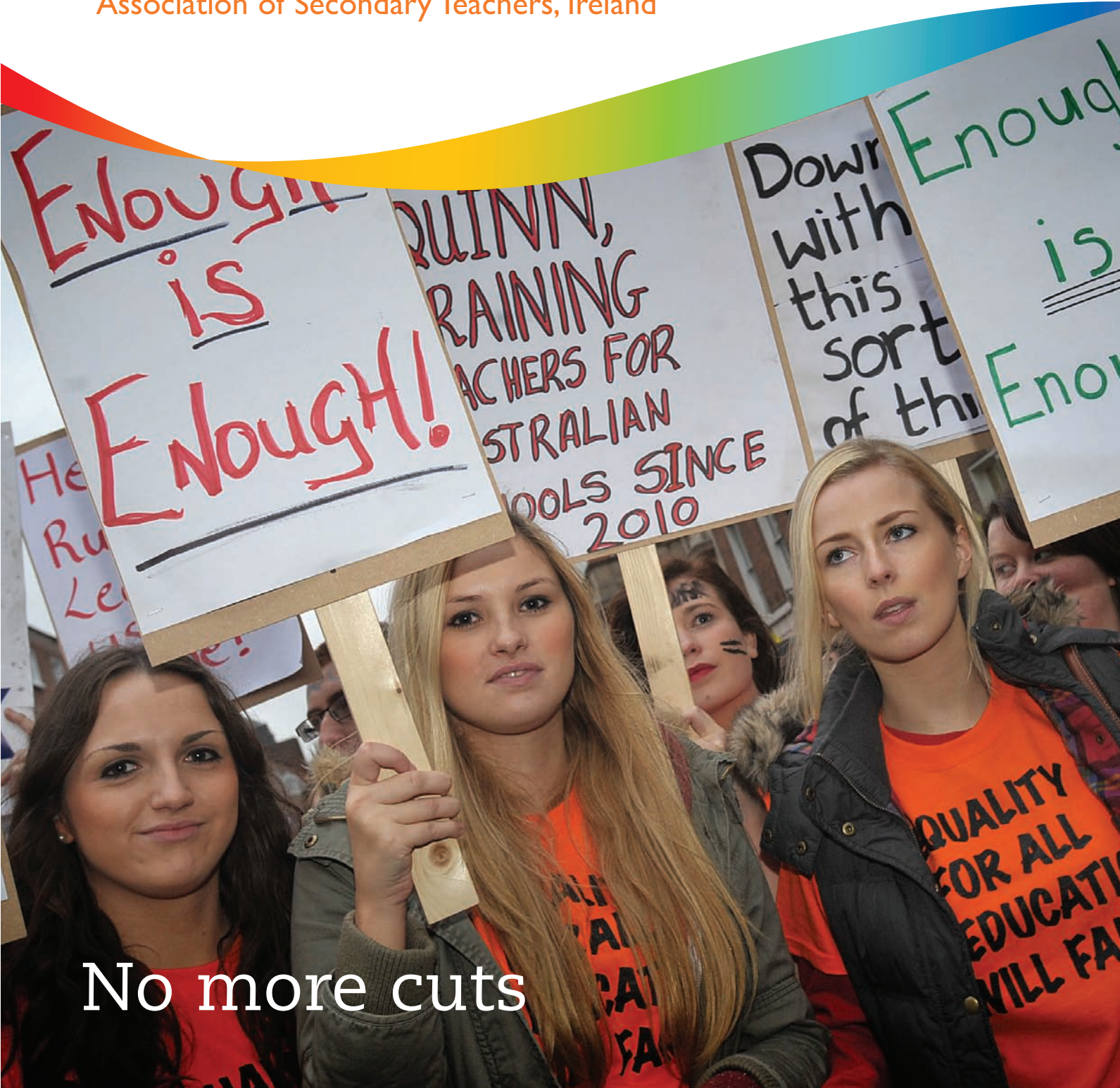


# ASTIR

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland



No more cuts

ASTI junior cycle  
consultation

Pre-Budget protest

Project Maths



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Cover image: Hundreds of young teachers joined the teacher union protest rally on October 24.  
Photo credit: Tommy Clancy

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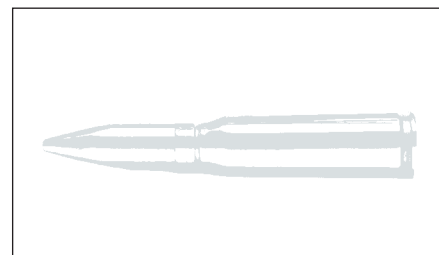
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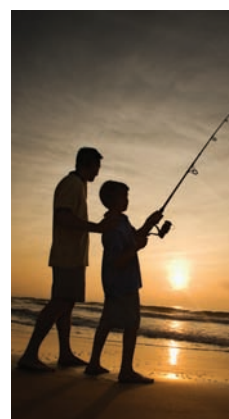
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# Reflections

As we approach the end of another year of austerity, it is an opportune time to reflect on what is happening in education and to our profession. Once more teachers are being asked to take on changes in their working conditions without proper consultation or any consideration of the effects on their health and wellbeing. The ongoing policy of austerity and the continuing budget cuts in education, together with the persistent attacks on the public sector and trade unions, make this a difficult time for all trade unions, and particularly the teaching unions.

## Junior cycle framework

The announcement by the Minister for Education and Skills in October concerning changes to the junior cycle, and the manner of that announcement, showed little regard for teachers' views, and was seen as an insult to our profession. Some of the changes proposed were developed by the Minister without any consultation with the real experts on second-level education: the classroom teachers. The ASTI is now in the process of informing and consulting you on your opinions. We ask that the Minister listens to our views before he proceeds any further. Many other changes have been imposed on teachers lately. School self-evaluation, for example, will no doubt add greatly to the workload of all teachers. How and when will a busy school find the time to do it? When will the CPD be given? Will it be funded properly? We did not become teachers to continually tick boxes and fill out forms; teachers need all their energies to devote to their students in the classroom. Irish second-level teachers come out well above the OECD average in terms of time spent in the classroom. We need adequate time for essential non-classroom work such as planning, liaising with colleagues and keeping up to date with subjects and new teaching and learning methodologies. It is unfair and damaging to seek to divert teachers' energies into bureaucratic administration and elaborate form-filling exercises at the expense of educational work. The Minister needs to step back and reflect before untold damage is done to our profession and to education.

## New teachers

The treatment of NQTs is a matter that must be dealt with as a priority. The restoration of a single basic scale is a fundamental policy of the ASTI. The policy of multi-salary scales is not only unjust and unfair, but will cause untold damage to education. Many young teachers attended the recent rally in Dublin and the great shame is that so many of them cannot see a future for themselves in Irish education. The classrooms of Croydon and Canberra will benefit from our brightest and best. This is a shocking indictment of this and previous governments. It must be stopped.



**Gerry Breslin**  
ASTI President

# Fair pay

On a cold afternoon in October a young second-level teacher and ASTI member, Yvonne Rossitter, addressed thousands of teachers at a rally outside Dáil Éireann organised by the teacher unions. A so-called 'new entrant to teaching', Yvonne is on a different pay scale to the teachers she works alongside. She receives no qualification allowances. Yet, this temporary teacher describes herself as lucky; many of her classmates are looking for work or have emigrated, others are surviving on substitute hours in the hope that something more substantial will turn up. "Think about your conditions when you were newly qualified and think about what is happening in our profession now," said Yvonne to the crowd. "Today I am asking you to reach out to newly qualified teachers in your staffroom. Ask them to get involved in the union. Without the unions we have no voice."

## Fair pay, security of tenure

The very issues that led to the foundation of the ASTI more than 100 years ago could not be more pertinent today; Thomas MacDonagh was himself a 'short-term' teacher and was outspoken on the issues of job security and a living wage for teachers. Over the past 10 decades, the ASTI has stood up on these issues again and again. History has shown us that while major advances can and have been made, protecting the rights of workers is a never-ending battle. The ASTI's key strength has always been unity. Fair pay and security of tenure have unified teachers of all ages and backgrounds since our foundation. We must reject attempts to cause rifts among members on the grounds of age, employment status, or any other grounds conjured up by vested interests whose ultimate agenda is the demise of the trade union movement. How much easier it would be for these vested interests if there were not 800,000 workers subscribing to trade union values such as collective action.

## Panel rights for temporary teachers

In our efforts to improve the number one issue for young members – lack of job security – the ASTI has succeeded in having its proposal for a panel system of entry to second-level teaching formally examined by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The proposal came from Annual Convention 2011 and ASTI representatives have highlighted it at every opportunity with the Minister, the DES and at Teachers' Conciliation Council. The ASTI has secured the support of the INTO and TUI, and will pursue this issue until a panel is established. We have argued that the continuation of a creeping 'hours culture' in second-level teaching will lead to disaffection and disillusionment among teachers. The cost to the Government of such a panel is negligible; the advantage to teachers and students invaluable.



**Pat King**  
ASTI General Secretary

## ASTI pressure has positive results for members

### Backdating for sick leave reduced by a year

Following intense representations by public sector unions, including the ASTI, the Labour Court has decided that backdating for the new uncertified leave/self-certified leave arrangements will apply from August 1, 2012. The original date proposed for backdating was September 28, 2011, and was opposed by the public sector unions. The new date means that teachers can discount any uncertified leave taken prior to August 1, 2012 when they are calculating their entitlement. For information on the new sick leave arrangements for teachers see [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

### Establishment of a panel system to be discussed

Discussions are to take place between the ASTI, the other teacher unions and the Department of Education and Skills on the establishment of a panel entry system to second-level teaching.

