co-ordinator posts. These new ASTI Guidelines update much of the detail associated with the appointment process, as well as also containing important policy positions long held by ASTI in the interests of its members. To read the digital information leaflet, visit the Posts of Responsibility section on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.

ASTI member wins Cornmarket prize



ASTI member Sinead Harding is the winner of Cornmarket's 2018 'Win a holiday' prize draw, worth €5,000. Sinead is pictured (centre) with Cornmarket area manager Eimear Conroy (left) and Cornmarket consultant Eimear Dunne.

#HelloMIC

POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES AT MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE

EDUCATION POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

- Structured PhD in Education
- Structured PhD/Masters in Literacy Education
- Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology
- Professional Master of Education (Primary Teaching)
- Master of Education (M Ed)
- M Ed in Religious Education
- M Ed in Leadership of Wellbeing in Education
- M Ed in Educational Leadership and Management
- M Oid san Oideachas Lán-Ghaeilge agus Gaeltachta
- MA in Education and the Arts (META)
- MA in Education and Well-being of the Older Person
- MA in STEM Education
- MA in Music Education
- Graduate Diploma / M Ed in Adult and Further Education
- Graduate Diploma / M Ed in Information and Communication Technologies in Primary Education
- Graduate Diploma / M Ed in Special Education Needs
- Graduate Certificate / Diploma / M Ed in Professional Studies in Education
- Graduate Certificate in Autism Studies

LIBERAL ARTS POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

- Structured PhD/MA in International Development Education and Practice
- Structured PhD in Applied Linguistics
- MA in Applied Linguistics (online/on-campus/blended)
- MA sa Ghaeilge
- MA in History
- MA in Local History (with UL)
- MA in Media Studies
- MA in Modern English Literature
- Graduate Certificate/MA in Christian Leadership in Education

PHD & MA BY RESEARCH AND THESIS IN THE FOLLOWING EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS

Learning, Society & Religious Education; Language & Literacy Education; Arts Education & Physical Education; Reflective Pedagogy & Early Childhood Studies; Educational Psychology, Inclusive & Special Education; STEM Education.

PHD & MA BY RESEARCH AND THESIS IN THE FOLLOWING LIBERAL ARTS DEPARTMENTS

Drama and Theatre Studies; English Language & Literature; French Studies; Gaeilge; German Studies; Geography; History; Mathematics and Computer Studies; Media & Communication Studies; Music; Philosophy; Psychology; Theology and Religious Studies.

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research ED

The first researchED event in Ireland will take place on Saturday, October 5, in St. Columba's College in Dublin.

researchED is a global movement aimed at empowering teachers through raising their research literacy. The goal of researchED is to bridge the gap between research and practice in education. Researchers, teachers and policy-makers come together for a day of information sharing and myth busting.

researchED events have been held in Malmo, Pretoria, Philadelphia, Dubai, Melbourne, Auckland, Amsterdam, New York, Toronto and Vancouver.

Speakers at the Dublin event will include researchED founder Tom Bennett, Tom Sherrington, author of *The Learning Rainforest*, and David Didau, author of *Making Kids Cleverer*, as well as ASTI members Peter Lydon and Conor Murphy.

For more information and to purchase a ticket visit: <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/researched-dublin-2019-tickets-59283503555>. All tickets will include lunch and tea/coffee breaks, and there is free on-site parking.



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Seminar for principals and deputy principals

The 2019 seminar for ASTI principals and deputy principals takes place on Wednesday, June 12, in Athlone. This year's seminar will spend some time focusing on the role of principals and deputy principals in the ASTI, and the ASTI's role in supporting and representing them.

A facilitated discussion will take place with the members present, and it is hoped that concerns and anxieties that members may have can be addressed, and that principals and deputy principals will feel that they have been given a real opportunity to have their voices heard. The seminar will also hear presentations on transgender issues in schools, and a legal presentation on the new legal landscape emerging for principals in particular. This presentation will ask: "Should principals be worried?"

The new ASTI Principals' and Deputy Principals' Advisory Committee will be elected at this seminar. If you want your voice heard in your union, please join us on June 12.

If you are a principal or deputy principal who is a member of the ASTI, you should have received a communication from ASTI Head Office in relation to this seminar and to the election to the ASTI Principals' and Deputy Principals' Advisory Committee. If you have not received this communication, please email dcullen@asti.ie with your name, school and position (principal or deputy) and we will make sure that you get all relevant documentation.

New book from head of trade union think tank

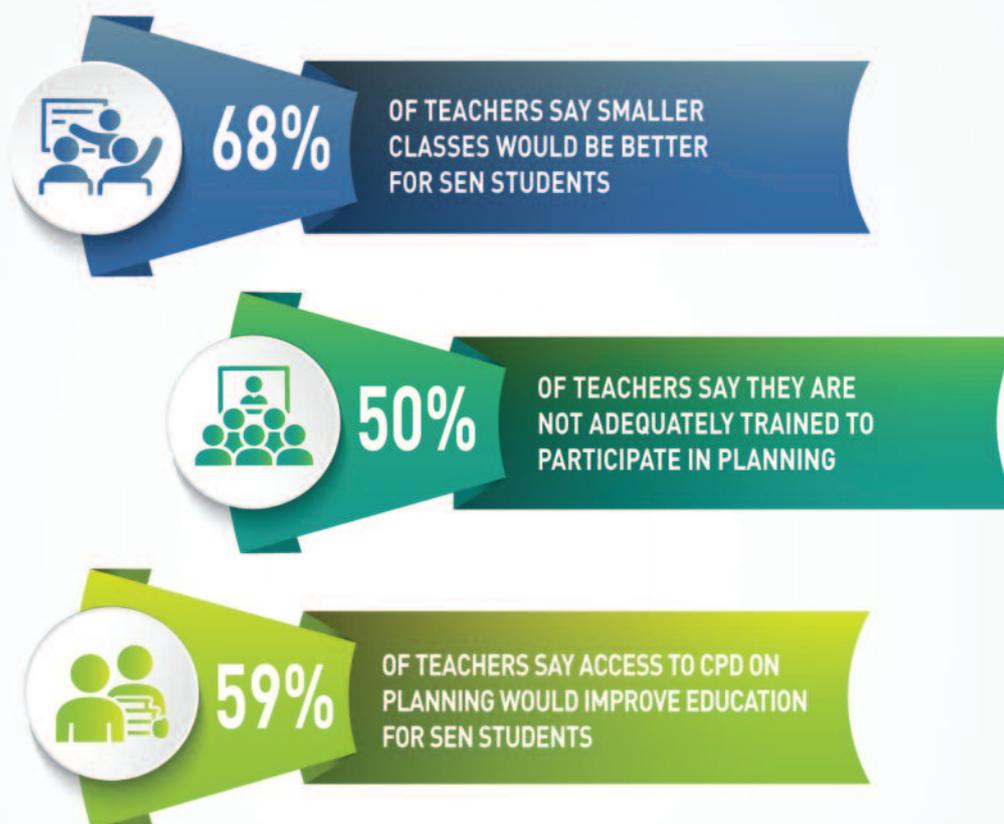
An Ireland Worth Working For – Towards a New Democratic Programme is a new book by Dr Tom Healy, Director of the Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI), which was launched in April. The book sets out Dr Healy's vision of how a new Ireland can be created and what it might look like.

The book considers three major challenges faced by Ireland: a growing and ageing population, with all that this implies for healthcare, pensions, education and many other areas; new technologies that will transform the way we work, travel and live; and, the crisis of the environment, which will threaten life on this planet for our children and children's children. In the book, Dr Healy discusses reclaiming work, the social wage and enterprise/industrial policy.

An Ireland Worth Working for – towards a New Democratic Programme is available for purchase from NERI and all good bookshops.

SUPPORT SEN BY SUPPORTING TEACHERS

Support from mainstream teachers in the classroom is now a key strategy used by schools to assist SEN students. However, an ASTI survey shows that lack of training opportunities, having no time allocation for SEN planning, and large class sizes are the key challenges facing teachers.



Support from subject teachers in the classroom is one of the key strategies in schools to support students with special education needs (SEN). An ASTI/Red C survey has found that 81% of teachers say it's practised in their school.

A total of 1,319 ASTI members who are classroom teachers, special education teachers and guidance counsellors responded to an online questionnaire from March 6-19.

Only 5% of mainstream teachers have a SEN qualification, while only 22% have participated in SEN training in recent years. Workload and lack of information about/access to training are key reasons for non-participation. Almost half of all respondents – 49% – were asked to participate in individual education planning for SEN students since the start of the 2018/19 school year. Of those who are employed as teachers of mainstream classes, 37% had participated in SEN planning.

The biggest challenge for teachers who participated in individual education planning for SEN students was timing and training. When asked about their SEN planning experiences, 55% of teachers of mainstream classes said they found the process time consuming, while 50% said they did not have adequate training. Among teachers with a SEN role, 79% said they found the process time consuming, while 30% said they did not have adequate training.

While co-ordination of SEN planning is sometimes delegated to Assistant Principals, it frequently becomes an unpaid duty for classroom teachers. Of the 36% of teachers who have non-remunerated duties, 29% say that this involves SEN co-ordination.

Some 68% of respondents said that smaller classes would be better for students with additional and special needs. The best ways to assist teachers in the delivery of inclusive education are smaller classes and access to training.

ASTI advice to members

In view of the fact that Individual Education Plans (IEPs) have not commenced under the EPSEN Act, ASTI members are advised not to implement IEPs or equivalents (such as Student Support Files, etc.).

