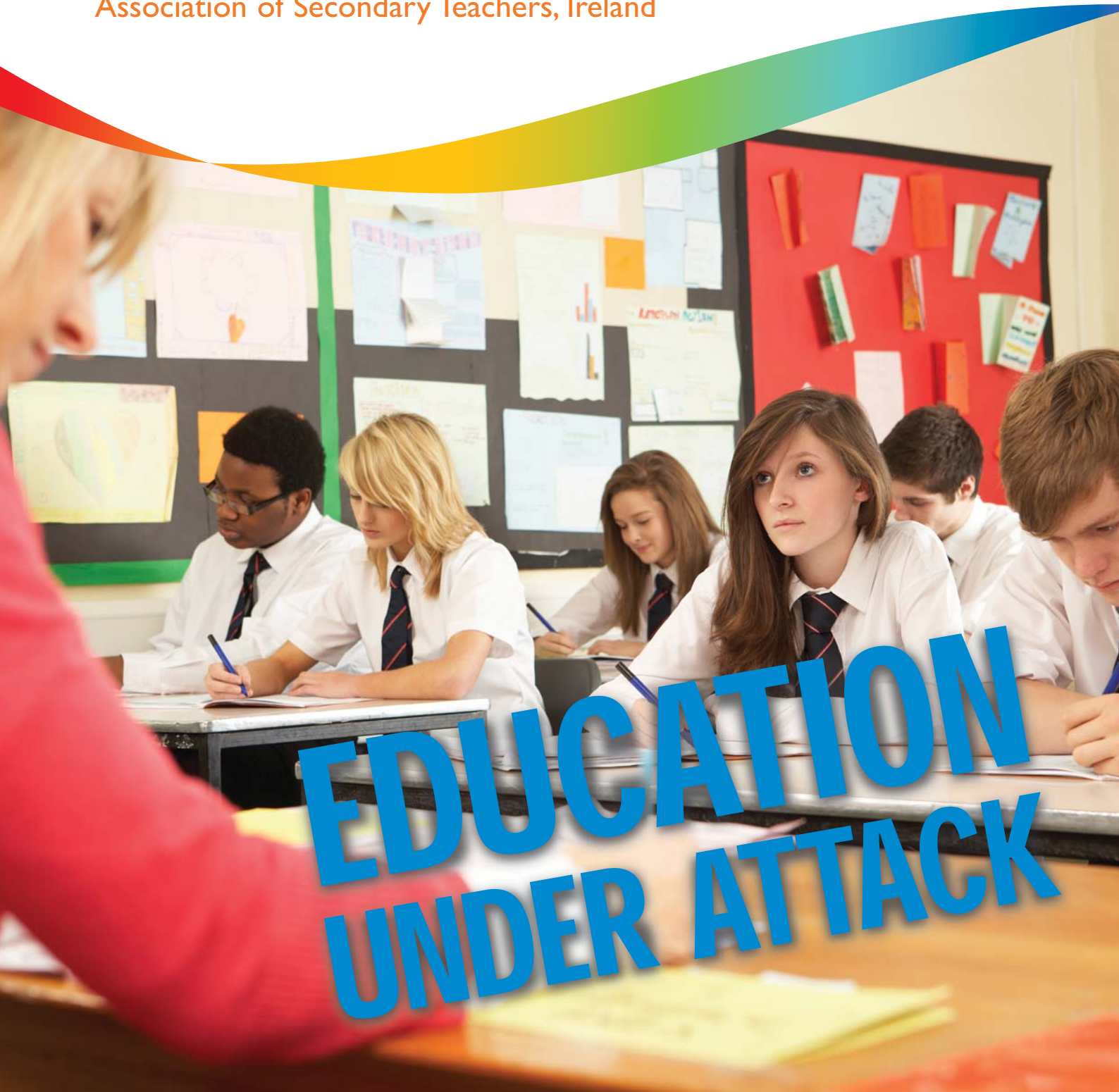


Volume 29: Number 5: November 2011  
ISSN 0790-6560

  
ASTI  
A century of service

# ASTIR

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland



## EDUCATION UNDER ATTACK

Budget 2012 –  
give students their chance

Junior Cert reform

Retirement advice



Transition Year students from Larkin College, Dublin in Irish Aid Centre, 2008



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# Contents

Volume 29: Number 5: November 2011  
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## ASTIR

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12



10



26

24



34



22

28

<p><b>4</b> From the President's desk <i>Education under attack</i></p> <p><b>5</b> General Secretary's update <i>Fighting for our schools</i></p> <p><b>7</b> ASTI news</p> <p><b>10</b> News</p> <p><b>12</b> News feature <i>Budget 2012 – Give students their chance</i></p> <p><b>14</b> ASTI in the media <i>Educational reform</i></p> <p><b>16</b> News features <i>Junior Cert reform – what's happening?</i> 16 <i>Debunking the myths</i> 18 <i>Working together to defend workers</i> 19</p> <p><b>20</b> Features <i>Answering your financial questions</i> 20 <i>Waiting to teach</i> 21</p> <p><b>22</b> Interview <i>Peter Brabazon, Discover Science and Engineering</i></p>	<p><b>24</b> Features <i>Organising students</i> 24 <i>Reaching out to teachers in the developing world</i> 26 <i>Big brother is watching!</i> 28 <i>Teachers' health – education's wealth</i> 30</p> <p><b>32</b> Frequently asked questions <i>Retirement questions</i></p> <p><b>34</b> Curaclam <i>Scrúdú na hArdteiste Gaeilge</i></p> <p><b>36</b> Representing members <i>ASTI priorities for educational reform</i></p> <p><b>37</b> Professional representation <i>It's your union: structure of the ASTI</i></p> <p><b>38</b> RSTA news</p> <p><b>39</b> Noticeboard</p> <p><b>41</b> Obituary</p> <p><b>42</b> Crossword</p>
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Letters, comments and articles are welcome

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

# Education under attack

ASTI President BRENDAN BRODERICK says that any reform of the education system must be properly supported and resourced.

It is that time of year when trade unions, business groups and others are preparing and submitting pre-Budget submissions to the various Government departments. At this time also, attacks on public services in general and public servants in particular, by the usual suspects in the media and elsewhere, begin to ratchet up. These vested interests choose to ignore the fact that the Irish public service is small by international standards and that targets in respect of public service pay, as agreed with the Troika, are being exceeded.

Speculation even persists in certain areas about where further savings might be made, despite the fact that some suggestions would constitute clear breaches of the Croke Park Agreement. The interests of the wealthiest (the top 5% hold 40% of the country's wealth) hold sway. The rationale for introducing wealth taxes, which are least likely to damage economic growth or job creation, is ignored. Meanwhile, our public services and those who depend on them – the unemployed, the sick, students, etc. – are seen as fair game for attacks and further austerity.

## Cutting from the bone

The Government is exploiting the opportunity provided by the crisis to undermine the basic tenets of the welfare state, and the pay and conditions of workers. Since the downturn, austerity measures have taken billions of Euro out of the economy. In education, €670 million has already been cut from education and the Department of Education and Skills is looking for a further €380 million over the next three budgets. This is at a time when student numbers are increasing in every sector and when it is clear that additional cutbacks will further damage an already weakened education service.

If, as some are suggesting, the pupil-teacher ratio is increased, it will lead to larger classes, subjects lost from school programmes, less time available to students with special education needs, less time for pastoral care and extra-curricular activities, and more challenging classroom management issues. Furthermore, the loss of many young, vibrant teachers to the system will make any significant reform agenda proposed by the Minister completely untenable.

## Junior cycle reform

As I write, the Minister has endorsed the NCCA framework for junior

cycle reform. He has also asked Department officials to begin discussions with the education partners on the "considerable level of detail" that has yet to be worked out. Any reform proposed must be both relevant and feasible if it is to solicit a positive response from teachers, students and parents. Schools need absolute clarity regarding the nature of the proposed changes in order to plan properly for their successful implementation. Also, reform of this nature and to the extent proposed must be accompanied by a coherent, detailed and fully costed implementation plan. Teachers know too well that the under-resourcing of new educational initiatives has the capacity to wreak havoc on an already overstretched system.

The ASTI's position on assessment remains clear. We are vehemently opposed to assessing our own students for certification purposes. The State Exams Commission has three years to put in place systems that ensure that the grade a student obtains at the end of their course is based on valid, reliable and objective data. We believe that the only way to ensure this is by ensuring that all students' work accruing towards Certificate examination is externally assessed.

## The case for investment

Investment in education is essential for economic recovery. Countries like Finland and South Korea increased their spend on education during economic crises and are now reaping the benefits. They realised that a world-class education system eventually gives rise to a world-class economy, a world-class health service and a world-class welfare system. This does not happen in reverse.



**Brendan Broderick**  
ASTI President

# Fighting for our schools

PAT KING calls on members to join the campaign against education cuts.

As this *ASTIR* goes to print rumours about education cutbacks are rife. It is unacceptable that schools and students are to be targeted *again* in this year's Budget. As ASTI members know, any more cuts will damage our already struggling education service irreparably. The ASTI has communicated this message loudly and clearly at every opportunity. We have met with the Education Minister and other members of Government. We have met with officials at the Department of Education and Skills, and with a wide variety of interest groups, including parents and school managers. We need your help to get the message across as widely as possible. ASTI representatives are currently undertaking a nationwide lobby of TDs and you can get involved by contacting your local representatives and making sure they know that your school, and the schools in your locality, cannot cope with any more cuts. Your representatives need to understand that any further increase in the pupil-teacher ratio or any reduction in funding will mean struggling schools, larger classes and restricted subject choice. In short, any cuts to education mean cuts to your students' futures. TDs are your representatives – make sure they represent you and your students when it comes to important Budget decisions. See page 12 to find out how you can get involved in the campaign today.

## Cuts will scupper reform

Ambitious plans to reform the junior cycle programme will become impossible if schools have to deal with further cuts. In early November the Minister for Education and Skills launched a complex and ambitious set of proposals to reform the junior cycle. The Minister acknowledged the challenge of implementing this reform given the environment in which teachers and schools operate today. If Budget 2012 further diminishes schools' resources, it will make a complete mockery of the Minister's reform plan.

The ASTI is in favour of junior cycle reform. Our members want to provide the best possible education for all students. That is why we are stressing that any reform must be supported by adequate funding and careful and structured implementation. We only get one chance to undertake this ambitious reform; it is too important to pursue by half measures. See page 16 for more on the junior cycle review.

## Review of the ASTI

This is a very difficult period in the ASTI's history. We have seen many conditions dearly won in the past dismantled, trade unions are being assailed by powerful interests, and some are questioning the point of being in a union.

We must make sure that the ASTI is strong enough to survive this period and emerge as an effective, modern and vibrant trade union. That is why work is currently underway on a comprehensive review of the ASTI, its structures and organisation.

This union's greatest resource is our people. Hundreds of teachers are committed to and actively involved in the organisation. We want to build on this great resource. This review is about creating structures that ensure we accurately reflect what members really want, and that we actively engage with all members and encourage them to become involved in their union. Despite current challenges, we will emerge as a strong union for the future.



**Pat King**  
ASTI General Secretary



# Hibernia College

## Post Primary Schools Partnership Programme



School of Education



### The Hibernia College Post Primary Schools Partnership Programme (PPSPP)

Under the Hibernia College Post Primary Schools Partnership Programme, partner schools who host school experience/teaching practice placements as part of the College's **H.Dip. in Arts in Post Primary Education** are given access to a range of benefits and continuing professional development opportunities. The aims of the partnership are to:

- Create progressive school experience/teaching practice placements for graduate student teachers (GSTs).
- Provide accredited continuing professional development for practising teachers/mentors.

### Hibernia College's offer to schools

Participation in the Post Primary School Partnership Programme will provide access to a range of benefits and professional development opportunities for schools, mentors and other school staff. These include:

- Online mentor training (available for all teachers who mentor GSTs).
- M.A. in Teaching and Learning study vouchers for all mentors and principals. (Vouchers can be exchanged for online modules leading to postgraduate certificate and diploma awards.)
- Online library access for mentors studying online modules.
- Tailored in-service training for all school staff on a range of topics (5 or more GSTs per academic year).
- Tailored introductory workshop to research methods for school management and staff (5 or more GSTs per academic year).
- Mentors' network membership.
- Principals' network membership.



Hibernia College is currently inviting expressions of interest from schools who wish to become partners in this programme. For more information or to submit an expression of interest visit

[www.hiberniacollege.com/partnership](http://www.hiberniacollege.com/partnership)

Or e-mail [partnership@hiberniacollege.net](mailto:partnership@hiberniacollege.net) or call us at 01 6610168



Hibernia College, Ireland's only HETAC-accredited online college, is a specialist in postgraduate education programmes for education professionals.

## Free online course for ASTI members



### The world is online – are you?

Love it or hate it, digital technology is here to stay and it will continue to revolutionise how we live and work. Education is part of this digital evolution and consequently there is an increasing focus on embedding information and communications technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum.

### Could your digital skills be improved?

One of the main barriers to the development of digital skills is the fear of technology and the corresponding lack of confidence to engage with it. Another barrier may be that students can appear more ICT savvy than their teachers. The fear of the unknown can be daunting, but acquiring basic ICT skills can help.