This news follows the ASTI's campaign for a panel system of entry for

second-level teachers, which arose from a Convention 2011 decision. The ASTI believes that a panel system of entry would help to ensure that second-level teachers are able to secure permanent employment in teaching within a reasonable timeframe.

### Important win on qualification allowances

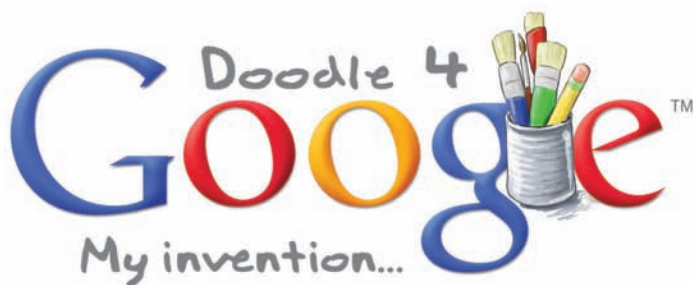
Following pressure from the ASTI and the other teacher unions, the Department of Education and Skills has confirmed that qualified, serving teachers who had commenced courses of further study prior to the announcement of the freeze on qualification allowances on December 5, 2011, will receive the relevant allowances for these qualifications on application. The ASTI has always maintained that such teachers had a legitimate expectation that they would receive these allowances when they undertook their courses of study. We made it clear that we would take legal action to support these teachers, if necessary.

Full information is available on the ASTI website.

## Synge Street CBS students take first prize at EU Young Scientist Awards

Congratulations to ASTI member Kate Walsh, Synge Street CBS, whose work with former students Eric Doyle and Mark Kelly helped them to

achieve first prize in physics at the European Union Contest for Young Scientists in September.



For the fifth year running we're inviting Irish school children to create their own doodle by taking part in the Doodle 4 Google competition.

The winning student will have their doodle appear on the Google Ireland homepage for 24 hours. They will also receive a Chromebook for themselves and one for their teacher; as well as a €5,000 college scholarship and a €10,000 technology grant for their school.

To be in with a chance to win these great prizes, enter your school today at [www.google.ie/doodle4google](http://www.google.ie/doodle4google)



## ASTI retirement events

### Cork South Branch



*Pictured are Cork South Branch officers Caitriona McGrath (left) and Maria Kelly with ASTI Immediate Past President Brendan Broderick at a Branch function at which over 40 retiring teachers were honoured. Maria gave the reply speech on behalf of the retirees.*

### 250 years of service celebrated in Dungarvan/Abbeyside

The Dungarvan Branch hosted a historic function recently to mark the retirement of seven long-serving teachers, with a cumulative service of over 250 years, from three local second-level schools. It was the largest such event ever arranged by the Branch. The Chairman, Pat Collins, made presentations to all the retirees and recounted their contribution to education locally. The recipients all returned thanks to their union and colleagues for honouring them.



*Pictured are: Back row (from left): Liam O'Mahony, St Augustine's College; Pat Stack, CBS Dungarvan; Margo McGann, Secretary, Dungarvan Branch; Vera O'Brien and*

*Declan O'Keeffe, Ard Scoil na Déise; and, Pat Collins, Chairman, Dungarvan Branch. Front row (from left): Ann Stack, Helen O'Sullivan and Jean O'Donovan, Ard Scoil na Déise; and, Shiovaun O'Sullivan, Treasurer, Dungarvan Branch.*

### Nenagh Branch



*Back row (from left): Ger O'Donoghue, Standing Committee; Mary Dagg, St Mary's Secondary School; Geraldine Gilroy and Pascal Gray, St Joseph's CBS; Nora O'Connor, St Mary's Secondary School; Kevin Walsh, St Joseph's CBS; Catherine Holohan and Bridie Corkery, St Mary's Secondary School; and, Ray St John, ASTI Treasurer. Front row (from left): Beth Cooney, Branch Secretary; Brendan Broderick, ASTI President; Granu Dwyer, Branch Chair; Pat King, ASTI General Secretary; and, Sinead Kent, Branch Treasurer.*

## Report recommends reduction in teacher education providers

A new report commissioned by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) has recommended that the number of centres for initial teacher education (ITE) be reduced to six. There are currently 19 State-funded providers of ITE, offering more than 40 college programmes in primary and post-primary teaching.

The report recommends that ITE provision be rationalised to provide just six centres for education in Dublin, Maynooth, Limerick, Cork and Galway.

Minister for Education and Skills Ruairi Quinn has asked the HEA to submit a detailed report, before the end of the year, on how to implement the recommendations of the international review panel.

He will then report back to Cabinet with more formal proposals, including financial implications.

The full report is available on the Department of Education's website.

## This issue in numbers...

22%

**The overall reduction in pay** for new teachers since January 1, 2011 (page 9)

10

**Maximum number of subjects** in the new Junior Cert, increasing from eight, as a result of ASTI lobbying (page 11)

## TASC seminar shares education knowledge



*Pictured at a TASC seminar on education held in September are (from left): Noel Ward, INTO Deputy General Secretary; Sally Maguire, ASTI Vice President; Ruairi Quinn, Minister for Education and Skills; and, Dr Nat O'Connor, Director, TASC.*

*The seminar, entitled 'Sharing Experiences of Education Reform and its Challenges between the Nordic countries and Ireland', found that major improvements to public services like education and health require a clearer definition of the values that guide society. The Nordic countries have developed sustainable and high-performing education systems largely because they are based on strongly articulated values of equality, democracy and Bildung – a conscious attention to the formation of young people as part of a collective responsibility by society.*



## Take a bow

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

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

The ASTI Achievement Awards recognise teachers in three categories:

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

**The Outstanding Teacher Team Achievement Award** recognises the contribution of a team/group of teachers to their school and education

**The Outstanding Individual Achievement Award** recognises the outstanding achievement of individual teachers outside their professional life

Log on to the ASTI website to nominate a colleague.

The closing date for applications is  
Friday, January 25th, 2013



## On the road

*In August, six teachers cycled 760km from Mizen Head to Malin Head in aid of Pieta House. Pieta House is a non-profit organisation providing a specialised treatment programme for people who have suicidal ideation or who participate in self-harming behaviours. Pictured en route are: Paul Tobin, Coláiste Chill Mhantain, Wicklow; Paul Warren, Eoin Fingleton, Liam Keighrey and Stephen Burns from Drimnagh Castle Secondary School, Dublin; and, Lorcan Duffy, Mountrath Community School, Laois.*



**75%**

**Number of public servants** who earn less than €60,000 per annum (page 14)

**35%**

**Increase in numbers** who sat higher level maths in 2012 (page 18)



Hundreds of new teachers took part in a pre-Budget rally against education cuts organised by the ASTI and other teacher unions in October.

# Teachers protest education cuts

Resisting education cuts and achieving equal pay for equal work are primary aims of the ASTI.

## New teachers deserve better

The ASTI deplores the Government’s decision to single out new teachers for pay cuts. The reversal of these cuts and the restoration of a single pay scale for all teachers is a central aim of this union.

Some commentators have falsely accused the ASTI of abandoning younger teachers by signing up to the Croke Park Agreement. ASTI members voted to accept the Croke Park Agreement to protect their pay and to protect their jobs. They did not vote to slash the pay of new teachers. The Government made that decision and all ASTI members stand behind their younger colleagues in opposing it.

- A dedicated ASTI Strategy Committee has been established to plan for the reversal of the multi-tier pay structure now in place for teachers.
- The ASTI is pursuing the issue of the abolition of teachers’ allowances at the Teachers’ Conciliation Council (TCC).
- Legal advice is being sought in relation to Government actions which have specifically impacted on young teachers.
- ASTI membership subscription fees have been waived for this school year for teachers affected by the cut to qualification allowances. This ensures that these teachers can have their views represented by the ASTI and have access to union protection, services and advice.
- The ASTI has conducted a survey of new teachers to find out how the cuts have impacted on them. This survey will enable us to negotiate on new teachers’ behalf, understand their views and priorities, and keep them informed and involved.

- The three teacher unions organised a pre-budget protest rally to support the ASTI campaign for more teaching jobs and more investment in education.
- We have met with key politicians and explained the realities facing new teachers to them.
- We are creating awareness through the media and among the public about the unfair targeting of young teachers, and urging all teachers to join with us in our campaign of opposition.
- The ASTI provides professional industrial relations advice and representation to all members and seeks to improve their working conditions, and increase their hours and job security wherever possible. A large amount of this work is in support of new and non-permanent teachers.
- The ASTI has sought the establishment of a panel system for the filling of second-level teaching vacancies. As a result of ASTI pressure, the Department of Education is examining the feasibility of such a system.

## No more cuts

The ASTI and the other teacher unions held a rally against education cuts in October, achieving front-page media coverage. The occasion highlighted the impact that budget cuts have had on schools and teachers, in particular how new teachers have been singled out for unfair pay cuts.