Workload

Responding to a question on workload, teachers were nearly unanimous that it has increased, with 96% saying work intensity has risen since the start of the decade.

This seems to be having an effect on teacher job satisfaction, with just 50% saying they are satisfied, compared to 77% 10 years ago.

Read the full survey at www.asti.ie.

GUIDING STUDENTS INTO THE WORKPLACE

The Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) is rolling out CPD for members nationwide focusing on upskilling in relation to labour market skill shortages, and new initiatives around apprenticeships and traineeships, says IGC President Beatrice Dooley.

The Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) is a professional association of 1,335 members, made up of qualified professionals working in a broad variety of settings, including second-level schools, further education and training (FET), and higher education. Any continuous professional development (CPD) must address this holistic role and provide new and relevant learning around personal, educational or vocational guidance counselling.

Demand for information

IGC members have been asking for current labour market information (LMI) that is appropriately pitched to learners, and that translates well to individuals from different socioeconomic backgrounds and from a wide range of educational levels. Guidance counsellors are uniquely positioned to communicate LMI to potential jobseekers. They engage with all students in schools through individual appointments at critical junctures of their subject choice and post-Leaving Certificate decision-making, interacting on a one-to-one basis with approximately 60,000 Leaving Certificate students annually.

Why should guidance counsellors be informed about apprenticeships and traineeships?

- National Skills Strategy 2025 and FET Strategy 2014-2019: the Government aims to significantly grow ‘work-based learning’ through the development of apprenticeship and traineeship routes
- The target set by Government is that 50,000 apprenticeship and traineeship places be provided between 2016 and 2020
- The apprenticeships system includes awards from Levels 5-10, with traineeship programmes offering awards at levels 4 and 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)
- The national apprenticeship system is being expanded to include, for example, the hospitality, biopharma, finance and property sectors
- At the time of writing, there are 45 apprenticeships available, with a further 36 in development. There are also over 50 traineeship programmes available and many more being developed.

CPD launched

The IGC has begun the roll-out of CPD on labour market skills shortages and new initiatives in the areas of apprenticeships and traineeships to members. This CPD will be delivered to all 16 IGC branches nationwide over the next 18 months, and is organised in collaboration with the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI), SOLAS, the Education and Training Boards (ETBs), the Institutes of Technology (IoTs), local apprenticeship providers, major local employers and CareersPortal. It ensures that members are equipped with up-to-date and relevant information on labour market skills shortages, and exciting new initiatives around apprenticeships and traineeships. Information on how to identify suitable candidates, where they can find a mentor, training courses, and

the career progression routes out of these, is delivered by main apprenticeship employers and course providers relevant to each IGC branch. Meanwhile, SOLAS and the DBEI/Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) provide the ‘Holy Grail’ LMI at national and local level. CareersPortal concludes this event by demonstrating how to make the best use of the online tools they provide to guidance counsellors, students and job seekers. This CPD, designed with input from industry, supports guidance counsellors in their role to help second-level students, adult learners and job seekers to find their optimal career pathways while at all times prioritising the holistic needs of the individual.

Conclusion

Guidance counsellors play a pivotal role in guiding students and job seekers of all ages into the appropriate courses and careers to match their unique set of skills, aptitudes, interests and personality. Empowering the guidance profession to deliver a first-class service will benefit Ireland’s economy by ensuring the optimum fit between the potential employee and the requirements of the labour market.

IGC CPD FORMAT

Speakers include:

Employers/apprenticeship providers – bespoke to the LM needs identified by each IGC branch and including ATI, ESB, CIF and Combilift

ETBs – courses relevant to local labour market shortages, apprenticeship and traineeship programmes

Technological Higher Education Association/local IoT staff – courses on areas relevant to current and projected skills shortages and apprenticeship programmes, including progression possibilities, from QQI levels 5-10

SOLAS – Skills and Labour Market Research Unit – current labour market shortages with a national and local focus

DBEI – Expert Group on Future Skills Needs – forecasting of national future skill shortages

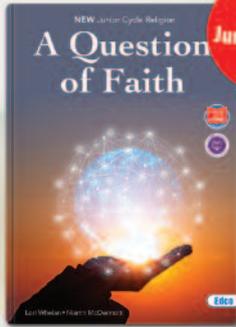
CareersPortal – how to access all of this material on Careersportal for guidance counsellors under time pressure

Q&A

An opportunity for questions from members to be addressed. Go to www.igc.ie for further information.

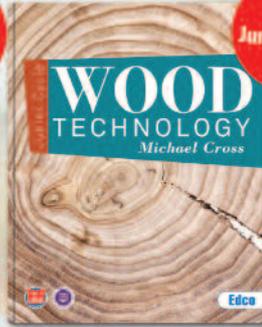
EDCO 2019 PUBLICATIONS

NEW Junior Cycle



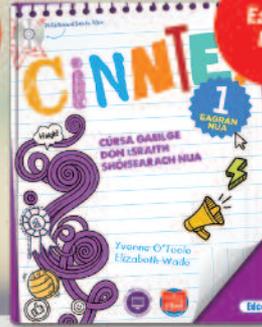
New Junior Cycle

Religious Education



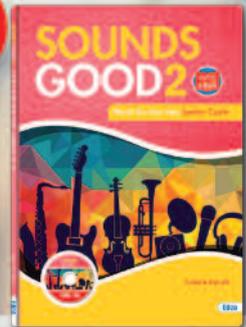
New Junior Cycle

Wood Technology

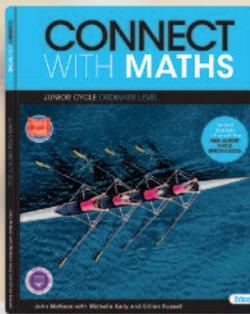


Eagrán Nua

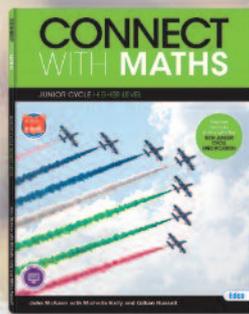
Irish



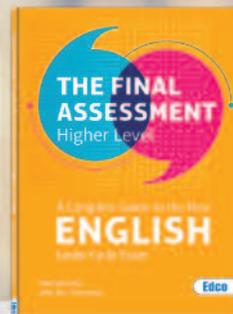
Music



Maths OL



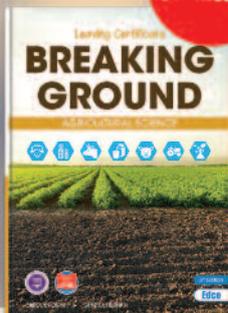
Maths HL



English Exam Assessment

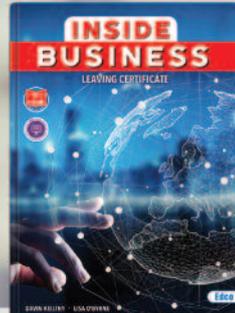


Leaving Certificate



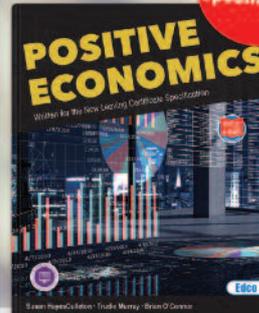
New Specification

Agricultural Science

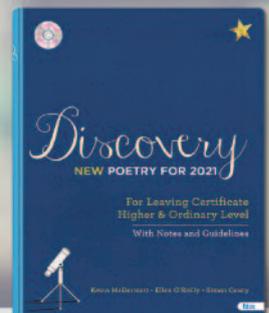


New Specification

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Economics



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Ph: (01) 4500 611, E-mail: info@edco.ie, Website: www.edco.ie

KEY SPEECHES

Equality was an overarching theme of the speeches at this year's Convention, from pay inequality in teaching, and supporting the inclusion of students with special educational needs, to the structural inequalities in society that impact on our education system.



From left: Deirdre Mac Donald (ASTI President-Elect), Breda Lynch (ASTI President) and Ann Piggott (ASTI Vice President).

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

The impact of unequal pay on teacher recruitment and retention, along with curriculum reform and inclusion, dominated Breda Lynch's address to Convention.

Pay inequality and teacher retention

I had hoped I would not be starting another presidential convention speech addressing the issue of pay inequality but alas that is where I find myself. The consistent campaigning and sacrifices of ASTI members kept this issue live for the last number of years. The October 2018 measures failed to address the inequality experienced by teachers. We need the restoration of the PME, or HDip allowance as we know it, and the starting point for teachers to be restored to point three on the scale, in recognition of the qualifications of those entering the profession. There are other issues that need to be addressed to make teaching attractive again.

Students are not customers

I welcome the Minister's comments in the Government's Action Plan for Education on continuing with reforms in a carefully managed and paced way. I like less the language of business that has now permeated the world of education, which talks about being 'customer focused'. We do not see our students as customers or clients. They are unique individuals who are at a crucial stage in the development of their identities, and teacher-student relationships are not reflected in these commercial terms.

Junior Cycle

We have carried out a survey among our members on the level of support and training they are getting in terms of the introduction of the new Framework for Junior Cycle. There has been huge dissatisfaction with many aspects of the training, with only 20% of participants saying they agreed with the statement: 'the in-service which I have attended to date has empowered me in teaching the new subject specification'. We need more and better in-service. The new specifications model, with its emphasis on reduced content, learning outcomes, key skills and classroom-based assessment, is widely perceived as challenging for a variety of reasons: the huge increase in workload, the new 'language', and lack of clarity on learning outcomes and units of learning in particular. Many teachers are not convinced that it (the Junior Cycle Framework) is a better model: they fear it will lead to inequalities, to lowering of standards, particularly in terms of the reduction in subject content with greater focus on key skills and learning outcomes.