### Where can I learn?

The ASTI has negotiated an online digital skills programme that delivers a basic digital computer skill set. This is an opportunity to prepare yourself for change and give you the confidence to guide your students. The I-CANDO Digital Skills programme offers seven modules of online, interactive, guided learning to help you to learn a range of digital skills. The seven modules are:

- Computer: Getting Started;
- Computer: Getting Online;
- Digital Photo;
- Digital Music;
- Digital Video;
- Social Networks; and,
- Webshare.

Full details of the course and modules are available at [www.i-cando.ie](http://www.i-cando.ie) where you can view a demonstration of the photo module and download the full brochure.

This programme will be available free of charge to ASTI members who sign up and complete one module before the end of December 2011. One module takes between two and six hours to complete. Access to the online learning will be open until March 2012. This programme normally costs €250.

### Interested?

Email your name and quote 'ASTI' to [info@i-cando.ie](mailto:info@i-cando.ie), or call 01-489 3604.

## Redeployment review

The ASTI is participating in a review of the redeployment scheme for surplus teachers, as agreed under the Croke Park Agreement. The first meeting in the review process took place in late October. At this initial meeting the ASTI put forward issues for discussion, based on feedback from members.

Primary ASTI concerns relate to the timing of stages in the redeployment process, the need for more guidance and transparency in the compilation of seniority lists, and the need for a more structured appeal process.

In addition to the review process, the ASTI is also pursuing the establishment of a pilot voluntary redeployment scheme, as agreed under the Croke Park Agreement.

It is expected that the review process will be completed shortly. Updated information on the operation of the redeployment scheme will then issue.

For more information on the redeployment review, check the ASTI website – [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

## ASTI reacts to the Hyland Report

The debate on the reform of Ireland's college entry system must acknowledge the need to retain a Leaving Certificate qualification that has high status and is regarded as valid and reliable, ASTI Assistant General Secretary Moira Leydon told a conference in reaction to the launch of the Hyland Report in September.

The Hyland Report, which was prepared for the conference 'Entry to Third Level in Ireland in the 21st Century' examined entry to higher education in Ireland and indicated possible alternatives to the current system. The ASTI welcomes the debate on reform of the points system but insists that there are no easy solutions when it comes to reform of the college entry system. Over 92% of second-level students now complete the Leaving Certificate and these students have a wide range of abilities and career interests, Moira Leydon told the conference. "Not all students require entry to third level at the point of Leaving Cert, but these students have a legitimate expectation that the Leaving Cert will serve them as well as it serves others," she said.

"In discussing reform of third-level entry, we must acknowledge the problems and the successes of our second- and third-level education systems. The cost of delivering a solution should not fall exclusively on the second-level system and should not serve to dismantle what is working well for schools and students. This is a particularly important point in the context of recent severe cutbacks in schools. Proposals that place additional burdens on schools will only serve to distort the goals of senior cycle education."

You can read the full Hyland Report at [www.heai.ie](http://www.heai.ie).

## Department circulars

Keep up to date with Department of Education circulars on the ASTI website. You can search for a circular by category, keyword or date.

## ASTI branch retirement events



*Pictured above is a recent Kildare Branch retirement function. Those in attendance were: retirees Ann Duggan, Joan Curtin, Josephine Curtis, Diane Kenny, George Murphy, Patricia O'Callaghan, Dorothy O'Connor, Treasa Uí Riagain and Mary Teahan from Holy Family Secondary in Newbridge; Peter McCarthy, Liam McManus and Ciaran Spring from Mean-Scoil Iognaid Ris, Scoil na mBrathaire, Naas; Mary Doogan from Newbridge College; Sean Duggan, Marius Fitzsimmons, Michael O'Callaghan, Bob Roche and Hugh Rooney from Patrician Brothers Secondary, Newbridge; Patricia O'Grady and Mary O'Sullivan from Presentation Secondary School, Kildare Town; Marian Heavahan and Caroline McDonald from Salesian College, Celbridge; Mary Hayes, Ann Kilbride, Phil Moore and Mary Salonen from Scoil Dara, Kilcock; Eddie Kelleher and Pat O'Connor from Scoil Mhuire Community School, Clane; and, Con Henry from St Paul's Secondary School, Monasterevin. Also in the photo are: Pat King, ASTI General Secretary; Jack Keane, former ASTI President; Branch Officers Derek O'Donoghue, Sandra Kennedy, and Pat Ruddy; and, Colm O'Toole, Standing Committee representative.*



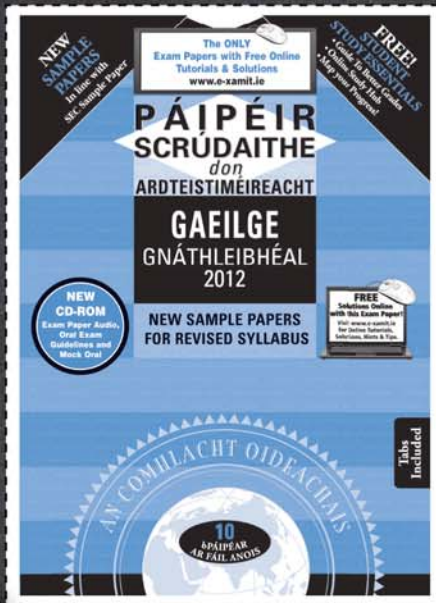
*Clare Branch retirement function. Back row (from left): Ray St John, ASTI Honorary Treasurer; Conn O'Donoghue; Mary Hayes; Seamus Hanrahan; Margaret Ruane; PJ Garry; Pat King, ASTI General Secretary; Mark Hogan; and, Michael Concannon. Front row (from left): Ita Winston; Maire Hitching; Jane Casey; Jack Keane, former ASTI President; Bernard Moynihan, ASTI Head Office; and, Ger O'Donoghue.*



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## ASTI school steward training



Each year, the ASTI provides training for school stewards. The training provides an introduction to the information school stewards will need in order to support ASTI member staff in their schools. Topics covered include the role of the school steward, ASTI policy and structure, industrial relations procedures, contracts, salary, leave entitlements, redeployment, and board of management structure.

A school steward training seminar held in Dublin last month was attended by Kathleen Desmond, Caritas College; Aoife Elster, Gaelcholaiste Chill Dara; Noel Gleeson, Drimnagh Castle CBS; Ailish Harkin, Presentation College, Terenure; Tom Hughes, Terenure College; Una Keenan, Templeogue College; Ann Kelly, Salesian College, Celbrige; Ita McAteer, Assumption Secondary School, Walkinstown; Andrew McDonnell; Rockbrook Park School; Michael McMullan, Beneavin College; Tom Noone, Ardscoil Eanna; Derek O'Donoghue, Scoil Dara, Kilcock; Andrew Phelan, Colaiste Phadraig, Lucan; Bridget Tinsley, Colaiste Naomh Mhuire, Naas; and, Michael White, Colaiste Bride, Clondalkin. Also photographed above are trainers Maire Collins and Desmond O'Toole, ASTI Executive Officers, and ASTI President Brendan Broderick.

## Managing challenging behaviour

The ASTI is hosting a professional development seminar on managing challenging behaviour on January 18 and 25. Early booking is advisable as places are limited – contact Eileen O'Rourke, Tel: 01-604 0170, or Email: [asti.library@asti.ie](mailto:asti.library@asti.ie).

## Support teacher helps student to scholarship



Pictured with Heictor Gonzaga are (from left): Geraldine Hanley, maths teacher at Gort Community School; Dr James J. Browne, President, NUI Galway; Professor Jim Ward, Galway University Foundation Board member; and, Margaret Geraghty, language support teacher, Gort Community School.

Heictor Gonzaga is the first recipient of a new NUI Galway scholarship to help students from a non-EU country to study at the university. Originally from Brazil, Heictor moved to Gort, Co. Galway, three years ago and following a couple of months with the English language support system, he entered the Leaving Certificate class in Gort Community School.

Principal of Gort Community School, ASTI member Denis Corry, said the achievement was very much a team effort: "From not knowing a word of English three years ago to getting 510 points in his Leaving Certificate this year is a remarkable achievement by any standards. I would like to commend his teachers and most particularly his language support teacher, Margaret Geraghty, for her wonderful support to all the Brazilian community over the last ten years."

## This issue in numbers...

**1,000**

Approximate number of teachers that will be lost from second-level schools if the pupil-teacher ratio is increased by one (P13)

**27%**

Percentage of second-level teachers currently in temporary employment (P21)

## Code of Professional Conduct to be updated

The Teaching Council published a draft revised Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers last month. The publication marks the start of a consultation process with registered teachers and the partners in education towards a final revised Code. The Code of will set out the ethics that underpin the teaching profession and the standards of professional conduct expected of a teacher. The revised Code includes new content on electronic communication, including email, text messages and social networking, as well as a requirement for teachers to actively maintain and improve their professional knowledge. All registered teachers are invited to read the draft Code and submit their views to the Teaching Council – see [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie).

### Do you have views on how teachers should approach social media as an education communication tool?

The draft Code includes a new provision that teachers must ensure that all email, text or social networking communication with students, colleagues, parents and school management is appropriate.

Some tips to protect yourself and your reputation online:

- check your privacy settings regularly on Facebook, MSN, Google and similar sites to make sure that only those you know and permit can access your information;
- maintain professional standards and use a teacher's voice when communicating with students;
- don't permit images of yourself to be taken and posted on any site without appropriate privacy safeguards;
- don't post criticism of colleagues or students on social networking sites;
- don't share confidential information about students or colleagues on social networking sites;
- don't post confidential images or information about yourself on social networking sites; and,
- if inappropriate content is posted about you by somebody else, you can contact the owner/administrator of the website to ask that it be removed. Each site has its own guidelines as to what content it deems unacceptable.

## Walkers art winners



*Sarah Louise Donohoe from Dominican College, Sion Hill, Blackrock, and Sophie Ryan, Santa Sabina College, Sutton, claimed top spot in the Walkers Dublin Secondary Schools Art Competition. Pictured with the girls is Walkers Managing Partner, Vicki Hazelden, and acclaimed Irish artist Rasher, who was a member of the judging panel.*

## Textbook publishers discount prices

The main educational publishers have committed to giving substantial discounts to schools that run book rental schemes, and to ensuring that editions will be revised less often.

The majority of publishers have confirmed that schools that purchase in bulk for book rental schemes will benefit from discounts of up to 17.5%. Eight publishers have also signed up to a voluntary Code of Practice, which means that in future, new editions of textbooks will be available for a minimum of six years. There will be no revisions to existing textbooks for four years unless changes are required because of changes to the curriculum or to examinations. Old editions will be kept in print for two years and revisions to textbooks will be available online.

The ASTI supports the St Vincent de Paul Schoolbooks Campaign – see [www.svp.ie/books](http://www.svp.ie/books) for more.

## Interested in using social media in the classroom?

You can find information on best practice in the use of new tools such as wikis, virtual classrooms and social media like Facebook and Twitter at [www.teachus.eu](http://www.teachus.eu).

**1 in 7**

**Number of UK schools** estimated to use biometric technology (P28)

**29/02/12**

**Cut-off point for teachers** who wish to have pension and lump sum calculated on 'pre-cut' salary. (P32)



Join the campaign today !

As Budget 2012 approaches, second-level education is coming under attack. Reports of possible cuts to education appear daily. The ASTI has joined with the other teacher unions (IFUT, INTO, TUI) to organise a campaign to protect education.

The unions have named **November 28 to December 2 Education Week** – a week of action and events aimed at protecting education from further cutbacks.

A nationwide lobby of TDs is taking place in the run up to Education Week. ASTI representatives are asking TDs to protect education by voting against any plans to increase the pupil-teacher ratio or reduce resources to schools.

**Add your voice**

You can add your voice to the campaign to protect education by contacting your local TDs. Your participation may well make a real difference to how the second-level sector fares in Budget 2012. TDs must be made aware of the consequences of any decision they take. Visit [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie) for contact details for your local TD and guidelines on what to say when you contact them.

**Be informed**

Any increase in the pupil-teacher ratio will not only affect the number of students in your classes. It will mean that key subjects and programmes may be dropped from your school. It will mean fewer teaching jobs and could mean that non-permanent teachers in your school will lose their jobs.

Read more on the impact of an increase in the pupil-teacher ratio in the panel overleaf.

- Make sure your family, friends and colleagues are aware of the impact.
- Give this information to your TD.

**Inform parents**

Parents need to know what impact an increase in the pupil-teacher ratio and other cuts to education resources will have on their child. Help us to communicate that message:

- Download the information poster at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).
- Place it in a public area in your school.
- Forward it to your school parents' association.
- Ask your Board reps to give a copy to all School Board members.

# Give students their chance

## Demonstration against austerity cuts – Dublin, November 26

A public demonstration against the Government's austerity programme is being organised by the Dublin Council of Trade Unions with support from the ICTU. ASTI members should show their objection to further education cuts by participating in this demonstration. Members should meet at 12 noon on Saturday, November 26, at the ASTI banner outside the Teachers' Club on Parnell Square for the march to the GPO.

## Education Week – November 28 to December 2

A range of activities will take place during Education Week.

These include:

- A media campaign to spread the message.
- The issuing of a joint teacher union Budget 2012 submission.
- TDs who have served as teachers will attend a briefing by teacher union presidents and general secretaries.
- Regional events will also take place during Education Week.

## Schools have taken their share

Cuts to education to date include:

- Increase in PTR in 2009
- Moratorium on posts of responsibility
- Visiting teachers for Travellers service abolished
- Abolition of resource teachers for Travellers
- Withdrawal of many English language teachers
- Curtailment of supervision and substitution scheme
- Redeployment of hundreds of teachers
- Cut in student capitation grant.