All TDs and Senators received briefing information and were invited to





*Pictured at a briefing for politicians in advance of the teacher protest are (from left): Gerry Craughwell, TUI President; Diarmaid de Paor, ASTI Deputy General Secretary; Charlie McConalogue TD, Fianna Fail spokesperson on Education and Skills; and, Sally Maguire, ASTI Vice President.*



*ASTI General Secretary Pat King (far right) speaks to (from left) INTO Deputy General Secretary Noel Ward; Ray Butler TD; and, Joanna Tuffy TD at a briefing of politicians organised by the teacher unions.*



*ASTI member and new teacher Yvonne Rossiter addresses the teacher union protest rally on October 24.*



*ASTI president Gerry Breslin addresses the thousands of teachers gathered to protest education cuts in October.*

attend the rally. In addition, a one-to-one briefing of members of the Oireachtas Committee on Education and Social Protection took place prior to the protest. Representatives from the unions told the politicians that after four years of savage cuts imposed on already under-funded schools, teachers were taking to the streets to express their concerns and fears for the children and young people in their classrooms. TDs and Senators who attended or were represented at the one-to-one briefing included Ray Butler (FG), Joan Collins (PBP), Clare Daly (Ind), Derek Keating (FG), Charlie McConalogue (FF), Jonathan O'Brien (SF), Aodhán O'Riordan (Lab), Averil Power (FF), and Joanna Tuffy (Lab). Politicians spotted at the rally included Richard Boyd Barrett (PBP), Jerry Buttimer (FG), Micheál Martin (FF), Finian McGrath (Ind), Denis Naughten (Ind), and Maureen O'Sullivan (Ind). The ASTI is engaging in intensive lobbying of TDs and Senators in advance of Budget 2013.

Keep up with ASTI campaigns at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

## How new teachers have been targeted

Budget 2011 slashed new teachers' salaries by 10%. Together with a change in the salary scale starting point for new teachers, this meant an overall reduction in pay of over 15% for teachers appointed after January 1, 2011.

Following a Budget 2012 decision to review public sector allowances, it was announced in September that most allowances above the basic salary scale, including qualification allowances, had been abolished for those not in receipt of them prior to February 1, 2012. This means an overall reduction in pay of 22% compared to teachers employed in 2010.

# ASTI consults teachers on junior cycle reform

Planned changes to the junior cycle require further consultation – teachers' concerns must be addressed.



On October 4, Minister for Education and Skills Ruairi Quinn TD published 'A Framework for Junior Cycle', setting out his plans for junior cycle reform. The curricular and assessment changes planned by the Minister have very serious implications for all teachers, particularly because of the Minister's decision to replace State certification with school certification at junior cycle, without consultation.

### Teachers' views must be heard

Any reform must be educationally sound, workable, and based on consultation with practitioners. That is why the ASTI is conducting a comprehensive programme of consultation with teachers on the junior cycle plans announced in October. The consultation will involve all ASTI members, and will

include meetings in schools and a major debate at ASTI Convention in April 2013. It is vital that teachers' views are communicated to the Minister and other stakeholders, including parents.

### Teachers are being consulted for the first time

Teachers were not consulted prior to the Minister's announcement of junior cycle reform. Teachers had been consulted by the NCCA on their proposals for reform, put forward in November 2011. These differ significantly from the Minister's plans.

Full details of the differences between the NCCA proposals and the Minister's plans are available on the ASTI website – [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

The scheme announced by the Minister in October differs significantly from the NCCA proposals. The main differences include:

Under the Minister's plans, students will receive a school awarded certificate following junior cycle.

The NCCA had proposed a national junior cycle qualification, awarded by the State.

The Minister's plans mean that terminal subject assessments will be initially set by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) but administered and marked by the school (except in English, Irish and maths, which will be administered and marked by the SEC for an initial period).

The NCCA had proposed terminal assessment in all subjects to be set, administered and marked by the SEC.

The SEC will only set papers for a limited period; eventually they will have no role in setting or marking assessment for junior cycle.

The Minister's plans mean that grades awarded for school work completed for certification will be not be subject to external moderation.

The NCCA had proposed that grades given by teachers for school work be provisional and subject to external moderation on a sample basis by the SEC

### Get involved

You can have your say on junior cycle reform by participating in the ASTI's consultation exercise. For more information on the junior cycle reform plans and the ASTI

consultation process, visit [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie). See page 26 for frequently asked questions on the Minister's junior cycle plans.

# Junior Cert: eight-subject limit removed

ASTI pressure proved successful in response to the Minister's plans to impose an eight-subject limit on the Junior Cert.

## Searching for answer to reform

**R**EFORM in education does not lead itself to simple solutions. The issues involved are complex and sensitive in nature and any changes will have to have the confidence of the public and be based on a broad degree of consensus.

I am paraphrasing Education Minister Ruairi Quinn, whose article on reform was published in the Irish Examiner last month. Educational reform is vital for those

Changes to the Junior Cert are needed, but no attempt has been made to ease fears, says **Pat King**



subjects in order to address the issue. Incorporating this work (not yet implemented in schools) into wider Junior Cert reform is one way of tackling a burdensome curriculum.

While the idea of an eight-subject limit was announced in the summer, the official implementation date at that time — as set out in the national strategy to improve literacy and numeracy published in July — was to be September 2013. This strategy, launched by the minister, announced



Over the past month I have been visiting schools, attending ASTI branch meetings and meetings of ASTI school representatives. It is clear that the minister's announcement about the eight-subject limit and the timetable for its introduction has caused uncertainty and anxiety among parents, school managers and teachers. I have heard of parents whose children are in sixth class in primary schools containing second level subjects to know which eight subjects

## The eight-subject limit in 2012 is putting the train before the tracks

**I**n the coming weeks a number of second-level schools will hold open days/evenings for parents of prospective students. These events aim to give parents a feel for "what it's like to be a stu-

**IN MY OPINION**  
**BRENDAN BRODERICK**



Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCA) revision of a number of subjects in order to create space for more being. This will be a wider reform w

## Quinn rows back on plans to cap subjects at Junior Cert exam

When the Minister for Education and Skills made the unexpected announcement in September 2011 that students entering second level in 2012 would be limited to eight exam subjects, the ASTI immediately voiced its strong opposition.

ASTI General Secretary Pat King wrote to the Minister, stating that the unanticipated introduction of this cap would "cause confusion for schools, teachers, students and parents".

In a newspaper article, Pat King asked the Minister a number of questions: "Who will decide what these eight subjects will be? When will the decision be made? Will the eight subjects be chosen on an annual basis? Will subjects be dropped by schools? What does fewer subjects at Junior Cert mean for the Leaving Cert? What does it mean for young people's career choices? What happens to teachers if their subject is dropped by the school?"

Another newspaper article written by then ASTI President Brendan Broderick stated: "In the absence of information and time to prepare, panic is setting in and already the internet discussion boards are rife with rumour about subjects falling off the curriculum and the possible long-term implications for students".

As a direct result of these actions, the Minister agreed to postpone the introduction of his eight-subject cap for examinable subjects until 2014. However, the ASTI continued to express its concerns about the eight-

subject cap and its implications for subjects, students, teachers and schools. The ASTI communicated these concerns directly to the Minister, to representatives from the Department of Education and Skills, and to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

In his address to the Minister at ASTI Annual Convention 2012, Brendan Broderick again highlighted the concerns of teachers in relation to the cap: "Teachers are very worried about the future viability of many mainstream subjects, and the information vacuum that exists in relation to how this will operate in practice is not helping ... It will force students into making choices at a very young age that may have major implications for their futures, and at a time in their lives when they are struggling with the transition from youth to adulthood. Moreover, it will result in classes consisting of two new cohorts of student. As well as those taking subjects for examination, we will have those who are not, and those who are undecided. This will have serious consequences for classroom management and discipline".

In October 2012 – as part of the launch of the 'Framework for Junior Cycle' – it was announced that the eight-subject cap has been removed. In its place will be a 10-subject cap, and schools can choose from 21 examinable subjects at Junior Cycle. Notwithstanding the fundamental difficulties the ASTI has with the Minister's 'Framework for Junior Cycle', the ASTI has welcomed the removal of the cap.

# Defending members

The ASTI offers professional industrial relations support to all members. Read about some recent cases taken by the ASTI on behalf of members.

## CID win – ASTI proves ongoing need for ‘replacement’ teacher

The ASTI secured a contract of indefinite duration (CID) for a member when a Rights Commissioner found that she could not be denied one on the grounds that she was covering for teachers on leave as she had not been teaching their classes or subjects.

The ASTI also successfully argued that Departmental allocation restrictions could not constitute objective reasons for not awarding a CID. The teacher had been employed on seven continuous fixed-term contracts between 2005 and 2012. With the support and advice of the ASTI she took a claim to the Rights Commissioner alleging that her employer was in breach of the Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act, 2005, in failing to award her a CID.

The teacher’s contracts stated that she was employed to replace two teachers on approved leave. The school maintained that this was a legitimate objective reason for not offering the teacher a CID.

The ASTI rejected this and argued that the teacher had never and did

not provide cover for either of the named teachers. The teacher was not qualified to teach the subjects taught by the teachers on leave and, in fact, their teaching hours had been subsumed into the hours of other permanent teachers. The ASTI further argued that the renewal of the teacher’s contracts each year proved that the teacher was employed to carry out work for which there was an ongoing need. The school also sought to rely on the Department of Education and Skills’ control of teaching post allocation and the requirement for schools to comply with Department Circulars as objective grounds for not awarding a CID. Referencing case law, the ASTI argued that constraints imposed by the Department of Education and Skills could not be considered objective grounds. The Rights Commissioner found in favour of the ASTI’s arguments and required the employer to issue the teacher with a CID effective from September 1, 2011.