Senior Cycle review

We in the ASTI have concerns about the Senior Cycle consultation process. We believe that the starting point for consultation at school level was too narrow and seemed to be based on an assumption that the changes at Junior Cycle were a great success and a basis for the way forward. Many teachers who attended the various NCCA seminars were upset by the lack of teachers' voices on panels and the significance given to the voice of IBEC. For these reasons we have engaged an academic to review the consultation process. This is not to say we are opposed to progress and change, but this change needs to be managed and paced. We do not want to become facilitators, bogged down in paperwork. We want to teach. We are very clear that changes at Senior Cycle should not happen until the new Junior Cycle has been fully rolled out and reviewed thoroughly.



Top (from left): Matt Kennedy (BelongTo), Breda Lynch (ASTI President), Oisín O'Reilly (BelongTo) and Wendy Kearney (BelongTo).

Above (from left): Diarmuid Fitzgerald, Joan Brophy and Mary Lyndon (Roscrea Branch).

Top: Jackie O'Rourke (left) and Aislinn Godfrey (Cork North Branch).

Above (from left): Roisin Mac Carthaigh (East Galway Branch) and Noelle Moran (Tuam Branch).

Many teachers are **not convinced** that the **Junior Cycle Framework** is a **better model**: they fear it will lead to **inequalities**, to **lowering of standards**, particularly in terms of the **reduction in subject content**, with its greater focus on **key skills and learning outcomes**.

Teacher supply

The Department published the Striking the Balance report from the Teaching Council in 2017. In response to this report a steering group was set up to address the issues. It does not include teachers or teacher union representatives. The Action Plan on Teacher Supply contains a range of priority actions. They included developing, with the support of the Government Information Service, a campaign to promote the teaching profession. I attended the launch of this campaign in the Department and there was one glaring problem with it: it was not offering these newly qualified teachers equal pay. The development of new four-year undergraduate programmes to train post-primary teachers, and increased student numbers on postgraduate programmes in post-primary priority subject areas, are welcome developments. There is no doubt that the two-year PME has been a major factor in the decline in numbers wishing to enter the profession by this route. Maybe we should be considering payment for these trainee teachers during the second year of their PME. The work of this steering group has also led to the introduction of a teacher sharing scheme, which might lead to better contracts

for teachers. A further change was the increase in the number of hours a teacher on career break can teach. These measures may make small improvements, but without pay equality and improvements in the working conditions of teachers we will continue to have classrooms without a teacher and consequent reduced subject choices into the future.

Barriers to inclusive education

Since the introduction of the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004, inclusive education has become a success story for Ireland. Teachers want the best for all of their students. However, recent research by RED C, commissioned by the ASTI, confirms that teachers' commitment to inclusive education is being significantly undermined by a lack of support at national level. The survey demonstrates that the vast majority of teachers have received no training in special needs education in recent years. It is also evident that schools lack consistent administrative structures to co-ordinate planning for SEN students. Teachers also identified the need for a reduction in class sizes to allow them to meet the often complex and varied needs of their students. The removal of the allowance for teachers with SEN qualifications has not helped the situation. I believe that inclusive education is about supporting and empowering all students in their lives. Bureaucracy and paperwork should never be allowed to dominate the way schools support inclusion or the important work of teaching and learning, and the relationships between teachers and their students.

Read/watch the full speech on www.asti.ie.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Kieran Christie summarised key issues for the ASTI, and plans for the coming year.

Junior Cycle

We have continued to raise our key issues of concern regarding the implementation of the Junior Cycle Framework. We have engaged in an ad hoc sub-committee of the Junior Cycle Implementation Committee to try to sort out the scheduling arrangements for Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings in schools. ASTI's objective is to ensure that such meetings are held in accordance with the terms of Circular Letter 0015/2017, the Appendix to the Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation (July 2015) and a further statement of clarification provided to ASTI by the Department of Education and Skills. This work was pre-dated by a resolution to ballot members on the matter of SLAR meetings if there is an insistence by some schools on holding them in a manner that breaches the agreement. That ballot currently stands in reserve.

Senior Cycle

The NCCA initiated a review of Senior Cycle education in February 2018. As part of that process, they are working with 41 collaborating schools. ASTI has contacted all those schools in which we have members and sought to ensure that ASTI policy is to the forefront of contributions at all times. We have met with the NCCA and the JCT. The ASTI's key messages are:

1. ASTI must not be sidelined in the review process.
2. There needs to be a better evidence base for change.
3. Lack of discussion on an implementation strategy will doom whatever emerges to failure.

We will continue to be very active in monitoring and participating in the reform process into the future.

Well-being

In ASTI, we have been working hard on the whole area of teacher and student well-being, particularly through our Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Committee. The Committee is currently engaged in talks with the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) to design a tool specifically to assess teacher stress in schools. We are optimistic that this tool will be launched in the 2019/20 school year.

FEMPI

The recent nurses' dispute threw up a few interesting questions for all public servants encompassed by the Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA). The Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI) legislation was used against ASTI members during our dispute in an oppressive and punitive manner. ASTI has raised this at the most senior levels within the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU). We are also working with our lawyers to see what can be done about the differential treatment of ASTI and Irish Nurses and Midwives' Organisation members, and believe we have identified a number of potential grounds for legal action.

ASTI/TUI dispute

It would be wrong for me not to make reference to the membership issue that



ASTI General Secretary Kieran Christie.

arose and that led to a necessity to make a complaint to the ICTU regarding the recruitment practices of one of our colleague teacher unions. Our complaint and its successful prosecution stands as a strong rebuff to those, whether they be individual members or a fellow trade union, who engage in or facilitate such outcomes. We have protected the principle that during disputes, there must be a barrier to an employer who might seek to incentivise workers to abandon their union and move to another. This is one of the most basic tenets of the trade union movement.

Post-2010 entrants

As far as ASTI is concerned, lesser-paid new entrant teachers will not always be with us. We will not quit until this issue is finally and fully addressed.

I would accord some caution to the statement that emerged on April 22 from the parties to the PSSA. Certainly, it is the first acknowledgement from the Government side that there are outstanding issues. That's an advance. It has been agreed to look at them in the context of a pay review or the next round of pay talks. That's an advance too. The ASTI will engage fully with the parties and will explore any avenue in order to finally bring an end to pay inequality for teachers.

Workload

The Government must properly support the teaching profession. They must trust us, and if they do, the future education of the youth of the nation will continue to be in good hands. But the growth in the administrative burden falling on teachers, coupled with the continuous initiative overload in recent years, does not augur well. The limit has been reached. The evidence is all around us. A recruitment and retention crisis is at full throttle with more and more subjects being added to the list for which teachers cannot be found. Schools must be places for all of



Kathleen Lynch (guest speaker).



ASTI General Secretary Kieran Christie and ASTI President Breda Lynch.

our young people to be properly educated. A vital ingredient in the mix is the need for schools to be staffed by education professionals – teachers – who are valued, supported and properly paid for the work they do.

Special Educational Needs

During this past year, concerns around the implementation of Circular 0014/ 2017 and the accompanying 'Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs' crystallised considerably for our members. The ASTI has a major difficulty with the imposition of a special needs education model that takes no account of the time, workload and practical implications for teachers and schools. Such an approach sells teachers short and sells this most vulnerable cohort of students short. Inclusion means nothing unless it is supported.

Pay

Finally, I want to address the issue of pay. A piece I wrote in *ASTIR* recently appeared to raise eyebrows when I suggested that arising from the outcome of the nurses' dispute there is a basis to return to and amend the terms of the PSSA to ensure a fair distribution of benefits. I believe that the PSSA has been stretched beyond its limits and now needs to be rebalanced for all public servants. A mid-term pay review must happen. ASTI is currently encompassed by the terms of the PSSA. It runs out at the end of 2020. The pay increase (restoration) contained within the current agreement are quite modest. A pay rise in the next agreement is a must. It's time for our recovery too.

Read/watch the full speech on www.asti.ie.

KATHLEEN LYNCH, UCD SCHOOL OF EDUCATION – GUEST SPEAKER

We must challenge neoliberalism in education.

There cannot be substantive equality of opportunity in education without equality of economic conditions outside of education. Neoliberal politics undermine equality, and social class inequalities are closely interwoven with care injustices. There is a strong case for developing a strong ethic of care, aligned with a focus on equality in economic conditions, to guide educational practice and public policy making.

The myth of meritocracy

The economic inequalities that generate social-classed outcomes in education and exacerbate disability and race and/or ethnicity-related outcomes are not generated in schools; they are generated in fiscal and social policies that allow and enable privileged groups to retain their advantages outside of schooling.

Inequalities of economic condition (especially in unearned wealth, huge wage differentials, and inheritances) produce inequalities in educational outcomes in direct ways.

Irish public policy has been driven by neoliberal market-driven values over the past 20 years. These policies have led to social polarisation, especially between the very rich and the very poor. Given the vast differences in family resources, the rich and well off use their private wealth more and more, outside of schools, to advantage their own children.

What this means is that meritocracy is a myth in an economically unequal society; there is no empirical evidence of substantive equality of opportunity in education without equality of economic condition. The election of the few from disadvantaged backgrounds (be that via social class, race or disability, lone parenthood, etc.) into elite positions will never become the pattern for the many. Indeed, the success of the few creates an illusion that the opportunity is there for all who try hard enough. This meritocratic myth merely legitimates inequality.