# Protect class sizes

There is a threat to increase the pupil–teacher ratio again.

What would this mean for second-level students, schools, teachers?

- Every second-level school would lose between one and three teachers.
- For each teacher lost, it would mean that up to 33 timetabled classes would go.
- Schools would have to re-organise, which would almost certainly include dropping subjects from the curriculum.
- The subjects most likely to be lost are:
  - Science – especially physics and chemistry;
  - Non-mainstream subjects such as German, music, art-craft-design, and design and technical graphics; and,
  - Non-mainstream programmes such as the Leaving Certificate Applied.
- For students it would mean ... some or all of the following:
  - not being able to take a subject they need/like;
  - bigger classes;
  - being in a class with higher level and ordinary level students together (i.e., two syllabi being taught at once);
  - being in a class with students from a different year (e.g., fifth and sixth years together); and,
  - a diminished classroom learning environment.
- For teachers it would mean:
  - more time and energy spent on classroom management and less on teaching;
  - less time to work with individual students;
  - the delivery of modern syllabi (which include more practical work and one-to-one interaction between students and teacher) would become more difficult; and,
  - up to 1,000 teachers would face redeployment, reduced hours, or losing their jobs.

Add  
your  
voice

Visit [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie) for more information.

# Educational reform

ASTI representatives have commented on a number of issues in the media recently, including junior cycle reform.



## On junior cycle reform

"The ASTI will not agree to any system where teachers are assessing their own pupils."

*Irish Times, August 26*

"The ASTI has already questioned the proposals that would cap the number of subjects at eight. It said that this had the potential to cause confusion for students and parents and questioned who would decide what eight subjects a student would take. The organisation's general secretary Pat King also reiterated the ASTI's opposition to teachers assessing their own students."

*Evening Herald, August 28*

"We are absolutely convinced that the funding will not be there to fund a coherent new Junior Cert programme and that is a matter of great concern to us. Teachers have to be trained, have to get upskilled; we don't want a situation where some schools are well funded – from their own resources maybe – and others are unable to provide students with the same opportunities."

*Pat King, RTÉ Six One News, September 26*

"The ASTI has said members are concerned about the impact on relations with students if they had to mark their work for a State exam, and are concerned about a lack of funding for redesigning courses or training teachers to deliver them."

*Irish Examiner, October 4*

"Educational reform is vital for those sitting in classrooms today. Their futures and the future of Ireland depend on it. It is essential that reform is carefully considered, well planned out, understood by those most affected by it and, crucially, fail-proof."

*Pat King, Irish Examiner, October 13, 2011*

"As it is, many Junior Cert classes contain up to 30 young teenagers, including honours, ordinary and foundation level students, together with students with special education needs and English language learners. The added practicalities for teachers of teaching exam and non-exam students together, while endeavouring to cover the course, meet individual needs, and motivate them throughout the year, are likely to be overwhelming."

## Myths busted

In *The Irish Times* on October 11, Fintan O'Toole examined the question: Is public sector pay in Ireland out of line with that elsewhere in the developed world?

He found: "The best source for comparisons in this area is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's 'Government at a Glance 2011'. The OECD figures are useful because they use so-called "purchasing power parity" – what your salary actually buys you in the real world. So what do they tell us? The starting salary for Irish teachers in 2008 was almost exactly the OECD average – but that was before pay cuts and the pension levy, which have reduced the salary by about 14%."

“There is no doubting the consensus that the Junior Cert needs to be reformed ...[however] The decision to implement one aspect of Junior Cert reform in 2012 is akin to putting a new train on a new route before the train tracks have been put down.”

*Brendan Broderick, Irish Independent, October 19*

“Irish second-level schools aim to deliver a holistic education service, which caters for all young people, regardless of ability, needs, socio-economic status or family background. Previous OECD reports have remarked on the success of the Irish second-level education system in negating social inequalities amongst students by offering a quality and consistent standard of education across all types of schools. This is one of the reasons why Ireland has one of the highest school completion rates in the world. However, this good news story remains sidelined by the press.”

*Brendan Broderick, Irish Times, October 31*

We are totally in favour of reform and of improving the system but it's got to be reform that works. We can't fail our students ... The consultation begins now and there has got to be real consultation with teachers in the classroom because they know what works best ... We want absolute certainty that what is being proposed will work ... This has

nothing to do with pay and conditions but we certainly are concerned that the resources may not be put in place to deliver the changes that are necessary. The Minister has said – and we welcome it – that this programme will be supported by investment. But we'll believe that when we see it.”

*Pat King RTÉ Radio, Drivetime, November 3*

**OECD Report**

“Today's report [OECD 'Education at a Glance 2011'] is based on figures that are now three years old. They are three hugely important years. In the past three years teachers' salaries have been dramatically cut ... The cost of living in Ireland is 18% higher than Europe, we are the fifth most expensive country to live in, in Europe ... so to compare salaries for teachers with salaries throughout Europe is a nonsense.”

“There is very good news in this report ... We have the highest retention rate in Europe. 92% of students stay all the way to Leaving Cert; they're voting with their feet, they're staying on because the education is good ... the students we produce go on to third level. We are third in Europe in terms of the number of students who graduate. These are signs of a healthy education system, despite the fact that it has been grossly underfunded for years.”

*Pat King, The Last Word, Today FM, September 13*

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# Junior Cert reform – what’s happening?

‘Towards a Framework for Junior Cycle’ has been published by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and is due for implementation in 2014.



While there is wide acceptance among teachers of the need to reform the current junior cycle programme, the ASTI has raised a number of serious concerns in relation to the NCCA’s proposals.

## Key concerns

### 1. Resources:

In the context of years of underfunding of schools, the recent severe cuts in both teacher allocation and supports for students and schools, and the indication of even further cuts in Budget 2012, the ASTI has no confidence that the necessary resources will be provided to successfully implement a new junior cycle.

### 2. Lack of clarity and engagement:

The schools and teachers implementing junior cycle reform need full information on exactly what is going to happen, when and how. In this regard, the NCCA document ‘Towards A Framework for Junior Cycle’ presents more questions than answers. There is an urgent need for extensive engagement between individual school staffs, the NCCA and the Department of Education and Skills in relation to the logistics of implementation of the new junior cycle and the changes in teaching methodologies that it will entail.

### 3. Equity:

It is essential that all schools are in a position to implement reform on an equal basis. As it stands, without a budgetary plan the proposal for short

courses contained in ‘Towards A Framework’ will lead to inequality of opportunity among students.

### 4. Assessment:

There is a lack of clarity in relation to “school-based assessment”. The ASTI is adamant that any move that places teachers in the role of judge rather than advocate of the student will distort the existing professional relationship between teachers, students and parents, and will therefore damage students’ experience of second-level education, as well as the public credibility of the State Exams process.

## The timeline

- The current Junior Cycle was introduced in 1989.
- In 2009 the then Minister for Education and Science Batt O’Keefe requested that the NCCA undertake a review of the junior cycle with a view to reforming it.
- In April 2010 the NCCA began a public consultation on the junior cycle. As part of this consultation, the ASTI conducted focus group meetings with members in venues around the country and made a formal submission to the NCCA.
- In spring 2011 proposals were presented to the Council of the NCCA. The ASTI, which holds two of the 25 seats on the NCCA Council, stated that it had serious concerns with the proposals. While some amendments were made following the ASTI’s objections (for example, a proposal that there be no final external written



exam for junior cycle students was dropped), the union's key concerns remain.

- The vast majority of NCCA Council members expressed the view that the NCCA's proposals should be forwarded to the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn, for his consideration.
- On September 25, 2011, the NCCA proposals were presented to the Minister. The ASTI wrote to the Minister expressing its concerns – see [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).
- On November 3, the Minister endorsed the NCCA's document 'Towards A Framework for Junior Cycle'. The Minister stated that: "There is a considerable level of detail, which can only be worked out in dialogue between my Department officials and the partners in education".
- The ASTI issued a strong statement again highlighting its concerns and the need for urgent dialogue with all school staffs – see [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

### Eight subject limit in 2012 dropped

Following the unexpected announcement in September 2011 that students entering second-level schools in 2012 would be limited to eight subjects in their Junior Cert exam, the ASTI received hundreds of communications from teachers around the country concerned about the implications of the measures for students, schools and teachers. The ASTI communicated these concerns to the Minister of Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn, and to Department officials. These concerns

were also highlighted in the media, including feature length articles by the ASTI General Secretary and President. The Minister has since announced that the eight subject limit will now not be compulsory until 2014.

### The Minister's response to ASTI concerns

In a speech launching 'Towards a Framework for Junior Cycle', Minister for Education and Skills Ruairi Quinn said:

- "I am determined that assessment reform must be an integral part of the reforms, if we are to make real change in teaching and learning and in the student experience."
- "I know that teachers and schools are operating in a very difficult environment, and yet I am asking for your co-operation in implementing this important change."
- "You will be supported in this work through the professional development service for teachers, and care will be taken to move at a pace the system can sustain."
- "I am asking my officials to begin the discussion on implementation with the partners in education, so that the necessary planning and development work can begin."
- "I will also put the necessary arrangements in place to begin the assessment and consideration of the resource implications of the proposals."

## 'Towards a Framework for Junior Cycle' – key reforms:

A new National Certificate of Junior Cycle Education will be introduced for first-year students in 2014. The Certificate requires that students present evidence of learning in:

Eight subjects **or**  
 Seven subjects and two short courses **or**  
 Six subjects and four short courses

Evidence of learning in English and Maths is compulsory, and in Irish, unless the student has an exemption.

An external final exam will account for 60% of the certification grade.

A portfolio component of subjects will account for 40% of the certification grade.

The portfolio component involves school-based assessment and external moderation by the State Exams Commission.

Grading of short courses will be school based and will also include an external moderation process.


Subject tuition time will be reduced to 200 hours, except for English, Irish and maths, which will each receive 240 hours.

Six key skills will be imbedded (e.g., managing myself, working with others, etc.).

Students will cover 24 "learning statements" in areas such as communications, citizenship, and critical thinking.

Download the NCCA document 'Towards a Framework for Junior Cycle' at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).





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# Debunking the myths



## **Myth: Irish teachers are paid more, and work less than teachers elsewhere**

**Fact:** In response to the recent publication of the OECD report Education at a Glance (which includes a section on teachers' pay), the ASTI pointed out that the report is based on figures from three years ago and does not include the recent pay cut (6.5%) and pension levy (7.5%) imposed on all teachers. New teachers have had their salaries cut by a further 14%. In addition, the table of teachers' salaries in the OECD report does not take into account purchasing power parity or cost of living. Using a comparison that does take this into account, the starting salary for Irish teachers in 2008 (before the pay cuts) was almost exactly the OECD average. In relation to working hours, there is no evidence to support statements that Irish teachers work less. In fact, Irish second-level teachers spend more time teaching in the classroom than the OECD average (735 hours per annum compared to an OECD average of 679). This does not include work teachers carry out outside the classroom including administrative and planning duties, meeting parents, and meeting other professionals such as education welfare officers.

## **Myth: Schools operate under a veil of secrecy**

**Fact:** All second-level schools are subject to four different methods of inspection: whole school inspection (WSE); subject inspection; whole school inspection – management, leadership and learning (WSE-MLL); and, incidental or unannounced inspections.

The majority of inspections involve a team of inspectors visiting the school, inspecting teachers in the classroom, evaluating school planning, examining teachers' teaching and learning plans, and conducting interviews with teachers. WSE-MLL inspections involve surveying parents and students. The resulting inspection reports are published on the internet and are available to any member of the public. Since 2006, nearly 5,000 primary and second-level school inspection reports have been published on the Department of Education and Skills website.

## **Myth: Public sector pensions cost €116bn**

**Fact:** This is the figure mentioned in the recent RTÉ programme Pension Shock. According to Trident Consulting, there are two problems with this figure being quoted in isolation. Firstly, the figure makes no reference to the amounts contributed by public servants towards their pensions. In particular, contributions have increased significantly in recent years. Secondly, there is one critically flawed assumption underlying the figure of €116bn: namely, that future public service pay will increase each year by inflation + increments + 1.75%, i.e., if a public servant gains an increment of 1% and if inflation is 2%, the figure of €116bn assumes that pay will increase by 4.75%. This is a pie-in-the-sky assumption leading to a pie-in-the-sky answer.

Further information on the cost of teachers' pensions is set out in the Trident Report – see the 'Protecting Pensions' page on the ASTI website – [www.asti.ie/news/campaigns/protecting-pensions](http://www.asti.ie/news/campaigns/protecting-pensions).

# Working together to defend workers

ASTI member ANN PIGGOTT explains the work of trades councils and their importance in ensuring workers' rights and conditions.

Trades councils exist in many towns and cities throughout Ireland, both North and South. They unify workers from diverse backgrounds and offer union members an opportunity to share knowledge and experience.

What I have learned from my involvement with Cork Council of Trade Unions (CCTU) is that most union members know very little about the conditions of members in other unions. When, for example, the severity of cuts within the education budget is explained on a practical level to people in other sectors, they are aghast at the implications for society. Likewise, when various employment circumstances are publicly discussed it makes trade unionists aware that all employees and unions must stand united in opposition to the deterioration of working conditions and services, which have been hard fought for in the past.