The ‘Casework’ section of the ASTI website provides further information on cases taken by the ASTI – [www.asti.ie/asti-membership/services-and-benefits/asti-casework](http://www.asti.ie/asti-membership/services-and-benefits/asti-casework)

## ASTI secures CID – proves objective grounds not established

A Munster teacher has been awarded a CID thanks to an ASTI case, which proved that no written objective grounds existed to deny the contract.

The teacher was employed continuously on six fixed-term contracts between 2006 and 2012. In 2012 she was informed that her contract would not be renewed for the 2012/2013 school year. She sought the advice of her ASTI Industrial Relations Official, who advised that she should have been entitled to a CID from her fifth year in the school and assisted her in the submission of a case to adjudication.

At the adjudication hearing, the school stated that the teacher was covering for a leave of absence in each of the years of employment and was, therefore, not entitled to a CID. The school stated that the teacher’s contract was not renewed for the school year 2012/2013 as the teacher for whom she was covering returned to work. The ASTI argued that the teacher had been entitled to a CID from September 2010 as this was her fifth successive year teaching in the school and no objective grounds for the refusal of a CID were set out in her written contract for that year, nor were they set out in the previous year, as she had not been provided with a written contract for that period of employment. The Adjudicator found in favour of the ASTI’s case and determined that the teacher had established an entitlement to a CID from September 2010.

The members in these cases were represented by Bernard Moynihan, ASTI Industrial Relations Official.

This just in: ASTI case proves ‘general’ objective grounds not valid to deny CID – see the casework section of the ASTI website or the next edition of *ASTIR* for more details.



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# Speaking out on the issues

The ASTI gives voice to the concerns of teachers in the national media.



## Any move to cut allowances for serving teachers will be strongly resisted, General Secretary Pat King warns

"The ASTI will not countenance a further pay cut for teachers and will challenge any attempt to introduce these changes. The public service unions entered the [Croke Park] agreement in good faith and teachers have delivered everything asked from them under the agreement – the Government must now stick to their side of the bargain."

*The Irish Times, October 13.*

## Junior cycle reform must involve consultation and investment, says ASTI General Secretary Pat King

"We are in favour of change, of improving the educational experience for young people but we are very alarmed at the announcement today. Last November the NCCA issued a framework document, a plan for the future of the Junior Cert, and what we heard today was a complete change from that ... there has been no discussion or consultation, with the teachers, with the practitioners, with the parents – with the people who matter ... change cannot happen without investment in training and up-skilling of teachers."

*Drivetime, RTÉ Radio 1, October 4*

## General Secretary Pat King argues that to cut funding for fee-paying schools would not make economic sense

"We're very concerned for the teachers employed in private schools. Some of them are in very vulnerable positions, some of them are very poorly paid, they are part-time, they are temporary teachers, some have already lost their jobs and more will lose their jobs if the Government introduces further cuts in fee-paying schools ... If every fee-paying school in the country in the morning, decided to become a non fee-paying school, the State would have to find an extra €30-40m a year to fund them ... We don't just represent the teachers, we want good education for the children in whatever school they are in, but it doesn't make economic sense to cut funding for fee-paying schools."

*Newstalk Breakfast, October 8.*

## ASTI President Gerry Breslin says abolition of junior cycle State exam is regrettable

"The Junior Cert is an objective, fair and independent exam and we do accept that reforms are required, but at this level to completely abolish it is regrettable."

*RTÉ Nine O'Clock News, October 4*

## Teachers want to protect education for the future, ASTI Vice President Sally Maguire explains

"The theme of the protest is 'Valuing Education' and what we are protesting about is we really want education not to be hit again in this budget because if we want to get out of this recession we have to educate our young people."

*The Last Word, Today FM, October 24*

## ASTI member Yvonne Rossiter clarifies the real situation facing new teachers

"I have colleagues who are working on six hours a week, which works out about €145 a week ... We don't want any special treatment, all we want is equal pay for equal work."

*TV3 News, October 24*

## Four years of anti-education budgets have had devastating effects – ASTI President Gerry Breslin

"A cut to the pupil-teacher ratio does not mean one extra pupil in a class. It means schools dropping key subjects such as physics and modern languages. It means amalgamating classes so that every student has less time to interact in the classroom and less time to learn. It means reduced access to vital services such as resource teaching and guidance counselling. It means young temporary teachers – the lifeblood of our schools – lose their jobs."

*The Irish Times, October 25*



Keep up to date with the ASTI in the media on the 'Media Centre' section of the ASTI website – [www.asti.ie/news/media-centre](http://www.asti.ie/news/media-centre).

# Challenging the media

The ASTI and all trade unions face a continuing challenge to tackle media bias.

'Media studies' appears across the second-level curriculum in subjects such as English and CSPE, as well as in transition year and the Leaving Cert Applied. Students learn the difference between objectivity and bias, between fact and opinion, and how the media can re-affirm stereotypes or challenge them.

Unfortunately, some recent media coverage concerning teachers and other public sector workers, and the trade unions representing them, demonstrates scant regard for these issues.

It is important to state that media coverage does not happen in a vacuum and many reports, interviews and programmes present a balanced and reasoned reaction to the real circumstances in which Ireland finds itself today.

## Fact from fiction

Nonetheless, the ASTI is regularly in the position of having to deal with inaccurate, biased and unfair reporting in the media. The ASTI achieves success in the coverage of its counter-statements; however, it is not

possible for the ASTI to control where, when, or how its statements are published. Sometimes a story with an 'anti-teacher' headline will also carry the ASTI's view, but not in such a prominent position. At other times, counter-statements are ignored or only partly presented because they do not fit in with the angle of the story or the editorial line.

The ASTI's experience is similar to that of the other teacher unions and other unions in general. In a recent edition of the INTO's *InTouch* magazine the union said of one newspaper: "Inconvenient truths clearly get in the way of an agreed line, which is predicated on the assumption that public sector workers, some of whom still read the *Sunday Independent*, are the cause of the nation's misfortune". A recent blog posting by IMPACT trade union entitled 'Why won't the media admit when they get it wrong?' documents misreporting of the latest Croke Park Implementation Body report. The latest edition of SIPTU's *Liberty* newspaper contains an article subtitled 'Setting Out the Facts', in which the union states: "Contrary to much of the commentary by those who seek to undermine and abandon the [Croke Park] Agreement, 40% of workers in the public service earn less than €40,000 a year while 75% earn less than €60,000 a year".

## Tutor opportunities

Hibernia College is currently seeking providers of tutorial services for its Professional Diploma in Education.

**The tutor will be responsible for assisting and supporting student tutorial groups in the completion of the PDE programme. We are specifically recruiting tutors in the following areas:**

- English Teaching Methodologies
- School Experience and Professional Practice
- Philosophy of Education
- Research Methods
- Science

**Tutorial services provided will include:**

- Preparation and delivery of tutorials in an on-site and/or online environment.
- Provision of e-mail and telephone support as required by students for the duration of the programme.
- Leading and moderation of online forums within the online learning environment.
- Provision of support to students through the discussion forums within the online environment.
- Liaison with lead tutors and students throughout the examination and assessment process.

**Service providers should be able to demonstrate the following skills and experience:**

- Knowledge and experience of the post primary school system.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Master's qualification.

**Where required, training will be given by Hibernia College in respect of all tutor online requirements.**

If you are interested in providing tutorial services to the College, please send a cover letter together with details of your achievements to date, your skills and your experience, to [tutorialservices@hiberniacollege.net](mailto:tutorialservices@hiberniacollege.net) or The Tutor Management Office, Hibernia College, 2 Clare Street, Dublin 2.

"It is vital that teachers and other public sector workers arm themselves with the facts and challenge the falsehoods they encounter."

## Talk back

Trade unions have a unique strength. The membership of the ASTI stands at just under 18,000. Approximately 60,000 teachers and lecturers are members of one of the teacher unions. More than 600,000 workers in Ireland are trade union members.

The ASTI will continue to counter inaccurate reports as appropriate, but it is vital that teachers and other public sector workers arm themselves with the facts and challenge the falsehoods they encounter.

The Irish media is becoming increasingly interactive. The next time you read or hear something in the media that misrepresents you or your profession, talk back. To help, the ASTI has developed a new webpage called 'Debunking the Myths', which deals with the common myths about teachers, public sector workers and their trade unions. Visit [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie) to find out more.

When inaccurate or unfair information is reported, the ASTI often seeks a correction, a right of reply or issues a counter-statement. These are not always published.



# Towards learner autonomy – Why? What? How?

ASTI member JIM AHERN writes about the development and encouragement of learner autonomy.



*"If you give a man a fish, you feed him for one day. If you teach him how to fish, you feed him for a lifetime".*

This notion of empowerment is a very powerful one when transferred to the classroom setting.

## The holy grail of teaching

For many teachers, the idea that their students might take ownership of their learning and in so doing become more self-reliant, more self-motivated and ultimately more independent, represents the holy grail of teaching. This ownership of the learning process is at the root of learner self-direction and so is central in the development of a student learning agenda. Interestingly, the recent emphasis on the integration of information and communications technology (ICT) in the classroom has seen it remain stubbornly at the level of materials presentation. With the development of a student-led learning agenda, the integration of ICT may finally begin to penetrate at a level where the student's own learning needs can be satisfied.