The history of inequality in Irish society and education, and the lack of full disclosure about this, displays a deep moral emptiness at the heart of our culture, a disposition of indifference to the care and welfare of others, outside of immediate family and close friends.

Time to collect the data

The fact that there is no national annualised data available on the relationship between social class and educational attainment in the Junior or Leaving Certificate examinations (or on race, nationality, Traveller status, ethnicity or disability) exacerbates the silence and the normalisation of inequality. As information is power, the lack of anonymised data is a mechanism whereby we can hide the truth from ourselves. It is time to collect data on the social class, disability, ethnicity, nationality, Traveller status, and gender of all those doing the Leaving and Junior Certificate examinations. It should be collected annually. As schools are not equal in their resources; this should not be about comparing schools (moreover private tutoring/grinds make school comparisons meaningless). But data must be made available if we are serious about knowing the extent of inequalities in education and how to address these.

The history of inequality in Irish society and education, and the lack of full disclosure about this, displays a deep moral emptiness at the heart of our culture, a disposition of indifference to the care and welfare of others, outside of immediate family and close friends. It displays a culture of the 'warm private hand and the cold public heart'. This is the 'I'm alright Jack mentality', of those who have good education, good jobs, a secure home, etc., and who devote their time and effort to consolidating their wealth and/or professional privileges. They are kind decent people at the personal level, but they are indifferent to the suffering of the stranger, the 'other' in the public domain. This culture of public indifference and carelessness has been exacerbated in recent decades by neoliberalism, the dominant ideology in Irish political and cultural life. What role can education play, and teachers as a profession, in revitalising values of care and justice in education? You cannot have social justice without care, and care without social justice.

Read/watch the full speech on www.asti.ie.

JOE MCHUGH TD, MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Minister McHugh said that change must be paced and managed carefully.

Irish language

Our language is an essential part of what we are. I am determined to facilitate an improvement in the teaching and learning of Irish throughout our education system. I am announcing a two-year project to support and promote the learning of Irish through other subjects. Our focus initially will be on PE through Irish, but we are not limiting: if you or a colleague has an idea for a lesson or subject, seize the initiative.

Junior and Senior Cycle reform

I want to thank you for the continuing engagement of your President, officers and officials in the Junior Cycle Implementation Group. I know there are concerns about the pace and sequencing of change across the sector, and this feedback very much influenced the development of the Action Plan for Education 2019. I appreciate the work that teachers are putting in to deliver the new range of learning experiences that are now being offered to students in schools. I acknowledge the fact that this is not a finished piece of work, and we will continue to review it.

Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings play a key role in building expertise about the judgements that teachers make about student achievement. I welcome the fact that for the first time in Irish schools teachers have been given paid non-student contact time for professional duties, a small portion of which is set aside for participation in SLAR meetings. I am aware that my officials and the teacher unions are discussing the arrangements necessary to facilitate the holding of these meetings. I am very anxious to see a successful outcome to these discussions, given the importance of SLARs to the overall architecture of the new Junior Cycle.

As you know, the NCCA is undertaking an extensive review of Senior Cycle. Lessons learned through the Junior Cert process should inform us within the Leaving Cert review as well.

History

Since my arrival in the Department, I have been considering the issue of history in the curriculum. I have asked the NCCA to review the optional nature of history under the Framework for Junior Cycle. The new NCCA Council will hold its first meeting in early May and I look forward to receiving the final version of the report when it is considered and signed off by the Council.

Pay

With regard to pay, I am very conscious that in its August 2018 report, the Public Service Pay Commission proposed that the parties to the Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA) should give consideration to putting arrangements in place to allow for current pay arrangements to be fully examined. I am aware that the parties to the PSSA are currently engaged in exploratory discussions on how such a review mechanism might work, and how it might inform discussions on a potential successor agreement. On the issue of new entrant



Minister for Education and Skills Joe McHugh TD,
and ASTI President Breda Lynch.

salary scales, I know that the ASTI has outstanding issues of concern. These will be given full consideration, either in the context of any pay review mechanism, or in the context of the next round of pay talks. This is unfinished business and I'm hoping that we will have a resolution to this. It's something I will continue to work on.

Teacher supply

I am aware of the difficulties that some schools are experiencing in recruiting teachers. My Department has engaged with the ASTI to gain the union's perspective on the issue. We extended the flexible approach to the employment of teachers on career break into the current school year and I believe that many of our teachers who are working abroad may want to come home. I would encourage all schools to facilitate those teachers, and meet your recruitment needs by promoting jobs online and on social media, and adopting new technologies for remote interviews.

Posts of responsibility

I appreciate the importance of having a management structure within schools that reflects the sophistication of our modern-day education system. The new distributed leadership model supports this. I am committed to ensuring that the total number of posts of responsibility currently in the post-primary education sector is not reduced though retirement during the school year. This will be reflected in adjustments to the relevant circulars.

Inclusion

I believe strongly in inclusion. This is reflected in the fact that we are investing heavily in supporting our children with special educational needs, with €1.8bn being spent annually. I know we have a lot of work to do there. The new allocation model is designed to be responsive to identified needs. Consultations have taken place with education partners as to how to best

apply adjustments for schools at the reprofiling stage. Any adjustments are being made in a graduated manner. I must stress that there has been no reduction to the overall number of special education teaching posts within the school system.

Climate change

On the issue of climate change, young people are leading this charge in a big way and you see it in your classrooms on a daily basis and you see the independence and confidence of young people in bringing that issue live on to the national and international stage. I want to thank you for facilitating them and ensuring that their aspirations, their ideas, are nurtured. My Department is actively contributing to the new all of Government climate plan, with a view to having a programme of retrofits ready for implementation from 2023 onwards, as funding permits.

I want to recognise you for the work that you have done. I see how teaching, pedagogy, has improved and has developed, has introduced new ways and a new pathway for our generation of young people, and you have done that and you continue to do that. But I'm also conscious that we have a strong legacy, a strong heritage in this country for education, and there are traditional ways that can still work today. It's about marrying the traditional and ensuring that we adapt to societal change.

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INTEGRITY OF THE LEAVING CERT MUST BE MAINTAINED

A number of motions addressed educational issues at this year's Convention.



Edel Farrell (Cork South Paddy Mulcahy Branch).

Two motions dealt with the subject of Senior Cycle reform. Motion 77 called on the ASTI to insist that all elements of Leaving Certificate assessment that contribute to final certification be externally assessed. Speakers emphasised the exam's excellent international reputation, which is based in part on its impartiality and transparency, arguing strongly that this must be maintained. A further motion called on the union to seek an undertaking from the Department that no reform of Senior Cycle take place until a comprehensive review of Junior Cycle reform has been undertaken. Delegates spoke of their dissatisfaction with the implementation of Junior Cycle reform thus far, and their concerns for the Senior Cycle if reform is rushed. A final motion addressed the issue of special educational needs (SEN), calling on the union to negotiate with the Department for an ex-quota post of Special Education Co-ordinator for schools. Delegates spoke passionately about the volume and depth of work required to meet the needs of SEN students, and the pressures on teachers in many schools to fulfil this role, often with protected time or proper remuneration.

Leaving Certificate assessment

"ASTI policy on assessment of our own students has preserved the integrity of the new Junior Cert. The Leaving Certificate is an internationally recognised qualification because of the broad-based curriculum, the teaching, but also because of the assessment model that's in place – an assessment model that allows total anonymity and total equality. That model should be treasured and preserved. If we assess our own children for certification it will change the environment that teachers work in. The ASTI's policy protects our teachers and allows them to perform with the utmost professionalism."

Murt Francis, Wexford Tony Boland Branch

"The Oireachtas report on the Leaving Cert made many references to rote learning and the predictability of exams, and the same report then had to admit that there was a study done in 2015 that proved that predictability was not an issue. The written exams that we do for the Leaving Cert are not that predictable and they are fit for purpose. Teachers must continue to be advocates for their students. You can't be biased if you don't know whose work you are correcting. Keep it simple, keep it fair, and keep it transparent."

Eamon Dennehy, Laois Branch and Standing Committee Region 10

Senior Cycle reform

"While in the midst of implementing Junior Cycle reform, without adequately assessing or evaluating it, this is not the time to proceed with Senior Cycle reform. We have experienced the lack of relevant training for Junior Cycle, and I have no reason to believe that it will be any different for Senior Cycle reform. As a teacher from one of 41 schools chosen to partake in the review of Senior Cycle, I observed our deputy principal, students and parents travel to engage with the NCCA. At no stage was the staff in general invited to become involved in this review. We have experienced the consequences of Junior Cycle reform. If we do not act now, we will see the same thing happen at senior level."

Anne Marie Daly, Cork South Paddy Mulcahy Branch

"It's important that we as teachers have a real input into any reform that takes place in relation to the Leaving Cert. We need to learn from the mistakes that occurred with Junior Cert. It's up to us to make sure that the same mistakes do not occur with the Leaving Cert. We're at the coalface; we're the ones teaching it day in, day out, and we're the ones who are going



Top: Jean Bourke (left) and Jennifer Hiney (West Mayo Branch).
Above: From left: Ita McAteer (Dublin South West Branch) and Breda Lynch (ASTI President).

Top: From left: Jimmy Staunton (Sligo Branch) and Dave Carolan (Drogheda Branch).
Above: Eoin O hAodha (Enniscorthy Branch).

to have to deal with the parents, the students, explain to them, defend the position. We must be involved and engaged. Change is good but it's important that the right changes are made in the Leaving Cert. We have to lead any change."