## Cork Council of Trade Unions

The Cork Council of Trade Unions (CCTU) is an amalgamation of workers representing both the public and private sectors. Delegates are nominated annually at local AGMs and attend monthly meetings in Connolly Hall. Many unions are affiliated to the CCTU – this assembly constitutes the voices of over 30,000 workers in the Cork area.

The CCTU is affiliated to many organisations, generally those with a global humanitarian dimension. The Council also has representation on city and county committees and Government boards in areas of education, development and enterprise. Many trades councils have a degree of involvement in local employment resource centres; council members are intermittently responsible for organising regional demonstrations in conjunction with the ICTU.

Earliest local records show that the District Trades Council was first established in 1915; in 1925 this was replaced by the Cork Workers' Council and the Cork Council of Trade Unions was established in 1960. The fiftieth anniversary was celebrated in 2010 and as part of that commemoration an impressive exhibition of trade union memorabilia was organised.

Photographs, books, badges, minutes and faded triumphant banners were displayed to the public. It is now our intention to find a permanent home for this priceless collection of artefacts in a region that fostered workplaces such as the Ford factory, Dunlop's Rubber Company and Velrome Dockyard, which was famous for shipbuilding. All closed in the 1980s.

### Bringing workers together

Members of trades councils from throughout the island of Ireland have met on two occasions since July and a third meeting is scheduled for January. One seat on the executive of the ICTU is reserved for trades council representation.



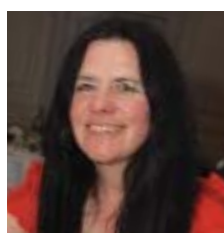
When the ASTI withdrew from the ICTU, it meant that no ASTI member featured on local trades councils – as a result, several councils throughout the country are still without ASTI membership/representation. Some trades councils are extremely vibrant, while others struggle to recruit delegates. The CCTU's members range from a 19-year-old apprentice to retired workers. Women did not go to meetings in the early years, and while they attend regularly now, the number of men is far in excess of their female counterparts. The first female President held office from 1979 to 1980, and I am privileged to be the second, elected in March 2011. The ASTI has had active members throughout the years; Derek Nolan and Paddy Mulcahy RIP were both previous presidents.

In looking towards the future, the Council is concerned with the erosion of public services, the dismantling of registered employment agreements and the proposed selling of semi-state bodies. In the context of Cork, the privatisation and subsequent end of the sugar industry has had a devastating impact on jobs and the economy. A recent European report vindicated the position adopted by the workers who rallied against the closure and advocated the retention of the Mallow sugar beet plant.

Recently, the CCTU hosted a meeting with the Cuban Ambassador, Teresita Trujillo, and Victor Dreke, Cuban hero of the Bay of Pigs and Che Guevara's commanding officer at this famous battle.

The CCTU is a vibrant group involved in many different activities. Meetings are never dull and topics range from local issues to international themes.

Trades councils attract genuinely interested activists and operate on undersized budgets. ASTI branches should affiliate to local trades councils if they exist in their districts. In such tumultuous times, the voice of education ought to be continually heard.



**Ann Piggott**

*Ann teaches in Kenmare Community School and is the current president of the Cork Council of Trade Unions. Ann is the ASTI Standing Committee Rep for Region 6.*

# Answering your financial questions

Want to save on your health insurance? Ask the expert!



**I am trying to cut back on my expenses at the moment. Is there any way I can save money on my health insurance apart from cancelling it altogether?**

There are numerous ways of reducing your healthcare costs and still maintaining a good standard of cover. For example, a range of corporate plans is now available that can typically reduce the adult cost by at least 10-20% per annum and even more depending on the level of cover held. You can also avail of 'split cover' whereby you can put the adults on a



higher level of cover and children on a lower level plan. This keeps everyone on one policy but ensures that you are not overpaying for your child dependents.

Student rates for those in third-level education typically offer 50% discounts on the standard adult charge. Some insurers offer this for student dependents up to age 23. However, you must request this from the insurer at your renewal date; otherwise, you will be charged the normal adult rate. In the worst case scenario, you can always reduce your cover to the lowest level possible until your circumstances improve and you can always upgrade your cover at a later stage. There may be an upgrade rule for any existing medical conditions only, but at least you will still have the option of 'going private' if you are faced with a public hospital waiting list. The best advice is to check out all your options with a competent healthcare adviser before you cancel your cover completely. After a lapse of 13 weeks, all insurers will treat you as a new member, which means that you have to re-serve all of your waiting periods.

**I am told I can save money by switching health insurance providers but I am nervous about switching my cover as I have an existing medical condition and can't afford to serve the waiting periods all over again.**

You don't have to worry as health insurance legislation protects you in this regard. If you have already served your waiting periods with your existing insurer, then you don't have to serve them again, i.e., you will be on cover immediately with the new provider. If you have not served all of your waiting periods, you get full credit for the time served and will only have to serve out any remaining time should you decide to switch to an alternative provider. This assumes that there is no break in your cover and you are not upgrading your hospital cover in any way. If you upgrade your hospital cover, e.g., switch from semi-private to private cover, then each insurer reserves the right to restrict your benefits to what you would have received on your old plan for a period of two to five years for any existing medical conditions only. Essentially, this means that you can't upgrade your cover to a higher plan and expect to avail of the higher cover for any existing conditions. However, if any new condition arises on or after the upgrade date, then you can use the new higher level of cover.

*Advice received by the ASTI from: Dermot Goode, expert in health insurance, Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd, and founder, [www.healthinsurancesavings.ie](http://www.healthinsurancesavings.ie).*

**Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013**

The Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission offers funding for a range of activities for schools, educators and pupils.

These include:

**Comenius School Partnerships:** pupils, students and staff from schools across Europe work together on joint projects over two years. Deadline for applications: 21 February 2012

**Comenius Regio Partnerships:** local and regional authorities with a direct role in school education, schools and other actors in education, work with European partners on topics of mutual interest. Deadline: 21 February 2012

**Comenius In-Service Training:** training for staff involved in school education. Deadlines: 16 January, 30 April, 17 September 2012. Each deadline relates to a specific training period.

**Comenius Assistantships:** encouraging intercultural awareness and language learning among future teachers. Deadline: 31 January 2012.



**Contact Seminars and Preparatory Visits:** opportunities to meet potential project partners and prepare for partnerships.

**Study Visits:** networking opportunities for education and vocational training specialists. Deadlines: 30 March, 12 October 2012. Each deadline relates to a specific activity period.

**eTwinning:** a simple and straightforward way to forge partnerships and work on projects with other schools in Europe using Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

To find out more about these or any other activities under the Lifelong Learning Programme, please contact us: 01 873 1411 or [education@leargas.ie](mailto:education@leargas.ie).

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

# Waiting to teach

Part-time teacher POLLY DONOGHUE subsidises her income from teaching by working in a local restaurant.



Anybody reading the headlines following the release of the OECD 'Education at a Glance' report in September probably thinks that as a second-level teacher I am overpaid and underworked.

I am one of over a quarter of second-level teachers in Ireland who is currently in temporary employment, paid according to how many hours I teach. I *am* underworked – because I cannot get enough work. At the moment, I have just 10 hours' teaching work a week. As well as those hours, I try to pick up casual substitute work when I can and I work part-time in a local restaurant.

The recent headlines didn't mention teachers like me or the many teaching graduates who are unemployed. They didn't note that teachers earn 12% less than other graduates in Ireland, nor did they point out that new teachers' pay has been slashed by 25% since the figures were compiled. Those facts characterise the true situation for teachers in Ireland.

## Behind the figures

Teachers and teaching are the most important influences on students' educational outcomes. That fact has been highlighted in numerous reports, including the OECD study 'Teachers Matter'. Meanwhile, the recent ESRI report 'From Leaving Certificate to Leaving School: A Longitudinal Study of Sixth Year Students' found that students consider the most effective teachers to be those who are prepared, patient, willing to explain, and who treat them with respect and care. Unfortunately, it is becoming more and more difficult to give that kind of attention to students. Schools have fewer resources than they have had in decades following successive budget cutbacks to education. At a time when the need to support all students is most pressing, resource teachers have been withdrawn, the pupil-teacher ratio increased, capitation funding cut, and grants withdrawn. As a result, class sizes are increasing, subjects are being dropped, higher and ordinary level students are being taught together, and in some cases different years are being taught together. The teachers I had during my school experience had a huge influence on my educational achievement and career. I got into teaching to have that same impact on my students. Teaching is a job I love, but with only ten hours a week, jobs under threat, and no promotional prospects following the moratorium on promotional posts, it's not a career I can rely on.

## Learning to adapt

That reality is far from the impression I had of teaching when I chose to pursue it as a career; it is far from the view many still have of the profession. Of course the landscape has changed utterly for all professions over the last number of years; people are struggling across all sectors, and teachers see that daily through the hundreds of families we come into contact with who cannot afford books, uniforms or other expenses.

Quality education is the most effective means to break the poverty cycle and to prepare for an uncertain future. Each child gets just one chance at a formative education. Chipping away at the only education system they will ever experience puts current and subsequent generations at a disadvantage. I am lucky to have gone through the education system before cutbacks put it in jeopardy. My education is my greatest asset; it gives me the best chance to adapt to this recession.

We need our education system to prepare students to be adaptable, active learners, ready for a changing environment. For that reason, the aims of the Junior Cycle reform reported this week are commendable. But it would be naive and dangerous to try to implement such changes in an education system already at breaking point without providing the required additional resources and teachers.

The rhetoric surrounding Junior Cycle reform has highlighted one important truth: a student's secondary school experience will influence the direction their life takes. It will affect not only their exam results or college and career prospects, but what skills they develop, how they view learning and education, and how they understand society and the world around them. Teachers are doing what they can to continue to provide this vital foundation within an underfunded system. But it's certainly not easy work.

This article first appeared on [TheJournal.ie](http://TheJournal.ie).

## Polly Donoghue

*Polly teaches in St Raphaela's Secondary School, Stillorgan, Dublin.*

# Supporting science

ASTIR spoke with Director of Discover Science and Engineering, Peter Brabazon.



Launched in 2003 on foot of a recommendation from the Taskforce on the Physical Sciences, Discover Science and Engineering (DSE) is an awareness body that aims to increase interest in and uptake of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects in school and at third level.

A 2010 ASTI survey found that science teachers see the perception of science subjects as being difficult and removed from everyday life, as well as a lack of awareness of potential career prospects in science, as significant barriers to uptake of science at second level. These are the areas that DSE aims to address through curriculum support initiatives, and awareness and outreach programmes such as Science Week. As DSE Director Peter Brabazon sees it, the body is an independent partnership organisation that sits between those who provide education and those who receive the benefits, i.e., business and employers, with the aim of supporting the needs of both and achieving something positive for the Irish taxpayer.

On the education side, DSE undertakes a range of promotional programmes and works with teachers to support science, technology and maths education in schools. To date, most of DSE's work has been in the primary sector, but for the last number of years the organisation has begun to pilot programmes at second level, where initiatives like the Sensors Programme work particularly on project

work and enquiry-based learning. These initiatives are designed in partnership with teachers. As Peter puts it: "What we design is fundamentally what the teachers designed. We help to make change happen, to explore possibilities".

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**DSE undertakes a range of promotional programmes and works with teachers to support science, technology and maths in schools.**

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#### Skills for life

We hear the arguments behind DSE's function almost every day: Ireland needs more STEM expertise, Ireland needs more science and engineering graduates to attract investment and jobs. But, says Peter, STEM education is not solely about skills for the economy but should be about instilling important skills for life. "A taxi driver should not be telling me: 'I'm no good at maths – I don't know how to work out the change'; he needs to have an appreciation of the importance of maths and needs to have some skill in it ... Ireland has an interesting mix of

industry types, with a high technology leaning. Even areas that you wouldn't imagine have a high technology leaning are moving that way rapidly. Our farmers, for example, use technology quite a lot, particularly the internet. So the challenge is that we need skills – not necessarily high-level skills – but everyone needs some sense of STEM”.

Just as all students need some science, technology and maths skills, those subjects must be backed up by a holistic education, says Peter: “A person might be a techie or work in a white coat or a hard hat, but most will need other knowledge and skills, like motivating people, being good communicators, etc. The real challenge is to allow for that. At a conference in Cork this year, Hewlett Packard reported that because of the speed of change, they have moved to focusing on rounded people with effectively the key skills the NCCA uses to design curriculum ... I think those are actually the key skills of a society, and I tell the business people we work with that these are the key skills they need – team work, initiative, communications, those sort of things. They are fundamental in what we do as well”.

#### Curriculum change

In a rapidly changing world, it can be difficult for education, particularly STEM education, to keep pace, says Peter: “When I studied engineering in the early 70s, the line was: ‘Ten years out of college, 50% of what you've learned will be of no use to you’. The challenge now is that when you go to college, virtually nothing will be the same

For more information on Discover Science and Engineering, visit [www.discover-science.ie](http://www.discover-science.ie).

when you come out. So curriculum always has to change but the speed of change has to be faster as well”.

Peter believes that the Project Maths model of curriculum change may be one possible answer to this: “I think one of the encouraging things about Project Maths is how it was developed and implemented. It's a big step in terms of change and maybe there are things that could be done better, but I like that Project Maths started with a pilot and developed through that. That means it's not just the NCCA designing curriculum and eventually passing it through all the systems. There is the potential to go back and forward and to have real teachers feed into the real process. I think that's the future – a real pilot in which you invest highly and get real learning from it as you go”.