Minister for Education Ruairi Quinn has set out his stall to replace rote learning and regurgitation of information with the promotion of critical thinking and problem solving. Moreover, many teachers report that the present school system maintains students in a dependant state where teachers are required to "spoon feed students too much" or that "students can't do enough for themselves". This seems to require a new dynamic in education where learners can develop a cognitive

independence by occupying a more active thinking role. There is an obvious case, therefore, for a greater emphasis on learner autonomy. While a single definition of learner autonomy has not been agreed upon, research has centred on the idea that learner autonomy is the situation where learners come to a sense of responsibility for all aspects of their own learning. Implicit in learners taking responsibility for their learning is of course their readiness and opportunity to do so. Clearly, for teachers and other educators, the process by which this responsibility is awakened, fostered and developed is of great interest. It is also not easily achieved.

## One school's experience

It was in this context, and realising the difficulty of the challenge ahead, that we set about the introduction in our school of initiatives capable of fostering and developing learner autonomy in our students. One of those initiatives was a transition year module. As it is beyond the scope of this article to elaborate upon all of the elements of the module, I will outline the components that were included:

- raising awareness of learning autonomy;
- investigation of learner attitudes, interests and beliefs;
- emphasis on goal setting;
- establishment of a choice-rich learning environment;
- learning to learn strategy training;
- learner reflection through the use of a learner diary; and,
- use of ICT to satisfy the learners' own identified learning needs and purposes.

We have recently had the opportunity to evaluate the effect and effectiveness of the module. The feedback from the students has been very positive. Students spoke openly and frankly about their learning. It was clear that their attachment and general attitude to learning had evolved. From a teaching standpoint, it has been enriching to see the students seek out new learning experiences, not because they had to but because they wanted to. On a personal level, having worked at the chalk face for over 30 years, and having relied upon the old faithful didactic model, I was enthused to see the students blossom and develop as autonomous learners. I will, therefore, conclude this article by encouraging teachers to consider the learner autonomy route. There is another way!

## Jim Ahern

Jim teaches in CBS Secondary School, Kilkenny. Watch more from Jim on YouTube – search 'Learner Autonomy Jim Ahern'.

# RETIREMENT SEMINARS FOR ASTI MEMBERS RETIRING IN 2012 OR 2013?

In order to facilitate members who are considering retirement during 2012 or 2013 the ASTI is providing seminars for those who have **not** yet attended an ASTI retirement seminar.

This two evening programme is for members considering retirement during 2012 or 2013.  
Attendance is required on **both** evenings from 4.30pm to 7pm.

You must pre-register with Eileen O'Rourke on 01-6040170 or [eileen@asti.ie](mailto:eileen@asti.ie)

VENUE	DAY 1	DAY 2
<b>DUBLIN</b> Clarion Airport Hotel	Monday 5 November	Monday 12 November
You must attend <b>both</b> days		
<b>TULLAMORE</b> Tullamore Court Hotel	Tuesday 6 November	Tuesday 13 November
You must attend <b>both</b> days		
<b>SLIGO</b> Radisson Hotel	Monday 26 November	Monday 3 December
You must attend <b>both</b> days		
<b>CARRICKMACROSS</b> Nuremore Hotel	Tuesday 27 November	Tuesday 4 December
You must attend <b>both</b> days		
<b>DUBLIN</b> Stillorgan Park Hotel	Monday 21 January	Monday 28 January
You must attend <b>both</b> days		
<b>KILKENNY</b> Newpark Hotel	Tuesday 22 January	Tuesday 29 January
You must attend <b>both</b> days		
<b>CORK</b> Silver Springs Hotel	Monday 4 February	Monday 18 February
You must attend <b>both</b> days		
<b>LIMERICK</b> Southcourt Hotel	Tuesday 5 February	Tuesday 19 February
You must attend <b>both</b> days		
<b>GALWAY CITY</b> Carlton Hotel	Monday 25 February	Monday 4 March
You must attend <b>both</b> days		

**TEA/SANDWICHES WILL BE AVAILABLE ON ARRIVAL**

You may only attend if you have pre-registered with Eileen O'Rourke on 01-6040170 or [eileen@asti.ie](mailto:eileen@asti.ie)

## ASTI RETIREMENT SEMINARS

**ASTI**  
A century of service



# Self-evaluation

School self-evaluation is due to be initiated this year. *ASTIR* looks at what's in store for teachers and schools.

Self-evaluation is not a new concept for schools; it builds on school planning systems already in place. But from this year schools and teachers will adopt new formal processes to internally reflect on student outcomes, teacher practice and learner experiences, and to identify what is working well and where improvements could be made.

The ASTI has concerns about the additional workload and pressure this will put on teachers and schools, and has communicated these concerns to the Department of Education and Skills.

## Background

Self-evaluation has been in the frame for a number of years as part of our evaluation measures, and has been officially due since its inclusion in the literacy and numeracy strategy introduced by the Minister last year. This plan requires that from 2012 all schools "engage in robust self-evaluation and put in place a three-year school improvement plan, which includes specific targets for the promotion and improvement of literacy and numeracy".

Self-evaluation will not replace external inspections but, according to Department literature released in September, recognises that teachers and school communities know what is best for their students in their own context.

## What's involved?

The Department of Education and Skills envisions that it will take several years for school self-evaluation practices to become embedded as part of school development planning.

A circular to guide schools in engaging in self-evaluation is due to issue to schools in November. The initial focus of self-evaluation will be on small, discrete aspects of schools' work.

Schools will examine teaching and learning in terms of curriculum delivery and teaching practice, and students' learning experiences and outcomes.

School staff will work collaboratively, using evidence, including standardised test results, to ask questions such as: how are we doing?; what are our strengths and weaknesses?; and, how can we improve?

## Support

The Inspectorate and the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) plan to organise seminars to support schools in implementing self-evaluation procedures. Web-based support seminars for principals are also planned.

Guidelines and an introductory booklet are being developed by the Department and advisory visits by inspectors are planned for each school. A dedicated website will be set up to provide further support – [www.schoolself-evaluation.ie](http://www.schoolself-evaluation.ie).

Between 2012 and 2016 schools will be asked to:

- evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in literacy, numeracy and at least one other aspect of teaching and learning across all programmes and subjects;
- each year, write short self-evaluation reports in each area examined; and,
- devise a school improvement plan for the aspects of practice identified for development, including a summary for parents.

'School Self-Evaluation: an update for post-primary schools' is available at [www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/Quality-Assurance/School-Self-Evaluation.html](http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/Quality-Assurance/School-Self-Evaluation.html).





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### Online Certificate/Diploma in Education (Special/Inclusive Education)

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### Enrol now!

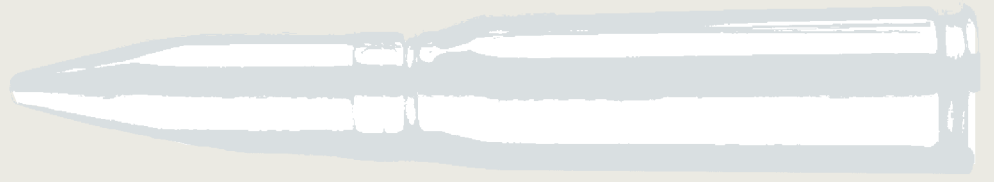
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This programme was funded by the Special Education Support Service, Teacher Education Section, DES, under the National Development Plan

**For further information & application forms contact**  
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 Email: [courseinfo@spd.dcu.ie](mailto:courseinfo@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)

# Project Maths – silver bullet or step in the right direction?

JOE McCORMACK looks at the impact and challenges of Project Maths.



The new Project Maths course is well and truly upon us at this stage. This new way of teaching and learning maths will be given a fair shot to see if it can raise maths competency and increase the cohort of students who take higher level maths.

Last June, Strands One and Two of the Project Maths syllabus were examined in the Leaving Cert, with students studying the new course on probability/statistics and geometry/trigonometry, alongside other topics from the 'old' maths syllabus. This cohort only began to study the new syllabus in fifth year and so the students were in the precarious position of having to try to understand the 'Project Maths way' in just two years. While, in general, the 'old' course saw the above topics examined as separate questions with little linkage between them, June's exam paper, in some places, linked topics. I welcome this new association, since we now live in an integrated world where problems, both academic and real life, need to be solved using a multi-pronged approach.

The Leaving Cert class of 2013 will need to be even more competent in dealing with the new concepts as they take on Strands Three and Four. Like the 2012 students, this year's class will have studied the old syllabus at junior cycle, which means they have to work hard to adjust to the new course. Most teachers would agree that it would have been more beneficial for Project Maths to be introduced only to first-year students initially, with these students working their way up through the system, building on the concepts from the foundation up.

## Leaving Cert 2012

The results are now out for the class of 2012, so what are their implications and what kind of reaction have they got thus far?

Firstly, an increase in the numbers opting for the higher level maths paper was anticipated, but the surge of 35% on last year's numbers exceeded expectations. In actual terms, uptake increased from 16% to 22%. This year 11,100 candidates sat the higher level paper, up from 8,235 in 2011. Almost all of them (98%) were eligible for the additional 25 bonus CAO points because they achieved a D3 or higher in the subject. This should give great encouragement and reassurance to students who are in two minds whether to take this level.

The bonus points inevitably contributed to higher CAO cut-off points in areas such as science and technology. Points for such courses were expected to rise anyway, driven by the increase in demand from students heeding the advice of Government and employers in relation to jobs. However, this initiative does not seem to have distorted the points system

as much as was expected, with only approximately 3,000 students using maths as one of their six CAO subjects and thereby benefiting from the bonus points. This would indicate that different or additional measures may be needed. Employers have welcomed the results but warned that there is no room for complacency.