Enda Duffy, Dublin South County Branch

Special Educational Needs

"The Special Education Needs Co-ordinator's role is complex, and it is largely fulfilling for those who do it; however, there is a weighty administration burden. There is a need for a dedicated post with an allocation of hours to enable that co-ordination to happen. Schools lack consistent administrative structures to co-ordinate the planning for SEN students. This has resulted in a significant minority of teachers being asked to undertake this role on a non-remunerated basis, which I think is exploitation and very often exploitation of the most vulnerable teachers who are often not in a position to say no. These children in our care deserve a targeted programme – they need somebody to co-ordinate that – a need for a team of teachers, who are provided with CPD and training."

Noel Buckley, Tipperary Branch

"I have been involved in SEN for over 15 years. Sometimes I feel like a total beginner because of the pace of change in this area in the last few years. I set up a Facebook group less than two years ago – special education teachers supporting each other – and there are almost 8,000 people on that now, looking for support in social media because we are not getting it from the Department. Management have been told that "reasonable time" can

be used for co-ordination, but when pressed, nobody is willing to say what reasonable time is. On the ground, what I know is that it varies – some people have zero time to do co-ordination duties; others have a full timetable."

Natalie Doyle-Bradley, Dublin North Central Branch

"I am affronted from a social justice point of view that the people who have least, students with special educational needs and their parents, have to take the crumbs that fall from the table and be content with that. We absolutely need a co-ordinator that is ex quota and integral to our whole school approach to equality in education."

Mary Slattery, Tipperary Branch

The Special Education Needs Co-ordinator's role is complex, and it is largely fulfilling for those who do it; however, there is a weighty administration burden. There is a need for a dedicated post with an allocation of hours to enable that to happen. Schools lack consistent administrative structures to co-ordinate planning for SEN students.

TIME FOR AN END TO INITIATIVE OVERLOAD

Teachers’ terms and conditions of employment came under the spotlight in a number of motions.

In recognition of teachers’ increasing workload, Motion 44 directed the ASTI to negotiate a scaling back of certain initiatives, and/or a reduction in class contact time. Delegates discussed areas where they felt a scaling back could occur, such as in Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) for Junior Cert. Motion 60 called on the union to ensure that whole school inspections include assessment of compliance with health and safety at work legislation. A series of motions dealt with supervision and substitution, calling for a provision to allow teachers to opt in or out of the scheme on an annual basis, and for a reduction in the number of class periods required of teachers in the scheme. Motion 21 called on the union to defend the principle of pay and pension parity in any future pay talks. A number of motions also addressed issues around sick leave and bereavement leave, calling for a return to pre-September 2014 sick leave arrangements, for holiday periods not to be counted as sick leave by the Department, and for the current bereavement leave allocation to be increased to seven days’ consecutive leave.

Initiative overload

“This is not just a motion for teachers, this is a motion for the education system as a whole – because if we are going to have an effective education system, we need effective, awake, alert, energised teachers.”

Richard Terry, Fermoy Branch

“Between January 2015 and November 2018, 317 circular letters were issued by the Department of Education, 83 of them in 2017 alone. Each of those circulars means work for somebody.”

Miriam Duggan, Dublin North 1 Branch and Standing Committee Region 16



Top: ASTI President-Elect Deirdre Mac Donald.



Above: Helen O'Reilly (Stillorgan Branch).

Well-being

“I would like to draw your attention to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. There is no hierarchy of statutory obligations – a statutory obligation is a statutory obligation, whether it is GDPR, Child Protection, or this Act. This must be included in all whole school inspections. We have the entitlement to a safety representative, elected by the staff. We need to make sure that our schools have that and protect our working environment.”

Deirdre Mac Donald, President-Elect, Wexford Tony Boland Branch

“The care of our teachers is the focus of the legislation, the care of all of the staff in our schools. The fact that it is being inspected is what makes it important to management, so this motion is very timely in insisting that the health of our staff must be inspected. The boards of our schools need to start asking are they compliant to a whole school inspection – are our teachers happy, are they healthy, and if they’re not healthy why are they not healthy and what can we do about it?”

Fergal Canton, Kilkenny Branch

Supervision and substitution

“Placing the added burden of supervision and substitution on our teachers, without the option to opt in or out in any given year, adds to the ever-increasing stress and workplace burden. While the option to opt out does not come without a burden of its own, a hefty financial one, a cost-neutral opt-out should be available to all teachers on an annual basis, regardless of years of service. Making the S&S scheme optional annually would go a long way to reducing the stress and improving the well-being of our teachers.”

Sinead Corkery, Dublin South Central Branch

Pension parity

"This motion comes because of the Public Services Stability Agreement. That agreement commits to honouring the principle that any salary increases paid to serving teachers would be applied pro rata to the pensions of retired teachers to the end of this agreement, in 2020. This is one of the most important motions on the clár because it affects every single teacher in this State. If we pass this motion, we must have a strategy to ensure that pay and pension parity in the public service is maintained. Pension parity with pay should be a red line issue."

Gerard Hanlon, Waterford Branch

"I'm a lower-paid teacher and as a first-time speaker to the podium I want to say thanks for everything you've done – you've fought for us year on year, fought for our profession and for our future. Lower-paid teacher pay is bad for sure, but lower paid teacher pensions are horrifying. We're told as young teachers, 'at least you have your holidays and your pension' – what pension?"

Christopher Davey, Carlow Branch

Sick leave

"The pre September 2014 [sick leave scheme was a] much simpler system, and crucially, there was no differentiation between ordinary and critical illness. We are now married into a unilateral public service sick leave system that's over-complicated, laden with bureaucracy and

enough to make anyone go out on sick leave just trying to keep up with it and what it entails. We're seeking to negotiate a return to a system that we feel is more fit for purpose, simpler, less bureaucratic, and easier to follow."

John Byrne, Cork South Paddy Mulcahy Branch

"For someone who has been out on critical illness leave, six months go by really quickly. The last thing you want to be thinking about is having to go back to work earlier than you want just to pay your rent, and make ends meet. I was lucky to become sick in August rather than April, or I would have had to go back to work much earlier."

Yvonne Rossiter, Bray Branch

Bereavement

"A teacher is permitted only five days' leave [including weekend days] in the case of a spouse, child or parent, which must be taken immediately following the date of the bereavement. My father Frank, a former trade union official, died on a Wednesday. This meant I was expected to be back at work the following Monday. Luckily, because of my school, this was not an issue. This time of grieving should not be consumed with a worry of having to return to work and 'prepare a face'. There is no space in the school day to be 'vulnerable'. This motion supports teacher well-being."

Dave Carolan, Drogheda Sean Higgins Branch

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MOTIONS DEBATED AT CONVENTION 2019

The following resolutions were adopted by Annual Convention 2019.

Motion 11 – Pay equality

That the ASTI work with the Public Services Committee of ICTU to ensure that in the next pay negotiations the Government commit to the principle of equal pay for equal work and a timetable for its realisation.

Motion 24 – In-service payment

ASTI vigorously demands that substitute teachers who attend in-service on a day when they would otherwise be working are paid.

Motion 65 – Composite motion – PME students

That ASTI demand that PME students not be officially timetabled in schools without a co-operating teacher who is the official teacher assigned to the class for the DES returns and that any additional hours carried out by PME students within schools be fully remunerated.

Motion 44 – Initiative overload

In light of the Minister for Education's acknowledgement of 'initiative overload' and the impact this is having on teachers' well-being, that the ASTI, in conjunction with other willing education partners where possible, negotiate a scaling back of certain initiatives and/or a reduction in class-contact time in order to provide the necessary professional time to manage such initiatives.

Motion 60 – Well-being

To ensure a whole school approach to well-being, all whole school inspections must include examination of and reporting on the school's Safety Statement and its compliance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act.

Motion 52 – Composite motion – Supervision and substitution

That in order to enhance teacher well-being, the ASTI negotiate with the Department of Education and Skills to allow teachers to opt in and out of the Supervision and Substitution scheme on an annual basis, regardless of their years of service.

Motion 51 – Supervision and substitution

For teachers who take part in the Supervision and Substitution Scheme, the ASTI demands that the five class periods availability be changed to three class periods availability per week.

Motion 50 – Supervision and substitution

That the ASTI demand that teachers who partake in the S&S scheme are paid for doing so, and teachers who do not partake will have their consequential salary deduction reversed.

Motion 77 – Leaving Certificate

In line with the recommendations of the Oireachtas Report on Leaving Certificate Reform, the ASTI insist that all elements of assessment which contribute to the final certification be externally assessed.

Motion 82 – Leaving Certificate

That the ASTI seek an undertaking from the Department of Education and Skills that the Leaving Certificate Examination will remain in place until the Junior Cycle is fully implemented and until a comprehensive review on the success and operation of the Junior Cycle is complete.

Motion 71 – Special Education Co-ordinator

The ASTI negotiate with the Dept. of Education and Skills for an ex quota post for a Special Education Co-ordinator similar to the programme co-ordinator's post with a detailed breakdown of the hours to be allocated for administration based on the number of pupils with learning support needs in the school.

Motion 21 – Pay and pension parity

That the ASTI support retired secondary teachers by giving effect to the long standing policy of pay and pension parity:

- That, when increases to the salary of secondary teachers are being processed, the ASTI shall as a matter of course raise a claim that a corresponding pro rata increase be applied to retired secondary teachers' pensions.

Motion 31 – Composite motion – Sick leave

That the ASTI seek to negotiate with the relevant Minister(s) a return to the pre-September 2014 sick leave arrangements.

Motion 30 – Sick leave

That the ASTI demand that the DES not count public holidays, weekends and all other school closures as sick leave.