The most significant curriculum change coming down the line is, of course, the recently announced changes at junior cycle. As part of the new system, students entering junior cycle from 2014 will be limited to just eight exam subjects. This will be a challenge for science and technology uptake, says Peter, as will any increase in pupil-teacher ratio, which could result in key subjects like physics being pushed to the edge. But, he says, these threats make DSE's work vital: “That's why it is important that students get an early understanding of what studying STEM is all about, both in terms of career prospects and further study. There are challenges in the system, and I am sure that there will be changes in the numbers doing science subjects, but we need to make sure that we do our best to encourage the people who are the right fit for them”.

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Just as all students need some science, technology and maths skills, those subjects must be backed up by a holistic education.

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### The maths issue

Despite the prevailing impression, Ireland is actually very successful in terms of the number of scientists we produce. The problem is that there is an imbalance in that we produce far more scientists than engineers – in most countries the ratio is reversed. The barrier, Peter suggests, may rest in higher level mathematics: “Whatever the opinions out there, one of the things that is true is it does take extra time, no matter what the educational issues. One of the problems I think is there is too much content. I think there should be more focus on process, which I think Project Maths does, and leave some of the content to third level ... if you know how to learn, that's the important part.”

### Investing in education

Appreciation of the value of education is key, says Peter: “In my day, my grandmother would have said that the only way out of things is through education. I think we've lost that a little bit in Ireland ... I think our total gross expenditure – families, governments, philanthropy – has to increase with regard to education. I am aware of the constraints that are in the system but the percentage of spend on education, I suggest, might increase. I'm not just speaking about governmental spend, I mean everybody. We have to put a higher value on education as a society”.

### Importance of context

“If you're an employer and you want skilled employees, you have to become part of the system”, says Peter, “even by opening your doors so people can actually see what it's like to work with you ... if people see what an engineer does in terms of working on sites, design, travel, developing language skills – there are great opportunities ... What we want – working with our partners and in collaboration with industry – is to show students the context for study.”

# Organising students

MARTINA O'LEARY finds out about the ICTU's new YouthConnect programme, which is visiting second-level schools.



Ask any teenager about trade unions and they'll most likely stare at you blankly. Ask any trade unionist 'what's our biggest problem?' and, chances are, they'll tell you that we need to attract more young people into our ranks.

With minimum income protection under attack and youth unemployment soaring, connecting with a young workforce has never been more vital for trade unions. And vice versa. Now the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' (ICTU) YouthConnect project is taking trade unions and the world of work into classrooms across the country.

## What is YouthConnect?

YouthConnect is a student-focused resource pack, which aims to raise young people's awareness of the role and activities of Irish trade unions. It also promotes collective action and the value of participating in schools, communities, unions and other organisations.

The easy-to-use pack includes information for teachers, lesson plans, student information handouts and worksheets – all bound together with clear teaching and project objectives. Its five information-packed modules cover: the world of work; unions and solidarity; rights at work and school; globalisation; and, equality and inequality in society. Teachers can obtain two copies of the pack – one for teaching and one for the school library. A new website – [www.youth-connect.ie](http://www.youth-connect.ie) – is designed to work hand in hand with the pack, and contains news and information on the module themes, a section for teachers, an e-zine, and a platform for students to discuss and explore the issues that interest them most.

ICTU project co-ordinator Fiona Dunne says that eight out of ten kids have never heard of a union. "They don't know who we are. They don't know what unions do. If there's no family connection fewer and fewer young people are becoming union members. YouthConnect is about getting into schools and making young people aware of what we do."

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## YouthConnect promotes collective action and the value of participating in schools, communities, unions and other organisations.

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### Champions at defending rights

Initially funded by IMPACT's former Tax Officials Branch, and now supported by a number of unions, including the ASTI, the programme is being launched for the new school year. Fiona and her team are offering teachers an introductory session from one of the 15 'schools champions' – graduate teachers who are trained to present the resource pack to teachers and students – on how best to use it. So far, 100 schools have signed up for visits – a positive start towards the ICTU's ambition of reaching all 750 secondary schools over the next two years.

"Initially we planned to target transition year students. But a pilot project, consultation with teachers and engagement at the teacher unions' conferences made us realise that teachers in a wide range of subjects – business, economics, religious education, CSPE – could use this resource. They can use a complete module or just part of it. Either way, it will bring trade unions and the world of work into the education mainstream," says Fiona.

The YouthConnect project is working closely with the Irish Second-level Students' Union (ISSU), which is Ireland's representative body for second-level students. Both aim to encourage students to become more aware of their rights, and to assert those rights in school and the workplace. The ISSU has already established 40 school councils and hopes that exposure to YouthConnect will help to generate more. School visits are used to showcase the iConnect card, jointly developed by the ISSU and





## Feedback

Send feedback to  
[astirfeedback@asti.ie](mailto:astirfeedback@asti.ie).

YouthConnect, which entitles holders to a range of discounts.

Fiona and her team are buoyed by positive feedback from the pilot scheme, although it revealed that few students are aware of unions and what they do.

"In the pilot I was struck by the negative views that young people have. They think unions are all about strikes, giving out and negativity. They know nothing about the positive day-to-day stuff: helping people who have been unfairly fired, or are underpaid or bullied at work. That doesn't make the news so we need to explain that it's part of what it means to be a union member," says Fiona.

"My ambition is that this will be something that Congress continues to do so that young people leave school thinking it makes sense to join a union," she says.

### ISSU Committee

Diarmaid de Paor, ASTI Deputy General Secretary, represents the ASTI on the ISSU Monitoring and Advisory Committee.

### ICTU YouthConnect Committee

ASTI Deputy General Secretary Diarmaid de Paor, ASTI Honorary National Organiser Kieran Christie and ASTI Standing Committee representative Sean O'Neill represent the ASTI on the ICTU YouthConnect Committee.

For more information, contact Fiona Dunne at [Fiona.dunne@ictu.ie](mailto:Fiona.dunne@ictu.ie).

### Martina O'Leary

*Martina works for IMPACT's information office.*

## Students join forces with YouthConnect

"YouthConnect is about young people and their rights in the workplace. But it's also about gaining experience and knowledge for the future," says Leanne Caulfield, president of the Irish Second-level Students' Union (ISSU).

The national representative body for second-level students is assisting with the roll out of the YouthConnect programme, which it hopes will encourage active citizenship and help young people to become more aware of their rights. "YouthConnect will enable us to extend our reach into more schools and broaden our services to a wider number of students," says Leanne.

The ISSU wants to encourage the establishment of more student councils, which are officially encouraged under the 1998 Education Act to get second-level students discussing the issues that affect them in school.

The ISSU says it can help schools to set up democratic, student-led councils, which it says can help to create a better school atmosphere. "There's often a misconception that they just facilitate complaints and moaning. But that's not the case. If organised effectively, and resourced adequately, they can create a better and stronger working relationship between students, parents and teachers. It's co-operative – not us and them," says Leanne.

The councils also involve young people in problem solving and decision making from a young age. "Students are more willing to participate and do their best when they are treated like adults. They know people care about what they think and they get a say in the things that affect them. When they understand the reasoning behind things it reduces negativity and students can be more willing to work with school management," she says.

Student councils have clocked up a lot of achievements in schools where they are functioning, including the introduction of book rental schemes and healthy eating options in canteens. Leanne says participation in councils also improves students' skills in employment-friendly areas like decision making, public speaking and critical thinking, while giving them practical experience of organising meetings and events and reporting back.

Last year the ISSU hosted the sixth European student convention on behalf of the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions. Young people from across Europe assembled in Dublin to discuss a "healthy, safe, and sustainable school environment". Closer to home, the ISSU regularly hosts training sessions for student councils and facilitates student working groups. Its national student executive reviews policies and develops strategies on issues affecting young people.

ISSU is now receiving income from the iConnect card, which has been incorporated as part of the YouthConnect programme. A percentage of the profits generated from the €13 card, which doubles as an ID and discount card, is reinvested in support services for students. That's a real boost for an organisation run on a shoestring, albeit with some support from IMPACT and SIPTU.

# Reaching out to teachers in the developing world

Former ASTI President JACK KEANE gives an account of his Global Schoolroom experience.



The Global Schoolroom charity was set up by two ASTI members, Gwen Brennan and Garret Campbell, to promote the sharing of educational experience between communities worldwide to help eradicate poverty, promote economic development and build sustainable communities. The charity has its origins in a 2005 trip the two made to North East India, where they had gone to learn more about the challenges faced by teachers in that region, which is geographically, socially and philosophically separated from the rest of the country. What they found was that most teachers there had no formal training or were inadequately trained. Confidence was low among the more than 300 teachers they spoke to, and many of them felt unsupported by their schools. While much importance is placed on education in the region, it is badly resourced, teachers earn very little and staff morale is low and turnover high.

## Training teachers

With the aim of providing formal and accredited training for these teachers, Global Schoolroom now recruits teachers from Ireland each year to travel to India to act as tutors to local teachers who are studying for the Global Schoolroom Diploma, which is accredited by UCD. The Irish volunteers work in teams of three to four teachers in ten locations around North East India. They conduct four-week training sessions with local teachers, including two weeks of intensive workshops, providing

training in teaching methodologies, lesson planning, classroom management and educational psychology. The visiting teachers then join the local teachers in their schools, working with them to apply the techniques and methodologies developed together over the previous two weeks.

The Global Schoolroom Diploma in Education is a three-year programme, for which the teachers must also complete written assignments and assessments. In June of this year 100 Indian teachers received their diplomas at Global Schoolroom's first ever conferring ceremony.

## A visit to India

Earlier this year, I was invited by Global Schoolroom to make a presentation to the fourth national conference for teachers in Guwahti in North East India. While there I had the opportunity to spend a few days travelling around the Assam Province, visiting schools and seeing firsthand Global Schoolroom's efforts on the ground to improve education and lives.

While there I saw for the first time what real poverty is, and how difficult school conditions are. Children were taught in classrooms with up to 70 others in very cramped conditions, travelling there by dirt roads from homes that were shacks made of timber or reeds. They had few, if any, resources, shared textbooks and the curriculum leaves little room for child-centred activities.



**Tremendous work**

Over the last six years Global Schoolroom has done tremendous work in North East India addressing the shortcomings of teacher education. Over 230 schools, 555 teachers and 22,000 children have been part of Global Schoolroom. As Global Schoolroom CEO Garrett Campbell points out: “In this current climate of negativity and in the context of the teaching profession in Ireland, Global Schoolroom should be evidence enough to demonstrate that Irish teachers are as committed to education as they ever were and instil a similar degree of energy, enthusiasm and professionalism among their colleagues.”

I would wholeheartedly endorse the invaluable work done by Global Schoolroom and enthusiastically recommend participation. It currently costs approximately €3,000 to prepare and send a teacher from Ireland. Teachers will typically raise €2,000 while Global Schoolroom pays the

balance with the support of Cornmarket Financial Services and Irish Life. Looking to the future, Global Schoolroom has had numerous requests to expand their programme into regions adjoining those where it now operates. Their main aim at present is to work towards being in a position to enrol volunteer teachers from India who can go on to train their colleagues. The charity hopes to establish a local training programme for Indian tutors in Spring 2012, and by June 2014 they hope to see through the graduation of a minimum of 300 Indian teachers. Why not get involved in helping to make this goal a reality?

**Did you know?**

- Global Schoolroom is supported by the ASTI, TUI and INTO.
- Preparatory sessions and orientation courses are provided over six weekends before departure to India.
- The closing date for applications for this year’s Global Schoolroom is November 25. See [www.globalschoolroom.net](http://www.globalschoolroom.net) for more information.



**Jack Keane**

*Jack Keane is a former ASTI President.*

# Big Brother is watching!

*ASTIR* takes a look at the privacy issues surrounding the increasing use of CCTV and biometrics to monitor behaviour and attendance in schools.

Since as early as 2000, school students in the US have been able to borrow library books, pay for food and access vending machine treats simply by scanning their fingerprints. It may seem like a scene from a sci-fi movie, but in fact today an estimated one in seven UK schools uses similar systems and schools in Ireland are beginning to get in on the Big Brother act, using biometrics and CCTV to monitor attendance and behaviour. The use of CCTV in Irish schools came under particular scrutiny earlier this year when it was reported that a school had been ordered to remove cameras from school toilets after complaints from students to the Data Protection Commissioner.

## Role of the Commissioner

The Data Protection Commissioner is responsible for upholding the rights of individuals in relation to the Data Protection Acts, which safeguard the privacy of individuals with regard to personal data held on structured or searchable files. Data protection is about your fundamental right to privacy. Under data protection legislation, you have the right to access and correct data held about you, and those who keep data about you must comply with data protection principles.

As schools keep records containing the personal data of students and staff, they have an obligation to comply with the Data Protection Acts. The use of CCTV and biometrics also falls under the remit of the Commissioner, and schools must understand the implications of the Data Protection Acts in relation to this new technology as any contravention may result in action being taken against a school by the Data Protection Commissioner, or may expose the school to a claim for damages.

## CCTV

In relation to the use of CCTV in schools, the Data Protection Commissioner makes clear that cameras are not a substitute for supervision and must not be used for that purpose. Every camera in and around a school premises must be justified. The most recent Data Protection Commissioner's report shows that where schools had not developed policies to deal with data protection issues raised by CCTV, or where its use was not justified, they were ordered to switch off the system.