## Student feedback

Students' experiences and feedback on Project Maths, in general, are mixed. From my experience, the first years are enjoying the common introductory course. For example, the new probability section allows them to get involved in more practical maths in the classroom, enhancing their learning on the primary school topic 'chance'. I believe the more practical questions will increase students' interest in the subject because they relate more to students' everyday experiences. The teacher will have more opportunities for open discussions on topics in class, and allowing students to back up their answers with relevant information should also allow them to express themselves more, leading to them developing a deeper knowledge of topics. In parallel with this, if a student can argue their case properly in the context of what they are being asked, they could be in line for very high marks. I see this as a positive development, as it will foster creativity and promote independent thinking.

In my opinion, there needs to be a more balanced paper at all levels. Some elements of the papers were marked too easily while topics in other areas were too difficult. I am in favour of questions that are fair, with a more rigorous marking scheme applied if necessary. It would be nice if students finished their post-primary maths experience satisfied that they did their best and that the rewards reflect their efforts. They should not feel traumatised to a point that preparation for other exams might be compromised. We, as teachers, want to see our students given a genuine opportunity to show what they have learned. I feel that they cannot do this with complicated 'wordy' questioning aligned with some abstract university type problems. Surely every student deserves simple language and somewhat relevant questions on their paper?

Social media has allowed students to offer feedback openly on the new course. The idea of being able to write on the paper is clearly one they welcome. However, practical issues must also be considered: will the length of a student's answer be influenced by the amount of space allocated for each sub question? Unfortunately, I think a weaker student could be drawn into the idea that a small amount of space for a question might mean that a very short solution is required. Also, students must be

given enough room to write their answers to a particular part of a question on the same or next page.

### Teaching challenges

There is no doubt that teachers will need to adjust to this new practical way of teaching their subject. They will need to choose their books carefully and use a wider range of resources outside these books. They will need to think outside the box and try to bring some of these new topics to life using practical examples and real life demonstrations. They will need to be more ICT proficient; I believe that the Department may need to look at some more continuous professional development in maths-specific ICT.

One of the biggest challenges for the classroom maths teacher is time. At the moment, it is hard to gauge how much time to spend on each topic and sub topic. Teachers will learn, as each year passes, to structure the course better, including the topic order and timeline. They will learn to choose the best paths through each topic while keeping a closer eye on the syllabus than ever before. However, I believe the Leaving Certificate courses at both higher and ordinary level, in their current format, may now be too long. Looking through the available exam papers, the length of some of the questions has increased significantly. Those schools that have not done so already may need to introduce a double maths class on their senior cycle timetable. As my own school does, more schools may start to invest transition year maths time in teaching the Project Maths syllabus and concepts. The marking scheme will be interesting too, with the new credit system seeing students being marked from zero up. At present there are a number of graded versions inside the marking scheme. After seeing how this year's papers were marked, many teachers I spoke to felt that the Department has not yet hit the target with the weighting of marks. Students and teachers need to be given more concrete information on how the exam is being assessed.

I welcome the Department's initiative to create a professional diploma in mathematics course. This is a free two-year course to upskill maths teachers and to support the implementation of Project Maths. There is an incentive there for many maths teachers to improve their skills and the Department has, in fairness, improved the resources available to teachers via the Project Maths team.

In general, we as maths teachers are still a little sceptical about Project Maths. There is also a concern about some topics that have been removed from the syllabus, which may be necessary for some mathematically related university courses. In a survey of 253 members of the Irish Maths Teachers Association (IMTA), over 77% thought students would benefit if maths teaching in schools was combined with industrial visits to view real-life applications of maths. The Government has little money to spend; industry must be encouraged to support the work of maths teachers as much as possible to bolster the effectiveness of Project Maths.



**Joe McCormack**

Joe is a maths, geography and ICT teacher at Sancta Maria College, Ballyroan, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16, and is an ASTI member.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### REQUIREMENT TO BE REGISTERED WITH THE TEACHING COUNCIL FROM 2012/13 SCHOOL YEAR

Under section 30 of the Teaching Council Act 2001, teachers employed in recognised schools must be registered with the Teaching Council in order to be paid from public monies by the Department of Education and Skills or a VEC.

It is the intention of the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn T.D., to commence section 30 during the 2012/2013 school year.

If you are working as a teacher in a recognised school, but are not currently registered with the Teaching Council, you should apply to the Council for registration immediately.

Further details including registration application forms and frequently asked questions are available on the homepage of the Teaching Council website: [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie).

The Council may be contacted in relation to registration at:

[primaryregistration@teachingcouncil.ie](mailto:primaryregistration@teachingcouncil.ie)  
for primary school teachers; and

[postprimaryregistration@teachingcouncil.ie](mailto:postprimaryregistration@teachingcouncil.ie)  
for post-primary school teachers.



# Project Maths team supporting teachers

DR ANNE BROSAN outlines how teachers' work is essential to the success of Project Maths and the wide range of supports available.

The Project Maths initiative aims to change what students learn, how they learn it and how it is assessed. Changes to the Junior and Leaving Certificate syllabuses were introduced in three stages, covering:

1. Probability and Statistics
2. Geometry and Trigonometry
3. Number
4. Algebra
5. Functions

The Project Maths Development Team (PMDT) provides continuing professional development (CPD) support to teachers. It aims to introduce and promote a wide range of pedagogical skills to encourage classroom discussion, higher order thinking and greater interaction in the classroom. It supports teachers through workshops, modular courses, school visits and online resources.

## Workshops

Since the start of the CPD programme in 2009, all mathematics teachers have been invited to two full-day workshops per year, for which substitution is provided by the Department of Education and Skills. These workshops are designed to support teachers during the phased introduction of the new syllabuses, and utilise Teaching and Learning Plans that exemplify effective ways of teaching and learning maths. To date, six workshops have been delivered nationwide and all are informed along the way by feedback and the needs of teachers:

- Workshop 1:** Probability and Statistics
  - Workshop 2:** Geometry and Trigonometry
  - Workshop 3:** Number and Problem Solving
  - Workshop 4:** Patterns
  - Workshop 5:** Planning for Teaching and Learning
  - Workshop 6:** Exploring Connections and Reasoning Leading to Proof
- Two further workshops are planned for 2012/2013.

## Modular courses

Additional courses for teachers have been developed in collaboration with the National Centre for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching & Learning (NCE-MSTL) at the University of Limerick (UL), and delivered by local facilitators through the local education centre network. These address Statistics and Probability, Geometry and Trigonometry, and Number, Algebra and Functions. Another course is planned for spring 2013, addressing 'Assessment for Learning' and 'Problem Solving in the Classroom'.

The PMDT has also, in collaboration with the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE), provided ICT courses on all strands of the syllabuses.

## School visits

This year the PMDT was pleased to be able to provide school visits during term three. Examples of support provided during planned school visits include effective use of: calculators; GeoGebra; IT support; Student's CD; and, Teacher Handbooks for subject planning, etc. To apply for a visit next year, contact the administrator, Email: [grainneh@ecdromcondra.ie](mailto:grainneh@ecdromcondra.ie). The PMDT will endeavour to accommodate as many schools as possible.

## Online resources

Through our website – [www.projectmaths.ie](http://www.projectmaths.ie) – three key resources are available to teachers: Teaching and Learning Plans, Student's CD and Teacher Handbooks. Additional material is also available online, and through our newsletter teachers are alerted to any new material or updates on the site (to subscribe, sign up on our home page).

## Conclusion

Since 2009, the PMDT has put considerable research and thought into developing resources to support maths teachers. The approaches have been tried in a variety of Project schools and, based on feedback, have been refined and often rewritten. Feedback from teachers has been overwhelmingly positive (visit [www.projectmaths.ie](http://www.projectmaths.ie) for video clips of classrooms in action). Teachers have reported gradual improvement in students' motivation, confidence, conceptual understanding and enthusiasm for the subject.

For positive results in the classroom, students' participation is essential. They must have a more active role in their learning and teachers must be more proactive in finding a balanced and flexible approach in practising various methodologies when teaching a topic. It is acknowledged that Project Maths has been challenging for teachers in many ways; a revised syllabus, a new style of examination and often new methodologies. It has also challenged us as mathematics teachers to rethink our fundamental beliefs about what mathematics is and how it should be taught and learned. For Project Maths to really work teachers need to be in the vanguard. This will have a huge influence on how Project Maths can equip our students to become higher achievers in mathematics and problem solvers for the future.

### Dr Anne Brosnan

Anne is an ASTI member and National Co-ordinator of the Project Maths Development Team.

# Fostering teacher resilience in times of change

The numerous reforms underway in schools need adequate supports to ensure successful outcomes and teacher effectiveness, says SEAN O'LEARY.

As a teacher who supports other teachers to work with students with special educational needs, I am frequently struck by teachers' ability to identify issues of concern, seek help to adapt learning and teaching, and to prioritise actions towards achieving proactive solutions. I can only describe such teachers as resilient. This characteristic has perhaps always been a component of effective teaching but now, more than ever, it is a critical component for every teacher.