Motion 41 – Bereavement leave

That the ASTI negotiate with the Department of Education and Skills to amend Circular Letter 19/00 relating to bereavement leave, in order to allow seven consecutive days' leave in the case of the death of a spouse, partner, child or parent.

Motion 78 – Teaching Council

That the ASTI resolve as a matter of policy that renewal of teachers' registration will not at any time be subject to engagement with Continuous Professional Development.

RULE CHANGE:

Motion 95 – Nomination of Treasurer

Amend rule 128 by deletion of the words "prior to the end of the opening session of Convention" in the first sentence and their substitution with the words "not later than the 31st of January each year".

Rule 128 to then read:

Nominations for the office of Honorary Treasurer must be submitted in writing to the General Secretary not later than the 31st of January each year. The election procedure shall be in accordance with that which applies to the election of President and Vice-President.

Motion 101 – Composite motion – Election of Treasurer

Election of Treasurer

Rule 127

That Rule 127 be amended by the addition of “The Treasurer may be re-elected each year to serve a maximum of six consecutive years” after “The Honorary Treasurer shall be elected by a simple majority vote at the Annual Convention from among the members of the incoming CEC”

The rule then to read:

“The Honorary Treasurer shall be elected by a simple majority vote at the Annual Convention from among the members of the incoming CEC. The Treasurer may be re-elected each year to serve a maximum of six consecutive years”

The following motion was referred to Standing Committee

Motion 81 – Special educational needs

That in the interest of SEN Students, the ASTI resist the roll out of circular 0014/2017 until such time that every teacher is trained and equipped to offer these students the support and education they deserve.



Rosabelle Crampton and Crena Shevlin (Stillorgan Branch).

ELECTIONS AT ANNUAL CONVENTION 2019

OFFICERS ELECTED AT CONVENTION



President
Deirdre Mac Donald,
August 19/20



Vice President
Ann Piggott



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PROTECTING VULNERABLE TEACHERS

Pay equality, and measures to protect the rights of trainee teachers, were to the forefront at Convention.



Kenneth Dwyer (Bray Branch).

The first debates of this year’s Convention returned to the issue of pay equality, with a motion calling for the principle of equal pay for equal work to be central to future public service pay negotiations. Other motions highlighted issues affecting vulnerable groups of teachers in schools. Motion 24 demanded that substitute teachers, who are often younger teachers on reduced hours, be paid for their attendance at vital in-service on days when they would otherwise be working in schools. Motion 65 drew attention to an increasing issue for those training to be teachers, calling on the ASTI to protect their right to mentorship and supervision during their training, and their right to be remunerated for teaching work.

Pay equality

“We’re coming to the end of a national pay agreement. This motion seeks to put [equal pay] on top of the agenda, to finally bring an end to the two-tier system the Government introduced from 2010. It is seeking a commitment from this Government that this two-tier system will come to an end, without a doubt, written in stone.”

Murt Francis, Wexford Tony Boland Branch

Motion 24 demanded that substitute teachers, who are often younger teachers on reduced hours, be paid for their attendance at vital in-service on days when they would otherwise be working in schools.

“Paschal Donohoe said the FEMPI legislation has been highly effective at temporarily reducing public service pay. Almost a decade later, it does not feel that temporary to young teachers still suffering as a result of its unequal pay scales.”

Sean Fox, Dublin North West Branch

“I would like to explode a myth – that the creation of a two-tier pay scale was done by older teachers ‘to save our gold-plated pensions’. We never discussed it, we never agreed to it, we never voted for it. We never accepted this and we would never accept this. I am proud of my union for the strength with which we have stood by our younger colleagues.”

Miriam Duggan, Dublin North 1 Branch and Standing Committee Region 16

“I am one of the lesser-paid teachers. I’m asking the Government to secure pay parity now, not in 2020. I have lost €30,000 to date, and I work side by side with people who have the same qualifications and the same subjects as me but qualified a few months previous to me and are making way more money. I’m not asking for a pay rise, I’m just asking for fair pay. It is an injustice and it needs immediate rectification.”

Mary Cullen, Wexford Tony Boland Branch

In-service payment

“On attending a training day in Tralee, I got chatting to a young teacher. She informed me that she was losing a day’s pay because she had been sent to in-service. She said ‘I could say no, but I don’t feel that I can’. Other teachers have raised similar incidents at branch meetings; timetabled hours go to another, a sub fills in for a sub, and the original substitute does not get paid. Many substitutes are lesser-paid teachers, who could adopt the slogan: “No pay for more work”. It is reassuring that this motion has been prioritised. The ASTI has no option but to vigorously pursue this.”

Ann Piggott, Cork South Paddy Mulcahy Branch and Vice President



Geraldine O'Brien (Clare Branch and Standing Committee Region 4).



Christopher Davey (Carlow Branch).

 Holocaust Education Trust Ireland

History Teachers' Association of Ireland
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Venue: Trinity College, Dublin 2
Fee: €295 (includes lunch each day)

 Holocaust Education Trust Ireland

 The History Centre

 Claims Conference



For information and details about all our programmes, contact:
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Tel: + 353 1 6690593 Email: info@hetireland.org www.hetireland.org

“This issue has come to light due to teachers’ engagement with JCT cluster days and whole school in-service days in particular. Substitute teachers are in precarious positions. They engage with in-service training, not only for the benefit of their students but also to make themselves more employable. A majority of substitute teachers are also likely to be lesser-paid teachers. Now we’re not only working alongside teachers who are on a lower salary scale, but at in-service we may well be sitting beside a teacher who is losing a day’s pay.”

Edel Farrell, Cork South Paddy Mulcahy Branch

“People are entitled to a day’s pay. In-service is an integral part of a teacher’s professional development. It is not a day off. It’s most important that substitute teachers in this position don’t feel they’re not supported by other teachers. Substitute teachers are entitled to a career path like every other teacher. We need to support them.”

Pádraig Murphy, Kildare Branch and Honorary Treasurer

“PME students are **paying €12,000 over two years to third-level colleges to work for free** in our schools. **It’s shocking and a damning indictment** of where we are.”

PME students

“Trainee teachers are being exploited to function as qualified teachers with none of the protection or financial benefits afforded to other teachers. PME teachers, who have had their training time over the last couple of years doubled, as well as the cost, are now being asked to act as trained teachers. There is a real danger of lowering standards, of damaging the learning opportunities for students, but also for trainee teachers. Teachers need the opportunity to grow and learn and this will not be afforded to them if they do not have adequate mentorship. No is not an option when you are a trainee teacher. We need a mechanism where teachers are protected.”

Ken Dwyer, Bray Branch

“PME students are paying €12,000 over two years to third-level colleges to work for free in our schools. It’s a damning indictment of where we are.”

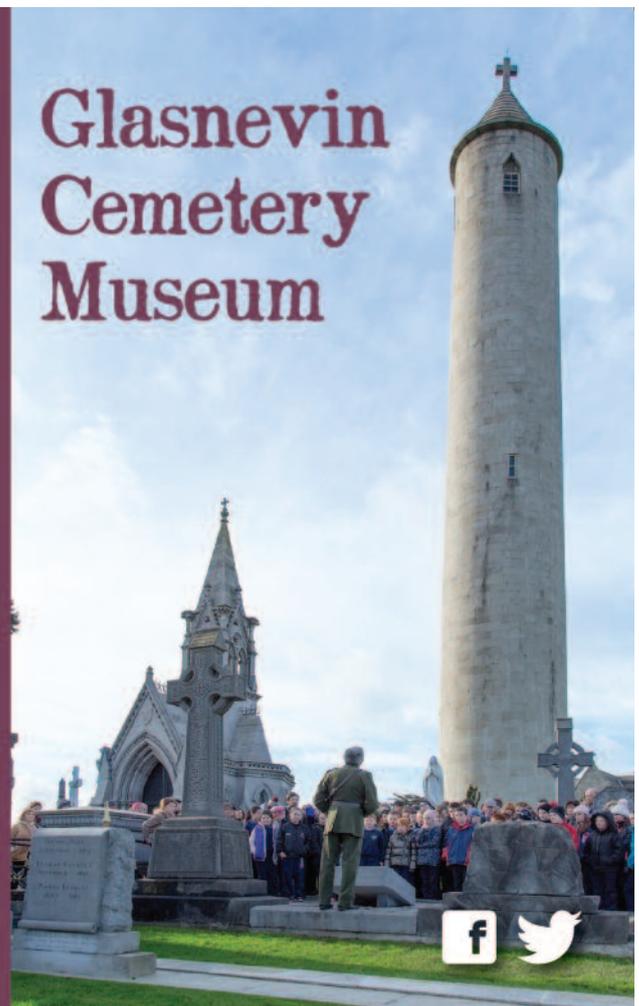
Liam Hennelly, Dublin North Central Branch

“I’m a Droichead mentor in my school so I’m a member of the PST. A national programme gives me allocated hours to sit down with newly qualified teachers so I can talk them through what’s going on in their classrooms, but a totally unqualified new trainee teacher can come into a classroom and be let loose with absolutely no support base. It’s a ridiculous situation that we should not be standing for.”

Ciaran Kavanagh, Dublin North East Branch


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VOX POP – CURRICULUM REFORM

This year we asked teachers about their experience of the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle to date, and their concerns about proposed Senior Cycle reform.