It is not just students whose privacy must be taken into account. In the most recent annual report, the Data Protection Commissioner reported that school staff members had complained about the use of CCTV to review their movements. In these cases the Commissioner found that, under the Data Protection Acts, staff monitoring via CCTV is rarely proportionate.





### Biometrics

The most frequent complaints to the Data Protection Commissioner relate to the use of biometric time and attendance systems in workplaces and schools. Biometrics operate by automatically identifying or verifying an individual based on physical characteristics such as their fingerprints, retina or body odour.

The advantages of a system that allows students to simply glance at a monitor or scan a finger to register their attendance are obvious. But while biometric monitoring might seem the perfect alternative to taking a roll and collating roll books, a balance must be struck between its advantages and the need to maintain privacy and uphold student rights. The Data Protection Commissioner has no simple 'yes-no' rule when it comes to the use of biometrics in schools. The agency advises that a biometric system is not necessary to meet the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, to register and monitor attendance, but that this does not rule out the use of such a system. According to the Commissioner, each situation must be examined in isolation and such a system could be implemented if it proves warranted.

Schools must, in the first instance, determine if there is a real need for the system, or whether less invasive alternatives could work instead.

Determining what is excessive will differ on a case by case basis, but considerations such as efficiency and reliability may be taken into account. Crucially, before implementing any biometric monitoring system, schools must have the informed consent of students and their parents. Students and parents must:

- receive detailed information about the processing of personal data;
- be told what the data will be used for and who has access to it; and,
- be given an assurance that their data will not be passed to a third party.

There is no obligation for any student or parent to agree to comply with the system; there must be an option to opt out and those who opt out must not be penalised.

### What can you do?

If you feel that your school is not complying with data protection legislation, you should report your concerns to school management as early as possible. If you feel that your privacy rights are being infringed, you can complain to the Data Protection Commissioner, who will investigate the matter and take whatever steps may be necessary to resolve it. For more information on privacy and data protection, see [www.dataprotection.ie](http://www.dataprotection.ie) or the data protection section of the DES website – [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie).

### Did you know ...

- The Data Protection Acts safeguard the privacy rights of individuals with regard to personal data relating to them held on computer or manual files, which are structured or searchable by reference to individuals.
- Under data protection legislation, you have the right to access and correct data held about you. This includes data held by your school and the Department of Education and Skills.
- Biometrics operate by automatically identifying or verifying an individual based on their physical characteristics, such as their fingerprints, retina or body odour.

# Teachers' health – education's wealth

ASTI member DEIRDRE MacDONALD discusses teachers' mental health in the 21st Century.



How are you today? Are you in a position to realise your abilities, to work productively and fruitfully, and to make a contribution to your school community? A positive state of well-being enables us to do these things. This is something that we inherently know, but is actually how mental health is defined by the World Health Organisation, and is recognised by the New Economic Foundation and the National Economic & Social Forum.

Why is mental health so important? What affects it? How do we protect and promote it? These are questions for all workplaces, but particularly for schools. The largest and most comprehensive research into occupational health carried out by four British universities found classroom teaching to be the most stressful occupation.

## A human right

Mental health is both a human right and a resource. Mental health is a most important, perhaps the most important, public health issue of our time. The idea that additional professional demands can incessantly be made on the teacher while continually improving performance is a complete

fantasy! What actually happens when this situation pertains is that the individual suffers deterioration in physical and mental health, and the school displays organisational symptoms such as poor morale, increased sick leave, and lost opportunities and efficiency, to name but a few.

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Teachers bring energy, wisdom, experience, knowledge and skill to school life and relationships, thereby enhancing the educational experience.

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## Impact on teachers

Research by Mental Health Ireland (2001) identified the following as primary stressors in the workplace: too much work; responsibility for others in the workplace; not having control over your work; and, poor communications. These are particularly relevant to the life of a practising

teacher in this era of ‘pennywise but pound foolish’ cutbacks, where lower costs are secured at the expense of teachers’ mental health. In educating the next generation, the life experiences of teachers are a huge additional resource. They bring energy, wisdom, experience, knowledge and skill to school life and relationships, thereby greatly enhancing the educational experience. The fact that teachers are not merely subject experts but whole people, with many facets to their lives, enhances their ability to understand and approach the myriad of personal problems that they encounter in their work with students. This work is often voluntary, but takes up an increasing proportion of their ever-diminishing personal time. However, while this element of professional life may bring a sense of fulfilment for the teacher, it frequently increases stress levels and puts significant pressure on teachers’ mental health. The non-acceptance by a school management of this fact exacerbates the situation for the individual and the organisation as a whole. Research has found that negative attitudes by management result in risks for employees in disclosing mental health difficulties.

### The school as workplace

A health-promoting school is one that recognises the school as a distinct workplace with divergent challenges and difficulties. Nowhere in ‘Charting our Education Future’ or any of the numerous education documents is there a discrete reference to, or recognition of, the school as a workplace. This is a blatant lack of acknowledgement of a most pertinent fact. However, this fact cannot be avoided under the Health, Safety and Welfare Act 2005. In terms of workplace hazards, by far the greatest hazard for teachers is stress. The figures on teacher retirements due to mental ill health from the Civil Service Occupational Health Department (46%) and the insurance industry/salary protection (43%) are evidence of this. It is worth remembering that these figures represent only those who are unable to continue their professional life. What of the teachers who are struggling on in their job with no support or even recognition of their situation? They can flourish and expand or deteriorate and decline depending on the conditions they work in.

Under the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004, there is an onus on employers to make reasonable accommodation for employees with mental ill health. Employers have a statutory obligation and a duty of care: (i) to protect employees from hazards that could lead to mental or physical ill health; and, (ii) to draw up a written assessment of all known hazards, including psychosocial hazards. The last comprehensive research into teacher stress was conducted 20 years ago. The world is a very different place now and nowhere more so than in education. The integration of students with special needs and students without adequate English, and the increase in family situations that negatively impact on classroom management are among the facts that make schools in Ireland almost unrecognisable from 20 years ago. Discipline, work overload, lack of consultation and communication, poorly motivated pupils, insufficient resources, feeling undervalued, poor morale and climate, change management, low levels of support and trying to maintain standards were the main causes of stress then. As a deceased colleague and past president of the ASTI, Tony Boland, used to say: “Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose” (the more things change, the more they stay the same). Indications are that these issues not only remain, but that they exist to a much greater extent today. Little has changed from the classroom teachers’ perspective to address these problems, despite the existence of a small rainforest of policies and up-to-date legislation.

## Under the Employment Equality Acts, there is an onus on employers to make reasonable accommodation for employees with mental ill health.

### The need for action

Promoting teachers’ mental health is not merely an option: it is an imperative! Mental health promotion comprises: education – raising awareness of mental health issues; prevention – implementing measures and strategies that support the mental health of the staff; and, protection – of vulnerable individuals. It is incumbent on the ASTI to prioritise mental health as an integral component in the protection of its members’ working conditions, to include mental health and well-being in all key policies, to put in place a safety, health and welfare committee, and to implement the recommendations of the Mental Health Promotion Workplace Network. Schools are great places for advocating equality and justice; thus, rationality dictates that well-being should be promoted and prioritised in all aspects of the school. This means fostering a workplace where you feel safe, have a feeling of support from peers and management, have access to practical supports, and believe that you can contribute to and influence the school organisation. Human resources are ‘core’ because they are essential to society and the market economy. There is no concrete recognition of the value of our work for society. At present, where everything is evaluated in monetary terms, no cost-benefit analysis has been attempted to capture what we really do in school. As Robert Kennedy said, speaking about growth: “GNP/GDP ... does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education ... it measures everything except that which makes life worthwhile”. It is time for us to do what we encourage our students to do. To stand up for our rights and maintain our well-being in order that we may experience a worthwhile life! So, how are you today?

Visit the ASTI website section on health and safety for more on this issue – [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

All Department-paid teachers have access to an employee assistance service. This confidential service provides telephone and direct one-to-one counselling for teachers. It is available 24/7 on 1850 411057.



**Deirdre MacDonald**

*Deirdre teaches in CBS Wexford Town and holds an MA in Health Promotion specialising in the area of mental health.*



## Ready to retire?

ASTIR answers your questions on retirement, pensions and the February 2012 deadline.

### **What does the February 29, 2012, deadline mean for my pension?** *Retiring on or before February 2012*

Under the terms of the Croke Park Agreement, teachers who retire on or before February 29, 2012, will have their pension and lump sum calculated on 'pre-cut' salary – the salary they were earning before the pay cut imposed in January 2010 (the scale that came in on September 1, 2008). On retirement, their fortnightly pension payments will be subject to the cut, averaging 4%, imposed on all public service pensions in Budget 2011. However, the lump sum will be unaffected.

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**The Department of Education and Skills has informed the ASTI that there will be no extension to the February 29 deadline.**

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### *Retiring after February 2012*

Those retiring after February 29, 2012, will have their pensions and lump sums calculated on the basis of post-cut salary – actual salary at retirement. Their fortnightly pensions will therefore not be subject to the 4% cut.

### *Will the February 29 deadline be extended?*

The Department of Education and Skills has informed the ASTI that there will be no extension to the February 29 deadline. The ASTI had made representations to the Minister for Education and Skills stating that the number of mid-year retirements could cause chaos in schools. However, the Department of Education and Skills has confirmed that there will be no extension to the deadline date. However, retiring teachers may be re-employed in certain circumstances.

### **What notice am I required to give if I wish to retire?**

You must give notice to both your school and the Department of Education and Skills. As a teacher's contract is with their school, formal written notification of your intention to retire should normally be given to the school at least three calendar months prior to retirement. Circular 0045/2011 requests that three months' notice be given to the Department of Education and Skills, otherwise pension and lump sum payments may be delayed.

### **Can I take up paid work after retirement?**

You are not prohibited from taking up paid work after retirement. Unless your pension was awarded under the Early Retirement Scheme, or you retired on the grounds of ill health, generally, your pension can continue



unless the employment is in the education sector of the public service – this includes teaching work, lecturing work and State Exams work. Where the employment undertaken is in the education sector of the public service, the teacher’s pension may be reduced to ensure that the total of pay and pension does not exceed the current equivalent of the teacher’s pay on the date of retirement.

A teacher must inform the Department where he or she has retired on pension and returns to teach or to work in the wider public sector. Certain conditions apply to teachers retiring on or before February 29 who wish to see their exam students through to June – see [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

**The ASTI is considering challenging the new pension scheme, which will compel new teachers to pay more than they will get from it.**

From January 1, 2011, retired teachers who return to teaching work will be paid according to post-2011 entrant rates of pay, starting at point 1 of the scale, which is €27,814 plus qualification allowances.

**Will the new public service pension scheme affect me?**

The new public service pension scheme, announced by the Government in September, will only apply to those who join the pension scheme after the new scheme has been formally introduced. As yet, no date for the introduction of this scheme has been announced.

The ASTI is considering challenging the legality of the new pension scheme, which, according to independent analysis, will compel new teachers entering the scheme at the beginning of their career to pay more into the scheme than they will ever get out. The teacher unions are currently seeking a hearing before the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform on the matter.

For more information on calculating your pension benefits, see the ASTI website – [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie) – where you can also find information on methods of enhancing your pension benefits, including information on purchasing notional service, the Buy Back Scheme and AVCs.

The ASTI provides guidance to those teachers who are retiring or considering retirement. Call us on 01-604 0160 or email [info@asti.ie](mailto:info@asti.ie).

## Next summer, do something different

**Nurture Africa needs secondary school teachers to work on a 3-week or 5-week voluntary placement in Uganda, in July or August 2012. This is an opportunity for you to use your skills, share your knowledge and connect with Ugandan communities.**

**Help make a difference in the lives of vulnerable children.**

For further information please contact Miriam Lewis: **Call** 01 542 4178 **Text** 087 644 5617  
**Email** [miriam@nurtureafrica.ie](mailto:miriam@nurtureafrica.ie)

**[www.nurtureafrica.ie](http://www.nurtureafrica.ie)**



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# Scrúdú na hArdteiste Gaeilge

ASTI has received correspondence from members in relation to the Leaving Certificate oral Irish examination. ROBBIE CRONIN, ASTI representative on the NCCA Gaeilge Committee and Committee Chairperson, provides clarity on the issues.



Toisc gur tháinig an-chuid gearán isteach chugainn faoi líon na bpictiúr socraíodh an cheist a phlé agus a shoiléiriú ar phár.

Ar an gcéad dul síos bhí sé socraithe na teangacha go léir a chur ar aon bhonn go dtí gur eisigh an Roinn an ciorclán i 2007 faoi 40% ag dul don scrúdú cainte. Roimh sin bhí an-chuid oibre déanta ag pairtnéirí an Oideachais faoi chúram an CNCM. Ach le cinneadh an Aire 40% a thabhairt isteach do scrúdu béil na Gaeilge, d'athraigh gach rud. Nuair a deineadh an cinneadh sin chuir an ASTI in iúl ag Coiste Gaeilge an CNCM nach rabhamar i bhfábhar an athraithe ina iomlan. Dúramar gur cheart 17% a choimeád don Chluastuisceant mar sin an gné is éasca do dhaltai an Ghnáthleibhéil.