## Support is necessary for reform

In Ireland, a number of educational reforms are promised or underway, such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, which has a focus on robust school self-evaluation. These reforms, which will affect the working lives of every second-level teacher, are in addition to the implementation of the recent continuum of support guidance developed by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the review of school admissions procedures, and various curricular reforms, such as Project Maths. In relation to the proposed new junior cycle, ASTI General Secretary Pat King has argued that: "To implement such complex and significant reform at a time when all second-level schools are overstretched and many are near breaking point would be damaging for students, schools and the second-level education service".

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**It seems reasonable to suggest that detailed consideration be given to supporting schools and teachers to implement reform.**

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The ASTI is right to be concerned about the impact of educational reform. There is considerable research internationally to suggest that both educational reform and increasing student diversity can place teachers at greater risk of 'emotional uncertainty', which can lead to work-related stress and loss of morale, as well as negatively affecting teacher performance. Given that one of the aims of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy is to improve outcomes for students by increasing teacher effectiveness, it seems reasonable to suggest that detailed consideration be given to supporting schools and teachers to implement reform.

All schools are not the same, just as all teachers are not the same, and all students are not the same. Schools differ in many ways. For instance, there is considerable diversity of intake across a range of schools. Just as students require differentiated learning and teaching, different schools and teachers require tailored support if they are to effectively implement reforms.

## Can reform aid resilience?

As a teacher engaged in supporting the best education possible for students with special educational needs, I welcome the specific consideration given to the assessment needs of these students in the new junior cycle proposals. Such a focus could bring 'emotional certainty' to teachers catering for the needs of students with these needs in inclusive classrooms. In an era of rapid educational change, it is critical to consider how reform can actually foster teacher resiliency. There are a number of factors that can foster resiliency for teachers, which include: fostering collegiality; developing opportunities for teachers to voice their concerns and receive supportive feedback; providing appropriate resources so that schools can create an environment where teachers can get to know their students well and assess their progress; prioritising opportunities for teachers to establish a supportive bond with at least one other person in the school; enabling meaningful participation; and, empowering schools to reduce the potential negative chain reaction following exposure to significant challenges.

It is teachers' ability to cope with complex school and classroom environments that makes us unique. As a profession, we must foster our own resiliency by sharing our educational knowledge and values with each other, with students and with the wider community.

Change  
for the better

The ASTI is in favour of educational reform that is resourced properly and ensures fair and equal opportunities for all students – see page 10.

## Sean O'Leary

ASTI member Sean is Deputy Director of the Special Education Support Service.

# Meet your reps

The ASTI Standing Committee is elected by ASTI members to make decisions about policy and strategy. We continue our profiles of your representatives.



**John Holian**

Represents: Region 2: West Mayo, East Mayo, Carrick-on-Shannon  
 Branch: West Mayo  
 School: Balla Secondary School, Balla, Castlebar, Co. Mayo

**I got involved because...** when I started teaching I went to West Mayo Branch meetings and there was always an active ASTI presence in my school. The influence of more senior teachers, who were involved in the ASTI, impacted positively on participation in union matters.

**The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are...** restoring teaching to its rightful position as a profession that attracts the brightest and the best young people. The plight of young teachers is of particular concern, having being targeted a number of times by cutbacks. Every effort must be made to reverse the erosion of conditions such as pay, pensions and working hours, all of which have been lost due to the gambling of the rich and greedy. Our conditions of work were hard fought for by previous generations of ASTI activists and we must honour their memory by reversing the destruction of the teaching profession.

**People may not know...** that I have a lifelong interest in the GAA. I have served as an officer, mentor and coach at all levels with my club, Balla GAA Club, as well as being involved with school teams down through the years. I also acted as manager and selector to the Mayo Minor football team some years ago.



**Ger O'Donoghue**

Represents: Region 4: Clare, Limerick South, Limerick North, Nenagh  
 Branch: Limerick South  
 School: St Clement's College, Limerick

**I got involved because...** some years ago I attended a two-day residential school stewards' training course facilitated by our current General Secretary, Pat King, who was the Honorary National Organiser at that time. The commitment that I experienced from the trade union officials to promote the conditions and rights of members at that training course encouraged me to take an active part at school and branch level.

**The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are...** to work towards ensuring that parity exists in pay and conditions for all members. The ASTI must work to ensure that CID holders on fewer than 18 hours are

brought to full hours. A promotion structure has been disintegrated by the removal of posts. If we are to ensure that teachers have a promotion path through middle management, up to and including senior management, a post structure must be reinstated, and to achieve this, the ASTI must play an active part.

**People may not know...** I have held various offices at branch level, including chairperson and CEC representative. I was ASTI Convener for chemistry and the ASTI representative on the NCCA syllabus committee that devised the current chemistry syllabus. To relax I enjoy a game of golf and I am a past captain of Limerick Golf Club.



**Jerry McCarthy**

Represents: Region 6: Cork South, Carbery  
 Branch: Carbery  
 School: De la Salle College, Macroom, Co. Cork

**I got involved because...** I got involved at branch level when there was an unsuccessful attempt to close the school where I teach, De La Salle College, Macroom. Later I served as School Steward, Branch Chairperson, CEC representative and now on Standing Committee.

**The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are...** the elimination of the multi-tier pay scale. We must reverse both the January 2011 pay cut and the elimination of qualification allowances for new entrants. The maintenance of working conditions in the face of curricular reform, for example dealing with the new Junior Certificate, and the Croke Park Agreement and increasing participation of our members at branch level are also very important.

**People may not know...** I find road running very relaxing after the stress of a day teaching. I have run the Dublin City Marathon in under three hours on two occasions.



**Fintan O'Mahony**

Represents: Region 8: Wexford, New Ross, Enniscorthy, Waterford  
 Branch: Waterford  
 School: Scoil Mhuire, Carrick-on-Suir

**I got involved because...** I was elected School Steward in 1999. When I got to my first branch meeting I realised how much I didn't know and I began to re-establish a link between my school and my

branch. That's always what it's been about for me: channelling important information back to the branches and back into schools.

**The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are...** bringing the union back into schools; organising from the ground up is essential. As important is to develop an organisation that sets the agenda in education, rather than just reacting to what the Department of Education and Skills announces.

**People may not know...** that I'm heavily involved in social media. I use Twitter to receive and pass on information, mainly about education; again, it's a channel of information (twitter.com/levdavidovic). I also use Twitter in the classroom and have accounts for my history and English classes.



**Colm O'Toole**

Represents: Region 10: Laois, Kildare, Carlow  
 Branch: Laois  
 School: Mountrath Community School, Co. Laois

**I got involved because...** I came from a background where we always stood up for our rights and I quite enjoyed the student protests

in Galway in the mid to late 1980s. In my first major teaching post I was encouraged into the union by some fabulous teachers as let's say everything wasn't exactly rosy in that school at the time! Thanks Ray, Mary, Joan and Seamus – to mention but a few.

**The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are...** obviously trying to look after the interests of our newest and youngest members. Sadly I must admit I have recently advised relations of mine who are in third-level education to think long and hard about a career in teaching as the qualification process is so long, financial rewards poor and god knows what age you will have to work to unless we can regain much of what has been lost. We also must achieve a long overdue system whereby teachers can voluntarily move from one area to another – surely this is not rocket science. The Minister's proposed junior cycle reforms are very flawed. One would think that he never discussed it with teachers at all, and of course he did not discuss it with us despite what some people think! We cannot go down the road of assessing our own students and having a school- rather than a State-based qualification for junior cycle students. International examples are bandied about but many of the 'great examples' used are now returning to the tried and tested. The good will of teachers is at breaking point; middle management structures must be restored and obviously remunerated. Finally, if a serious effort is not made to address these issues by both our union and the Department, the morale of our profession will plummet even further. That is not good news for anyone.

**People may not know...** that I met my lovely other half at an ASTI function and I'm still happily fighting for my rights on that front 19 years later! So please attend your meetings and functions and you too might be as lucky as I was, as well as getting involved and getting stuff off your chest! I am an avid sports fan and hope Mayo win the big one before I hang up my boots (teaching boots, that is!)



**Elaine Devlin**

Represents: Region 12: Donegal, Monaghan, Cavan, Drogheda  
 Branch: Dundalk  
 School: De La Salle College, Dundalk

**I got involved because...** I joined the ASTI as soon as I started teaching. I became a regular at meetings during 1999/2000 and became Chair

of the Dundalk Branch. I was elected to the CEC and then to the Equal Opportunities Committee. I was elected to Standing Committee in 2008.

**The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are...** to be active partners in educational change. Changes in education are usually poorly implemented and are based on a political agenda rather than an educational one – one has to look no further than Project Maths. New entrants to the profession are demoralised. The policy of successive governments seems to be that education should win the race to the bottom. We need to try to end this way of thinking.

**People may not know...** I am a GAA fan, and followed Donegal in their quest for Sam – can hardly believe that Jimmy brought Sam back to Donegal again!



## CHURCH OF IRELAND COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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### Master of Arts (Education)

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Applications are invited for the Master of Arts (Education) in the Church of Ireland College of Education, in collaboration with the University of Northampton, focusing on Learning Support/Special Educational Needs. This course is open to graduates of the Postgraduate Diploma in Learning Support and Special Educational Needs or equivalent.

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates, who will be short-listed for interview on the basis of information supplied in their application forms.