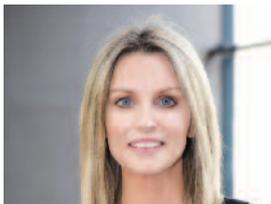
Photo: Patrick Broune



MARY CULLEN,
St Peter's College, Wexford

– teaches English and geography

While I can appreciate the benefit of a push towards students taking more ownership of their learning and the use of group work, I believe changes were made too quickly and a more paced approach should have been adopted. Teachers are expected to differentiate in the classroom but the introduction of common exams does not support this. In-service has not always provided the necessary information and we find ourselves trying to unpack a large curriculum without supports such as units of work and sample papers. On top of that, teachers fear that courses are being 'dumbed down'; for example in English the essay no longer exists. Many teachers believe that students will not be prepared adequately for their Leaving Certificate and wonder if Leaving Certificate reform will mean a lowering of standards also. I believe that many subjects would benefit from reform in Senior Cycle but that a full review of the impact of Junior Cycle reform should be commissioned first.



ADRIENNE HEALY,
St Dominic's College, Cabra, Dublin

– teaches maths, biology and science

We haven't had support. I've had two in-service days – at the second I asked if they could help us with the Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) 2, which nobody had done, and I was told no. I came out of the in-service very frustrated. They've taken out so much of the context and content from the syllabus. They want us to do 'discovery learning', but it's very difficult if students don't have the basic principles. Another issue is the gap between Junior and Senior Cycle: 90% of the plant material is gone from the Junior Cycle science course. We have designed a module in Transition Year to bridge the gap for students taking biology. Students are reporting increased pressure because of CBAs, as opposed to reduced pressure, which is what they were supposed to do. I don't believe we should be going forward until there's a full review of the Junior Cycle.



LIAM HENNELLY,
Belvedere College, Dublin

– teaches biology, chemistry and science

Frustration would be my main feeling at the lack of proper training and support structures, and lack of what I would consider a proper syllabus. I've a real issue with the idea that my students could be

disadvantaged because of my own possible error in unpacking learning outcomes that I haven't been trained to unpack. We're constantly told that STEM is the future, and yet science has been downgraded to 200 hours of instruction over three years from 240. In the old Junior Cert science structure, students had 35% done before they did the final exam. Now the final exam is worth 90%. We were told that they wanted to stop it being a 'high-stakes' exam. In the case of science it's more high stakes than ever. My concern for Senior Cycle would be that it will follow the same pattern, which completely lacks teacher involvement and teacher inclusion.



CONOR MURPHY,
**Skibbereen Community School,
Co. Cork**

– teaches English

In terms of English, the major issue is you're doing more with less time. The learning outcomes are so dense individually, which means you're not covering anything in any depth. I believe they have learned lessons from English, but it hasn't occurred to them to go back, learn from the mistakes, and implement changes. The course could be very good if you sorted out the learning outcomes. The specification is not working on the ground. There's no point doing any kind of reform on the Senior Cycle in the midst of Junior Cycle reform. The prospect of them changing based on what they consider to be a success at Junior Cycle lacks any kind of intellectual rigour, and is very worrying, as the mistakes at Junior Cycle are very obvious, very fixable, but if you bring any of them into Senior Cycle you're undermining the whole education system.



PAULINE NAGLE,
**Mary Immaculate Secondary School,
Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare**

– teaches science, chemistry and maths

The in-service we have received has been appalling. We should never have accepted a new course without in-service prior to it. Only three subjects have done a second CBA – science, maths and English – and it is causing major issues with other activities in our school. With regard to the CBA, we were promised exemplars of work. We didn't have in-service until we were in our second year, and when we went to our in-service, there were no exemplars available. There is still no exemplar of an exceptional CBA I or II. Our union needs to do an evaluation of the in-service, so that we get a true picture of how teachers feel. I would have serious concerns regarding Senior Cycle reform. I absolutely believe that changes need to be made but we must have in-service completed before any changes are made.

STAND UP, SPEAK OUT

ASTI Education Committee member James McGovern reflects on his recently published book, *Stand Up, Speak Out*, which tells the story of his 32 years as a public speaking and debating tutor in St. Mary’s CBS, Enniscorthy.

I felt this story needed to be told and recorded for posterity for several reasons. Therefore, the book itself has many strands.

It is of course a history of the participation of St. Mary’s CBS Enniscorthy in various public speaking and debating competitions spanning over three decades, and as such is a tribute to all the students who took part at any level. It shows the process of research and preparation developed over the years, and the level of time and effort the teams put in, in order to reach their potential.

It also contains a brief account of the history of public speaking and debating down through the ages, with mention of some of the venerable orators who helped to inspire and motivate our endeavours.

Furthermore, as I am now retired from teaching, it serves as a memoir of one aspect of my life as a teacher.

Importance of public speaking

But it is much more than all that. It stresses the importance of public speaking and debating in our schools, and highlights a deficit in our education system whereby not nearly enough students are exposed to these disciplines. Those who are able to stand up and speak out usually come to the top in every aspect of life, but how many good ideas are never heard, and how many potential leaders are lost, through lack of confidence and training in public speaking?

Those who seek after truth and justice, and those who strive to reach their potential in whatever arena, should be given every encouragement to develop the skills and courage to do so, starting in the schools. And while a lot is being done on an extracurricular basis by various bodies organising competitions, and dedicated teachers preparing students for them on a mainly voluntary basis, the practice of public speaking and debating needs to be mainstream and available to every student.

Of course, the skills of public speaking and debating do not guarantee success by themselves. But they are tools to that end, essential tools for life, and like any tool it is down to the individual how and when they are used.

Yes we researched and prepared meticulously and students learned to stand up and speak out, but their successes in their chosen careers are of course down to their own hard work in all areas of their education and how they used their abilities and skills.



From left: ASTI President Breda Lynch, James McGovern, and James's former pupil Enda Brady, a Sky News broadcaster, who launched Stand Up, Speak Out in February.

The contributions from former students contained in this book are valuable and enriching, and I thank those past students for their work and generosity in writing them. They represent all the students from CBS Enniscorthy who took part in public speaking and debating over the years, and enhance the book by showing the process from the student’s point of view.

Our noblest sentiments

Nowadays much communication is carried on in short snippets or captions on Facebook and Twitter, etc. Even the function of the American presidency seems at times to be carried out by tweet! But are these snippets speech that appeals to our noblest sentiments, animates our souls, stirs passions and emotions, and inspires virtuous action?

In ancient Rome, oratory was seen as an essential part of education and had a central function in public life.

Down through the centuries public speaking and debating has been seen by philosophers and writers as a quest, and as speaking up for truth and justice. Quintillian described the orator as “a good man speaking well” and later, during the time of Shakespeare, Francis Bacon reiterated the idea of oratory as part of education being essential in the journey towards morality and truth. Our own Edmund Burke once said that: “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing”.

Of course that may all seem simplistic and aspirational, and we know from history that bad people can speak well too, but that’s a book with a different cover!

This book seeks to celebrate the art of public speaking and debating, and suggests that it’s time for these skills to become central in education and society again, as it is only through debate that just policies can be formulated, and it is only through standing up and speaking out that we can be heard.



Don't forget to specify

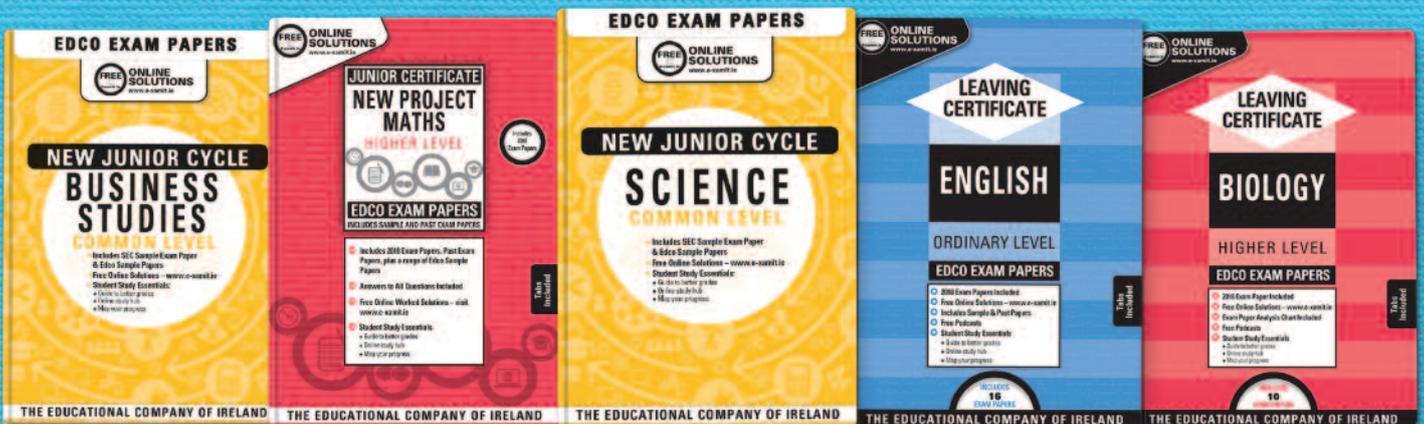
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RETIRING AND MOVING ON

The last day at school for retiring teachers and final-year students is fast approaching, says Pádraic O’Doherty, RSTA President.

The end of another school year beckons, with added significance for both final-year students and retiring teachers. Students look forward to their last day at secondary school as the great world of opportunity and dreams awaits them. Retiring teachers who have paid into their retirement plan over time approach the final day in an expectant and reflective mood. While teachers may not miss a world governed by bells, timetables and noisy corridors at break time, the comradeship and solidarity of colleagues will always be remembered with gratitude.