Is scil ginchumas an chaint agus scil gabhchumas an chluastuisceant. Sin an fáth go n-oireann breis marcanna do ghné na cluastuisceana do dhaltai Gnáthleibhéil. Léirigh ionadaithe na gCeardchumann a míshastacht sna gnéithe seo a leanas:

## Níl idirdhealú i gceist sa Ghaeilge

Tá idirdhealú sna teangacha eile. Ciallaíonn sin go dtugtar aitheantas do scoláirí an Ghnáthleibhéil trí chóras idirdhealaithe/differentiated. Níl a leithéid de chóras ann don Ghaeilge. Dar liom, is córas seafóideach agus míchothrom é sin. Ciallaíonn sé go ndéanann an dalta Ardleibhéil an scrúdú ceanann céanna leis an dalta Gnáthleibhéil.

Anois dírimís ar an tsraith pictiúr. Sa scrúdú: cainte nua beidh trí ghné á scrúdú. Án a léamh, scéal bunaithe ar shraith pictiúr agus comhrá. Ní fios cé a bheartaigh ar 20 sraith a eisiúnint. An tuairim atá ann ná gur ardaíodh raic chomh mór sin faoi chaighdeán na Gaeilge a bheith á íslíú

sa chóras nua, agus na gearain a thainig isteach ó Mheitheal na Gaeilge, gur beartaíodh dúshlán níos géire a chur sa scrúdú beil. Arís d'ardaigh ionadaithe an Cheardchumainn seo a míshuaimhneas faoi mhíchothromaíocht a bheith sa Ghaeilge nach raibh ann sna teangacha eile. Ní dheanann lucht na Spainnise ach cúig rólspaoi, mar an gcéanna leis an nGearmainis agus an Iodáilis. Tuige, mar sin, a iarrtar ar dhaltai na Gaeilge 20 sraith pictiúr a ullmhú? An freagra dar liom ná seancheist T1 agus T2. Aithníonn an ASTI go bhfuil leatrom á dhéanamh ar dhaltai an Ghnáthleibhéil ach ní chiallaíonn sin gur fhanamar inár dtost.

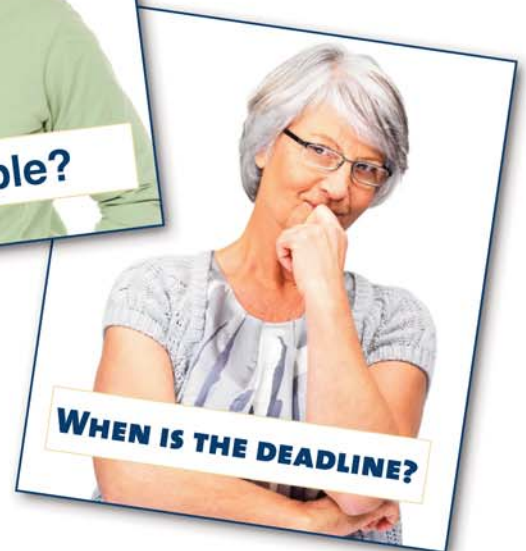
Ní dócha go bhfuil éinne ann ar an gCoiste nar aithin na deacrachtaí agus na laigeachtaí a ghabhann leis an gcóras nua. Molaimid do mhúinteoirí na Gaeilge a t-eolas a sacaipheadh go bhfuil éagóir á déanamh ar dhaltai Gnáthleibheil.

Ceist eile nach bhfuilimid sásta fúithi ná na Páipéir Shamplacha atá ar shuíomh an Choimisiúin. Socraíodh nach mbeadh litir sa scrúdú scríofa ach má fheachann tú ar an bPáipéar Samplach don Ghnáthleibheal tá litir le scríobh ann. Comhrá ar shuíomh sóisialta, tasc eile a bhí le déanamh. Ach comhrá a iarrtar sa Pháipéar Samplach. Cé air go bhfuil an míleán?

## Robbie Cronin

*Robbie teaches Irish in Marian College, Dublin.*

# Make the most of your TAX FREE CASH before you retire



As an ASTI member, if you are missing years of service, you can top up your tax free lump sum through a 'last minute' AVC. You can then claim back full tax relief at retirement\*.

**Example:**  
Susan had a tax free lump sum shortfall of €10,000\*\*. She managed to save €4,316 by investing €10,526 in her 'last minute' AVC.

Gross payment to 'last minute' AVC (including charges)	€10,526
Claimed back tax relief @ 41%***	€4,316
<b>Actual cost to Susan</b>	<b>€6,210</b>

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# ASTI priorities for educational reform

The ASTI works to represent teachers and protect standards in relation to education reform. *ASTIR* looks at current issues of concern in this area.

Find out more

Want to know more about our policies?

T: 1850-418400

E: [info@asti.ie](mailto:info@asti.ie)

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



## Junior cycle reform

The ASTI is in favour of reform of the junior cycle, but insists that any educational reform must be accompanied by careful consideration and planning. The ASTI will continue to insist that, in examining the NCCA proposals for Junior Cert reform, the Minister gives due consideration to other significant concerns of teachers, for example that the reform be accompanied by necessary investment in planning, resources and teacher professional development.

## Assessment

In any reform of assessment procedures, the ASTI will strongly defend its policy that teachers should not assess their own students for the purposes of certification in the State exams.

This policy is based on the principle that the State-certified examination system should be valid, objective and equitable. While there is merit in using a variety of techniques of assessment to evaluate students' skills and knowledge, these techniques must involve external setting of questions, external administration and external marking, in order that they are perceived as totally objective and impartial.

## The focus on STEM subjects

Science and maths education are a vital dimension of the holistic education that second-level schools aim to provide, and are central to the development of economic growth and employment opportunities in the country.

Revised senior cycle science syllabi are currently being developed. In contributing to the consultation process on science curriculum development, the ASTI has highlighted that additional resources and smaller class sizes are required to support effective learning, particularly for practical work and task-based learning.

The recent spotlight on the allocation of 'out of field' teachers to teach maths gives the ASTI the opportunity to address serious staffing issues in schools.

The ASTI believes that the allocation mechanism of teachers to schools requires examination and that the recruitment process to the PGDE must be more responsive to clearly identified areas of teacher shortages. In addition, teachers must be provided with realistic opportunities to continually develop their skills.

The ASTI has discussed this issue with the Minister of State with responsibility for Research and Innovation, Sean Sherlock TD.

## Literacy and numeracy

The Minister for Education and Skills published a wide-ranging literacy and numeracy strategy in July. The ASTI insists that the implementation of this strategy take into account the cutbacks that have taken place in education and their impact on the work of schools. Class size, for example, is a huge factor in standards, especially in mixed ability classes. Since the increase in pupil-teacher ratio, class sizes have increased and many schools have had to amalgamate levels of ability and year groups. Additional interventions for the marginalised and educationally disadvantaged must also be provided.

The current arrangements for oral and aural examinations in modern languages at Leaving Cert level include a robust national standards system, similar to that of written exams. No such arrangements exist in relation to optional oral and aural exams in Irish at Junior Cert level. For that reason, ASTI policy is that members should not engage in ad-hoc arrangements for Junior Cert orals in Gaeilge.

The ASTI Education Committee advises on ongoing educational policy developments and the concerns of teachers in relation to curriculum and assessment. Find out more at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

# It's your union: structure of the ASTI

New to the ASTI? Or maybe you're an existing member who wants to know more about how your union works.



**what branch am I in?**  
A map of branches is available on the ASTI website where you can also find contact details for your branch officers. Get in touch to find out about your next meeting, or to suggest agenda items.

## Branches

The ASTI is organised into 56 branches. Each of the 18,000 members belongs to one of these branches. Branches are locally organised and usually meet each month. Each branch elects a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Equality Officer and Branch Organiser.

## What branch am I in?

A map of branches is available on the ASTI website where you can also find contact details for your branch officers. Get in touch to find out about your next meeting, or to suggest agenda items.

## Central Executive Council

Each branch elects representatives to ASTI Central Executive Council (CEC), which is the governing body of the union and meets at least twice a year to decide on ASTI policy and actions.

## Who are my reps?

You can find the names of your CEC reps on the branch section of the ASTI website or in the ASTI diary.

## Standing Committee

Each branch is allied to one of 18 regions. Each region elects one representative to Standing Committee, which meets on a monthly basis. Standing Committee acts as the day-to-day executive of the Association.

## Who can I contact?

Standing Committee contact details are available on the ASTI website and are provided each year in the ASTI Diary.

## Head Office

ASTI Head Office takes care of the day-to-day business of the ASTI, as advised by Standing Committee and CEC. The General Secretary and Head Office staff provide a wide range of services, advice and representation for ASTI members. Each school is assigned to a specific official for the purposes of advice and representation.

## Who can help me?

You can call or email ASTI Head Office in relation to any query you have about your job or profession. It is important to provide your full name and school when you contact Head Office. These details will be kept private, as will any issue you discuss. Call 1850-418 400, or Email: [info@asti.ie](mailto:info@asti.ie).

**who can help me?**  
You can call or email ASTI Head Office in relation to any query you have about your job or profession. Call 1850-418 400, or Email: [info@asti.ie](mailto:info@asti.ie).

Find out more about the structure of the ASTI on the ASTI website – [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

# Keep up connections

Do you want to keep in contact with retired teacher colleagues after retirement?

The RSTA offers you the opportunity to keep in contact with retired teaching colleagues. We have 16 branches that organise their own social events, trips, tours and adventures through which you can keep in touch with old friends and meet new ones.

At a national level, the RSTA seeks to promote the welfare of retired secondary teachers. It is not a trade union. It does not have a negotiating licence. It is independent of the ASTI, although many RSTA members are emeritus members of the ASTI. The RSTA is affiliated to the Irish Senior Citizens' Parliament, the Retired Workers' Committee of the ICTU, the National Federation of Pensioners' Associations and Older and Bolder. Our annual subscription is just €24 per year, of which €16 goes back to the branch for their use.

RSTA contact details: [www.rsta-ireland.com](http://www.rsta-ireland.com)

Secretary: Seán Fallon, 2 Killakee Walk, Firhouse, Dublin 24.

Email: [fallonsfamily@eircom.net](mailto:fallonsfamily@eircom.net)

Tel: 01-451 3314

Mob: 086-849 6460

If you are retiring this year and would like to join the RSTA, please complete the membership application form on this page and return it to:

Mrs Muriel McNicholas,

Cordarragh, Kiltimagh,

Co. Mayo

## Retired Secondary Teachers' Association

[www.rsta-ireland.com](http://www.rsta-ireland.com)

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

RSTA Branch: \_\_\_\_\_ See \* below for list of branches.

Annual subscription €24. Subscription payment options:

Deduction from pension  Direct debit  Online bank transfer

Cheque  Cheques should be made payable to "RSTA"

**Members are encouraged to pay by deduction from pension, where possible, to keep administration and banking costs to a minimum.**

#### Mandate for deduction of annual subscription from pension

I hereby authorise the Retired Teachers' Payroll Division of the Department of Education to make a deduction directly from my pension of the annual subscription as notified to it by the Retired Secondary Teachers' Association on my behalf. I understand and agree that the Retired Secondary Teachers' Association has the right to alter the rate of subscription from time to time and to advise the Department of the changed rate.

Pension Payroll No: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return the completed application to:** Mrs Muriel McNicholas, RSTA Hon. National Treasurer, Cordarragh, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo.

\*RSTA Branches: Cork, Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kerry, Kildare, Kilkenny, Limerick, Mayo, Midland, North-East, Sligo, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow.

## Chronic conditions resource pack

A new resource pack to aid teachers in supporting students with a chronic condition during school hours was launched in September. The pack was prepared by four Irish charities – the Asthma Society of Ireland, Diabetes Ireland, Brainwave – The Irish Epilepsy Association, and Anaphylaxis Ireland. It contains, among other things, an emergency action plan on each condition, and guidance on safe storage and disposal of medication, which will help schools. The pack was sent to schools nationwide in September. For more information, call Diabetes Ireland on 1850 909 909.

## School travel toolkit

The National Transport Authority, in conjunction with An Taisce Green-Schools, has published a 'Toolkit for School Travel'. This toolkit is aimed at schools who wish to promote ways of reducing car use on the trip to and from school, and to reduce the impact of traffic on the community around the school. The toolkit can be downloaded from [www.nationaltransport.ie](http://www.nationaltransport.ie).

## ASTI member's Wilde biography

ASTI member and English teacher Gerard Hanberry's biography of Oscar Wilde's family was launched in September. This epic family saga is set against a background of rebellion and famine, and contains new revelations about Oscar's time in prison, his father's cover-up of his illegitimate daughters' deaths, and Oscar's mother's dire poverty before her death. *More Lives Than One* is available in bookshops and from <http://www.collinspress.ie>.



## The Crocus Project

The Crocus Project is a perennial activity for pupils aged 11 years and upwards. Holocaust Education Trust Ireland provides schools with yellow crocus bulbs to plant in memory of the children who died during the Holocaust. The Trust makes available guidelines and information, which may be of assistance to teachers during this activity. These resources complement existing material on racism and interculturalism. For more, see <http://www.hetireland.org>.

## Mediation training

The Drumcondra Education Centre is running an accredited Mediation Skills Training Programme, unique to the education sector, from January 2012. The programme will feature a wide range of skills learning and integrated practice in the art of conflict resolution. It is accredited by the Mediators Institute of Ireland (MII) and will be delivered as a blended learning model featuring face-to-face and online learning modules. For more information, Tel: 01-857 6400, or Email: [CRE@ecdrumcondra.ie](mailto:CRE@ecdrumcondra.ie).

## Junk Kouture

Junk Kouture is a competition challenging second-level students to rework rubbish and other already used materials and craft them into high-end couture fashion. The winning school will receive €2,500 in prize money, with the winning team receiving €500, IT equipment to the value of €1,000 and a place on a weeklong fashion design course at the Grafton Academy in Dublin. Students must submit their entry online at [www.junkkouture.com](http://www.junkkouture.com) by January 31, 2012.



### Online Certificate/Diploma in Special and Inclusive Education

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

**Commencing: January 2012**  
**Closing date for applications - 14th December 2011**  
**Late applications may be accepted**  
**Enrol now!**

- ★ Open to all qualified teachers and other graduates
- ★ Option to take individual modules
- ★ Study around your existing schedule
- ★ Individual support from expert tutors
- ★ Live online classroom sessions
- ★ Advance your skills and enhance your career

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

For further information & application forms contact  
 Admissions Office, St. Patrick's College on (01) 8842025  
 Email: [admissions.office@spd.dcu.ie](mailto:admissions.office@spd.dcu.ie) or log on to [www.spd.dcu.ie](http://www.spd.dcu.ie)  
 Information also available from ICEP Europe on (01) 6510618  
 Email: [info@icepe.eu](mailto:info@icepe.eu) or log on to [www.icepe.eu](http://www.icepe.eu)



## Show Racism the Red Card



Teachers are invited to register online and be part of the 2012 Show Racism the Red Card Anti-Racism Creative Competition. On registration, you will be sent a free anti-racism

DVD education pack featuring top stars of Irish sport, as well as young people giving their views and experiences on racism in Ireland. Once the young people have watched the DVD, they are challenged to create their own piece using written, visual and audiovisual means to address the themes of racism and integration. You can register until the end of February 2012. See [www.theredcard.ie](http://www.theredcard.ie) for more information.

## Music competition

A new music competition offers schools the chance to win up to €3,000 in music vouchers and the opportunity to perform in the National Concert Hall. For more information see [www.waltons.ie](http://www.waltons.ie) or [www.rte.ie/lyricfm](http://www.rte.ie/lyricfm).

## Information booklet for parents of children with SEN

A new information booklet for parents of children with special educational needs offers information on the full range of educational supports available in schools for children with special educational needs. It can be downloaded from [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie).

## Volunteer in Uganda

### CEDF

The Children's Educational Development Fund (CEDF) is a non-profit organisation founded in 2007 to provide support to disadvantaged and vulnerable young people and their communities in Uganda. The CEDF is looking for teachers to volunteer for their Teachers Build Together Week over the Easter Break, and their Teachers' Summer Programme. For more information log on to <http://cedf.ie>.

### Nurture Africa

Could you offer three or five weeks in July or August 2012 to put your skills to good use in Uganda and make a difference in the lives of vulnerable children? Nurture Africa is looking for second-level teachers to teach in partner schools or to work in community outreach or construction. For more information see [www.nurtureafrica.ie](http://www.nurtureafrica.ie).

## SciFest

SciFest is a series of one-day science fairs funded by Intel Ireland and Discover Science and Engineering as project partners, and hosted nationwide by the institutes of technology. Each SciFest fair includes a competition and exhibition of projects, a selection of science talks, science demonstrations in the college laboratories and a prize-giving ceremony. The closing date for receipt of entries to SciFest@College 2012 is March 2. Teachers and students should consult the project website – [www.scifest.ie](http://www.scifest.ie) – regularly for further information and updates.

## Space programme

Astronomy Ireland is piloting a new secondary schools astronomy programme in the Dublin area. The programme complements the goals of Discover Science and Engineering in promoting the relevance of STEM subjects in everyday lives. Astronomy Ireland's education officer will give presentations to students and provide educational DVDs and teaching resources. For booking enquiries or to request an information pack contact Cliona, Tel: 01-890 1111, or Email: [cliona@astronomy.ie](mailto:cliona@astronomy.ie).

## Leaving Certificate Examinations

Appointment of examiners

Application forms for the following positions are available on the website – [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie):

- examiner in oral tests at the Leaving Certificate examinations; and,
- examiner in practical/project tests at the Certificate examinations.

The closing date for applications is Friday December 2, 2011.



### Link invites applications for its 2012 Global Teachers Programme

- Work in an African school
- Share skills
- Have the experience of a lifetime

### Start a School Partnership with Africa today!

- Themed curricular learning materials provided
- School visits and ongoing support from dedicated staff

For more information, please visit [www.lcd.ie](http://www.lcd.ie); email [info@lcd.ie](mailto:info@lcd.ie); or phone 01 2841414.

Charity number: 17232



## Oliver McDermott – remembering a beloved teacher

As December approaches, we remember with great sadness the passing of a highly esteemed and much loved teacher – Oliver McDermott. Oliver was diagnosed with cancer in summer 2009 and faced his final illness and treatment with enormous courage and dignity. He had a very brief respite, which was celebrated in true Oliver style, but alas, the cancer returned and he died prematurely on December 12, 2010. Many words spring to mind when one thinks of Oliver, but one always emerges to the forefront, and that is the word passion.

Other people may have interests, but Oliver had passions! Education, music, opera, literature, drama, friendship, collegiality, the ASTI; these were all Oliver's passions.

Born in Carlow town in 1947, Oliver attended St Joseph's Primary school and CBS Primary School. He then went as a boarder to St Mary's College, Knockbeg. It was there, under the influence of Father Shine, that his lifelong love of music and drama was nurtured. In the last years of his life, his love of Wagner's music in particular led him to visit cities in Europe and America. Oliver studied for over six years at St Patrick's College, Maynooth, graduating with a BA in English and Philosophy and a Bachelor of Divinity. He subsequently began his teaching career in 1971 in Holy Family Secondary School, Newbridge, where he remained until his retirement in 2007.

Throughout his 36-year teaching career, Oliver was a respected and much admired teacher of religion, music and English. Past pupils fondly remember Mr McDermott's inspired teaching of the Shakespearean tragedies and his enthralling re-enactments of the great soliloquies from *Macbeth*, *King Lear* and *Hamlet*. In the classroom he cajoled, entertained and motivated students from their first days right through to their Leaving Certificate.

Oliver held a number of posts, including co-ordination of Transition Year, LCVP, Repeat Leaving Certificate and the school plan. He was also a teacher representative on the Board of Management. On the stage, for generations of Holy Family students, the highlight of their school experience was their involvement in one of Mr McDermott's school musicals. Oliver determinedly held to the belief that as many girls as possible should actively participate in, and experience, the floodlit moment. Many past pupils recall, with delight and pride, wonderful nights in the school hall as Mr McDermott accompanied a cast of 'hundreds' as they burst onto the stage in dance and song in *My Fair Lady*, *Oklahoma*, *Westside Story* and *Fiddler on the Roof*.

In the staffroom Oliver was ever responsive to the needs and welfare of his colleagues. He had a big heart and a great sense of responsibility.



*Oliver McDermott was presented with a Thomas MacDonagh Medal in recognition of his service to the ASTI.*

He was always ready to give sound advice and kind support. Appreciating the need of his colleagues for relaxation and entertainment, he regularly organised outings to various plays and music events. Oliver's dedication to education went beyond the school. As a staunch trade unionist, he was deeply committed to the ASTI. Throughout his long career, he represented teachers as Kildare branch officer, on CEC and Standing Committee. He particularly enjoyed annual convention and Kildare delegates could rely on him for advice on correct procedures, and recommendations on candidates for election. At the 2007 Convention, Oliver made a groundbreaking speech as he presented a motion on equality legislation. Those present remember this speech as being powerful, thought-provoking, courageous and heartfelt, informed by his life experience. He was the first chairperson of the ASTI branch of the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN). Oliver's distinguished service to the ASTI was acknowledged when he was awarded the Thomas MacDonagh medal. He was very pleased to receive this acknowledgement and he proudly showed off his medal on a visit to Holy Family

staffroom! He has, indeed, left a legacy of respect for, and active involvement in, the ASTI in Holy Family.

Oliver retired in 2007 but, true to form, he did not go quietly but with aplomb. There were three school functions and a tree planting ceremony held to mark his retirement! On retirement, he pursued his love of travel, accompanied by his partner Dermot, and had completed one year of a Master's Degree in Music at Queen's University Belfast before illness struck.

Oliver would have especially appreciated the presence of many ASTI colleagues at his funeral. Among them were the then President of the ASTI Jack Keane, former ASTI presidents, and our current President Brendan Broderick.

Oliver will always be remembered for his integrity, principles, empathy and kindness, his sense of humour, his *joie de vivre* and his high drama. His passing has left a huge void in the lives of those who knew and loved him. A fitting tribute was paid to him by Sr Catherine Moran, founding principal of Holy Family Secondary School, when she considered that Oliver was a man who took Polonius's advice: "This above all: to thine own self be true". Indeed, Oliver McDermott was a man who was ever true to himself.

The staff of Holy Family Secondary School, Newbridge.

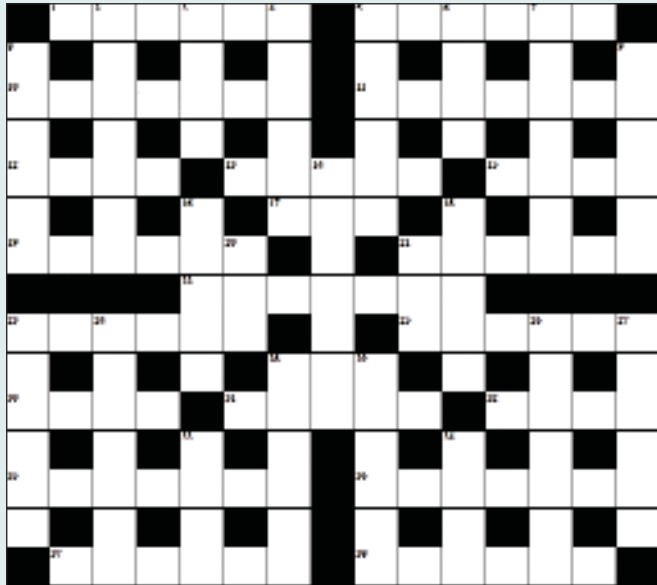


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ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 1105

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. 1105, Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, December 2, 2011

CLUES ACROSS:

- 1 & 16 DOWN: Counting the hours in Croke Park! (6,5)
- 5 This aptly named soccer player often has to do this (6)
- 10 This Abbey is home to the Crawley family (7)
- 11 Assign great social importance with this animal (7)
- 12 Lotto mentality has the prophetic sign (4)
- 13 Makes awards at levels 1-6 of the National Framework of Qualifications (5)
- 15 Nags could conceal an unexpected difficulty (4)
- 17 In short, current sponsor for Rugby Six Nations (3)
- 19 See the extreme agitation (6)
- 21 Nearer to the breadwinner (6)
- 22 Pragmatism for a smiler (7)
- 23 Mel and Ena together could provide a glossy finish (6)
- 25 Goddess of the dawn (6)
- 28 The new version focuses on Management, Leadership and Learning (3)
- 30 Cup bearer to the gods (4)
- 31 Liars' reprimands (5)
- 32 It's aimed at delivering equality of opportunity in schools (4)
- 35 20th century French painter, leader of the Fauvist movement (7)
- 36 Where you might stay in continental Europe if you retired before end of February 2012! (7)
- 37 Sacred hymns (6)
- 38 Take by assault (6)

CLUES DOWN:

- 2 Virtual reality tracking system used in tennis, for instance (7)
- 3 Swiss hotelier, who created a chain of elegant restaurants (4)
- 4 "But soft, what light through ... window breaks?" (Shakespeare) (6)
- 5 In her time this opera singer was hailed as La Divina (6)
- 6 Wind instrument (4)
- 7 A roll or knot of hair worn at the back of the head (7)
- 8 Offensive (6)
- 9 American folk singer and songwriter noted for his protest songs, e.g., "We shall overcome" (6)
- 14 Georgian capital (7)
- 16 See 1 across
- 18 French writer in an absurd world! (5)
- 20 Feel the freshwater fish (3)
- 21 In short the European Space Agency or the Equal Status Act (3)
- 23 Disinter (6)
- 24 This shrub sometimes is called the mayflower (7)
- 26 Gap or aperture (7)
- 27 Agree or accede (6)
- 28 Saw red in hip boots (6)
- 29 Slip away in a sleep (6)
- 33 This scheme promotes partnership between home, school and community (4)
- 34 There could be a cold one coming up! (4)

Solution to ASTIR Crossword No. 1104

Across	Down
1. Children First	2. Headier
10. Italian	3. Lair
11. Niagara	4. Rancid
12. Ruin	5. Nantes
13. Wides	6. Imam
15. Dish	7. Swahili
17. DES	8. Micro-blogging
19. Byroad	9. Cash shortfall
21. Oldish	14. Desplat
22. Torpedo	16. Patsy
23. Onrush	18. Cloud
25. Duffer	20. Doh
27. SAE	21. Odd
29. Gash	24. Rossini
30. Get-up	26. Frasier
31. Half	27. Senile
34. Nairobi	28. Eureka
35. Ezekiel	32. Wool
36. Lillie Langtry	33. Beag

Congratulations

to the winner of Crossword No. 1104: Tracey Murray, St Mary's CBS, Millpark Road, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford. Enniscorthy Branch

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