Safeguarding pensions

To retiring teachers, the RSTA’s message is to join their local branch and become active by attending the meetings and engaging in the social activities and business of the organisation. The retirement pension is the retired teacher’s principal source of income and needs to be protected in the current challenging economic climate. This fact became clear when public service pensions were severely cut, without consultation, during the recession. Consequently, the Alliance of Retired Public Servants, with the ASTI and the RSTA as founding members, was established and now represents over 140,000 public servants. It has given retirees access to Government, providing a new confidence that could not be achieved unilaterally.

European trip

The Midland Branch has now returned from the south of Spain, where they visited the historic cities of Andalusia with colleagues from other branches. Memories abide of the tapas food of historic Seville and Granada, and the stroll along the Roman bridge on the Guadalquivir at Córdoba. Shorter trips are planned at local level by branches across the country.

RSTA National Conference

Final preparations for our National Conference at the Galway Bay Hotel are now in progress. While the business of the Conference will take place during the day, the evenings will be filled with social activities, followed by a trip to Connemara on the second day. For ASTI members it is yet another opportunity to celebrate these gifted years with erstwhile colleagues. The motions this year reflect the needs of retired teachers. Last year a unanimous vote was passed urging branches to keep in contact with members who are ill or housebound. This year the Minister for Older Persons, Jim Daly TD, will be an invited guest. The 2018 motion calling for an ombudsman for older people will be brought to his attention. Northern Ireland has already set a precedent in this matter. The RSTA is grateful to the ASTI for the kind invitation to address Annual Convention, and I was honoured to convey our fraternal greetings in person.

RSTA membership application/renewal

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Annual subscription: €24

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Contact: murielmcnicholas@gmail.com or 085-118 1330

The personal information requested here will be retained to administer your membership of RSTA in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). See the RSTA Data Protection and Privacy Policy on the RSTA website – www.rsta.ie

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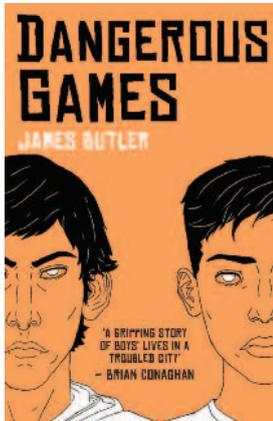
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DANGEROUS GAMES



Dangerous Games, former teacher James Butler's debut novel, explores the pressures of young masculinity. Described by Senator Lynn Ruane as an honest story of the lives of young men in a fragmented society, the exciting urban drama follows the story of Kevin – a likeable teenager but unlikely hero – who gets caught in a web of crime and deception. Set in working-class Ireland with true-to-life characters and relationships, the action-focused book is aimed at encouraging teenage boys to read, and is available from all good bookshops.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND HAVE YOUR SAY

The Data Protection Commission (DPC) is running a public consultation on children's data protection rights in a social media context and they want to hear from students. All schools in the country have been invited to take part in this consultation. A pack of lesson plan materials (lasting approximately two hours) that aims to assist teachers in facilitating a discussion with their students (aged eight to 17) about personal data and data protection rights in a social media context is available online. In addition, schools are invited to relay the opinions expressed by students on the various issues back to the DPC. All of the information and materials needed can be found on their website: <https://www.dataprotection.ie/en/news-media/know-your-rights-and-have-your-say-stream-two-dpcs-public-consultation-processing>. Submissions from schools will be accepted until the end of the school year.

If you have any questions, please contact childrensconsultation@dataprotection.ie.

PARTICIPANTS REQUIRED FOR RESEARCH

Second-level teachers working in Ireland are required for research into emotional labour currently being conducted by a PhD student in the University of Limerick. The research focuses on the emotional display rules of secondary school teachers. These emotional display rules refer to the perceived expectations of teachers in relation to what emotions should be displayed and what emotions should be suppressed. Emotional labour has been linked with higher turnover intentions and actual turnover, burnout, job dissatisfaction and decreased personal well-being. Although this has been found in occupations such as nursing and hospitality, there has been very little research on the subject in the context of second-level schools. Involvement in the study will require participation in a one-on-one interview with the primary researcher. The interview is expected to last no longer than one hour and will be audio recorded.

For more information or to participate in the study, contact Niamh Lafferty on 085-787 0340, or Niamh.Lafferty@ul.ie.

SEISMOLOGY IN SCHOOLS

For the last 10 years the Seismology in Schools programme has involved over 700 schools worldwide monitoring seismic activity and submitting records to a global database. There are 70 participating seismic stations in schools, colleges, universities and geoparks across Ireland, where the seismometers have been used in Leaving Cert geography and physics classes, as well as extensively in Transition Year science classes. They have been used for BT Young Scientist and SciFest projects, and have captured data from devastating earthquakes in Haiti, Japan, Nepal and Indonesia, as well as underground nuclear tests in North Korea. The most successful school of the entire global network is St Columba's College in Stranlar, Co. Donegal (station DL02), which has recorded data for over 930 events. Seismology in Schools targets significant cross-curricular goals. It helps students to make connections with people across the globe. The data schools collect bring home the reality of distant catastrophes, and helps to inform students of the challenges facing humanity now, and in the future, as our population inexorably grows.

If you would like to become involved in Seismology for Schools, visit <http://geoserver.iris.edu/stations#zoom=5&lat=53.27809&lon=-8.065&layers=FFFBFFFFFFFTFF>, or contact Brendan O'Donoghue or Tom Blake by email at bdonoghue@stcolumbasstranlar.ie, or tb@cp.dias.ie.



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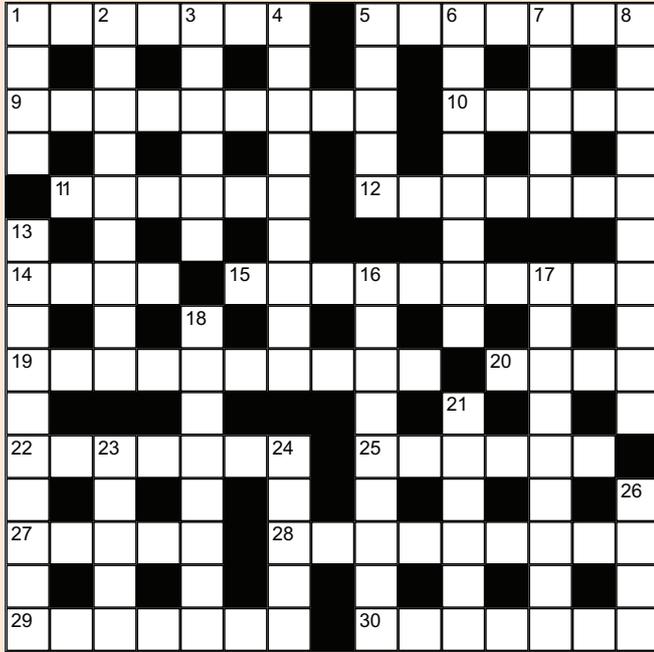


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ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 1903

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. 1903, Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, June 28, 2019

ACROSS

- 1. T. S. Eliot is privy to John's thrones (7)
- 5. Strive or endeavour (7)
- 9. Upsetting this may result in spoiled fruit (9)
- 10. Beyond the range or limits of, excessively (5)
- 11. Softer type of wood (6)
- 12. Other sources say he's very wealthy (7)
- 14. Ageless magpies for mischievous children (4)
- 15. Act of transferring property title from one person to another (10)
- 19. Place a bet. Twice! (6,4)
- 20. Crucifix inscription (4)
- 22. Hard yellow cheese from Switzerland (7)
- 25. Part of the introductory paragraph to an essay (4,2)
- 27. Enough maple? Plenty! (5)
- 28. Nubia lied about hearing nothing (9)
- 29. Combined landmass of largest and third largest continents by population (7)
- 30. The nearest thing to diligent (7)

DOWN

- 1. Kerry's natterjack is one (4)
- 2. Done without being planned or rehearsed (9)
- 3. See permit for shoelace hole (6)
- 4. Clever device from Mr and Ms Abbot (5,4)
- 5. Tacit space for extra room (5)
- 6. Scientific name of a species in which both parts of the name have the same spelling (8)
- 7. Smyth tells tales and legends (5)
- 8. Containing DNA from different organisms (10)
- 13. Decompose and become absorbed by the environment (10)
- 16. Dither, or be indecisive (9)
- 17. Incapable of living or functioning successfully (9)
- 18. (8)
- 21. Airport of Newfoundland (6)
- 23. Could be class, case, crust or cut (5)
- 24. Part played by Madonna in eponymous 1996 film (5)
- 26. Used with braces by the pessimist (4)

Réiteach do Chrosfhocal ASTIR 1902

TRASNA

- 1. An fórsa
- 5. Ceardaí
- 9. Dalai Lama
- 10. Triúr
- 11. Miriam
- 12. Gresham
- 14. Dodo
- 15. Leithscéal
- 16. Inmheánach
- 20. Eden
- 22. An Lagán
- 25. I gcóma
- 27. Ataen
- 28. Fochupáin
- 29. Augusta
- 30. Tréanas

SÍOS

- 1. Arda
- 2. Foláir dom
- 3. Reiki
- 4. Ar an mbean
- 5. Cealg
- 6. Aitheasc
- 7. Deich
- 8. Iarsmalann
- 13. Addis Ababa
- 16. Tacaíocht
- 17. Éadomhain
- 18. Beiginis
- 21. Scouse
- 23. Learg
- 24. NAFTA
- 26. Inis

Did you miss?

- ASTI special needs survey 7
- Convention 2019 report 10

COMHGHAIRDEAS

Comhghairdeas le buaiteoir Chrosfhocail 1902:

Ann C. Walsh,

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