Application forms and further information can be obtained from:

The Church of Ireland College of Education  
 96 Upper Rathmines Road, Dublin 6  
 Email: info@cice.ie Telephone: (01) 497 0033 Fax: (01) 497 1932  
**or can be downloaded at [www.cice.ie](http://www.cice.ie)**

*Completed application forms should be returned to the above address, clearly marked M A (Education) Application.*

*The closing date for receipt of applications is Monday 14th January 2013.*



**Margaret Kinsella**  
 Represents: Region 14: Stillorgan, Wicklow, Dun Laoghaire, Bray  
 Branch: Stillorgan  
 School: St Raphaela's Secondary School, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin

**I got involved because...** The ASTI has always been a very important aspect of my school. I realised from day one that it is important to be a part of this organisation as all the benefits were clearly explained by my representative. The ASTI clearly explains current issues and highlights the rights of teachers and, in particular, offers help to those whose rights are not being adhered to.

**The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are...** dealing with the new proposals regarding changing the Junior Certificate from a State exam to a school-based assessment programme. Supporting the plight of new teachers who must now work the same hours and carry out the same tasks as another teacher in the profession while earning considerably less. Equal pay for equal work.

**People may not know...** I have a horse whom I adore (Lady Dior) and compete in hunter trial competitions. Also, people may not know that although I work in Dublin I live in Wexford and commute on a daily basis.



**Jim O'Neill**  
 Represents: Region 16: Dublin North 1, Dublin North Central  
 Branch: Dublin North Central  
 School: St David's CBS, Artane, Dublin 5

**I got involved because...** I believe that trade union membership was a hard won right for all workers. In particular I believe that the ASTI has a fundamental role to play in protecting and improving the pay and conditions of teachers. Most importantly, the ASTI is essential in ensuring equality of treatment of all teachers and in particular in protecting the rights of the more vulnerable in our profession.

**The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are...** to find ways to protect the conditions of new teachers who are not covered by the Croke Park Agreement, and to fight the current practice whereby teachers' working conditions are changed unilaterally by Government decree rather than through negotiation.

**People may not know...** I represented Ireland in rowing at junior and senior level in the 1970s and 1980s, and won Irish senior championships with Neptune Rowing Club in 1980 and 1981.

**Breda Lynch**  
 Represents: Region 18: Dublin South Central, Dublin South 1  
 Branch: Dublin South Central  
 School: Muckross Park College, Dublin 4



**I got involved because...** I believe wholeheartedly in trade unionism and I continue my involvement inspired by the many dedicated trade unionists I have encountered in this union over the last 27 years, including Deirdre Healy, Bernard Lynch and Philip Irwin, my predecessors in Region 18.

**The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are...** to manage the upcoming changes in education, endeavouring to prevent further deterioration in our pay and conditions in these tricky times when all public servants seem to be fair game. We need to manage these changes in our own interest and in the interests of our pupils and education itself.

**People may not know...** I was one of those teachers who were redeployed back in 1989 when the scheme was new. Loreto Churchtown, where I had been working for five years, closed and my colleagues and I greatly appreciated the work of the ASTI on our behalf at the time.



**Kieran Christie**  
 Honorary National Organiser  
 Branch: Sligo  
 School: St Attracta's Community School, Tubbercurry, Sligo

**I got involved because...** unable to secure full-time employment and working in a part-time capacity in my early years as a teacher, I benefited from the work that had been done in the late 1980s to secure pro rata contracts. I realised that it is important that as many union members as possible should participate and try to influence the agenda.

**The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are...** to strongly resist and seek to reverse the appalling division being created in the teaching profession arising from the changes to the terms and conditions of employment for new entrants, and to position ourselves strategically to defend our pay and conditions in the face of the ferocious attacks that undoubtedly will come in the next few years.

**People may not know...** that one of my claims to fame is the fact that I was once a contestant on the RTÉ television quiz programme *Where in the World*. I managed to answer only one question throughout the duration of the show (as a well known DJ might say, the questions just didn't suit me) but I still managed to end up on the winning team.

Eighteen regionally elected members, along with the President, Vice President, Immediate Past President and Honorary National Organiser, sit on Standing Committee. Standing Committee members bring the views of the members and branches they represent to the table when important decisions are being made. You can find contact details for your Standing Committee representatives on the ASTI website or in your ASTI Diary.



# Induction for new teachers

ASTI member BILLY REDMOND explains the National Induction Programme for Post-Primary Schools.

The National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) was established in 2010 to support newly qualified teachers (NQTs) as they enter the profession.

Induction is a programme of teacher education, which takes place during that critical first year following qualification. The purpose is to offer systematic professional, pedagogical and personal support to NQTs.

The NIPT does this in five ways: website support; workshop programme; school-based support; professional support groups; and, school visits.

This article will focus specifically on three of the supports, namely the workshop programme, school-based support and web-based support.

## Workshop programme

Participation in the NIPT workshop programme is now a requirement for all new graduates in order to achieve full registration with the Teaching Council.

A series of 12 workshops is delivered throughout the country in collaboration with the Association of Teacher Education Centres Ireland (ATECI). Five of these workshops are delivered to both primary and post-primary NQTs, and provide excellent opportunities to meet and share experiences with other NQTs from both sectors. The remaining eight workshops are sector specific and based on needs identified by facilitators and NQTs.

All workshops are designed with a practical focus and delivered by trained facilitators who are experienced teachers. At each session NQTs receive and use a reflective workbook that has been developed by the NIPT and participate in a wide range of activities including, for example, role-plays, discussing scenarios and engaging in reflection on professional practice.

Graduates can register for the workshop programme by contacting their local education centre. Visit [www.ateci.ie](http://www.ateci.ie) or [www.teacherinduction.ie](http://www.teacherinduction.ie) for further details.

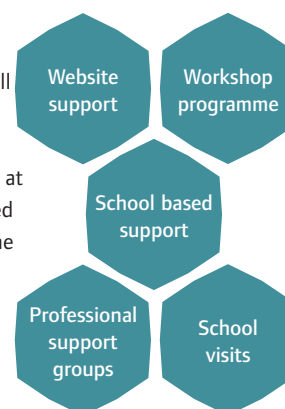
NIPT Workshop Programme 2012-2013			
Working as a professional: what is involved?	Working with parents	Behaviour management	Differentiation
Planning and preparation	Child protection	Literacy	Transition from primary to post-primary
Classroom management and organisation	Practical assessment	Numeracy	Inclusion

## School-based support

A whole-school approach to the induction of NQTs is encouraged and all staff may contribute to this process. A key characteristic of school-based support for NQTs is access to a mentor at school level. A mentor is an experienced teacher who has been nominated by the principal and has undertaken professional mentor training with the NIPT to prepare for the role.

Mentors who have participated in the NIPT training sessions have reported positively on their experiences and the learning gained. Mentors who attended recent training in Dublin West Education Centre noted: "It was a pleasure and a privilege to do the course"; "a truly wonderful and beneficial course".

A mentor organises and adapts school-based activities to suit the school context and these may include, for example, regular meetings to provide ongoing support for NQTs in planning classes, observation activities, reflection and constructive feedback sessions.



## A whole-school approach to the induction of NQTs is encouraged and all staff may contribute to this process.

NQTs acknowledge the importance of the mentor and of having 'someone there for them' throughout their first year. Mentors also benefit greatly from their experiences. As Barbara and Terry Field write in *Teachers as Mentors: A Practical Guide*: "The role of the mentor is a developmental one. It is a professional reflective process ... [Mentors] have to re-examine, defend and maybe change their own ideas and practice".

## Website support

The NIPT website – [www.teacherinduction.ie](http://www.teacherinduction.ie) – contains detailed information on the induction programme for NQTs, mentors and principals. The workshop timeframe for 2012/2013 is now available, as is a brief summary of each workshop.

The NIPT team would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in the UCD Pilot Project on Induction as we build and develop the national programme. We wish all NQTs well as they embark on their teaching career and remind them that asking for help is a sign of strength.

## Billy Redmond

Billy is National Co-ordinator for the Induction Programme in Post-Primary Schools. He is a home economics and religion teacher, and a qualified guidance counsellor. He worked for five years as a regional development officer for the National Behaviour Support Service.

# Junior cycle reform – your questions answered

We summarise the Minister for Education’s plans for junior cycle reform, as announced in October 2012.

## What will students study?

Students will take eight to ten subjects for certification. Schools have the option to offer short courses. If short courses are available, students may substitute two short courses for one subject, up to a maximum of four short courses.

The range of subjects available at junior cycle will remain the same. However, the subject syllabus will be radically redesigned and renamed ‘subject specification’. The latter will have less content, and greater emphasis on key skills, learning outcomes, exemplars of standards and assessment tasks. There will be common level specifications, with the exception of Irish, English and maths, where there will be two levels – ordinary and higher. New subject specifications will be introduced to schools on a phased basis commencing with English in September 2014. The NCCA will provide seven short courses in September 2014; schools can also develop their own short courses. Students will also continue to study subjects/programmes as at present – religious education, physical education, SPHE.

## What will students achieve?

A junior cycle achievement profile will issue to students in the autumn after junior cycle. This will consist of: (i) a school certificate (replacing the Junior Certificate); and, (ii) a report on other aspects of student achievement.

### (i) School certificate

The new certificate awarded by the school will be equivalent to Level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework. The certificate will include grades achieved in subjects and short courses. Grades will include five levels: not achieved; achieved; achieved with merit; achieved with higher merit; and, achieved with distinction. The first school certificate will be awarded in 2017 when English will be assessed. At that time, the State Examinations Commission (SEC) will provide the marks for the final assessment component for English as well as results for other subjects. Schools will combine the SEC marks for English with those for the school work component.

### (ii) Other learning experiences

Schools will issue a report on other aspects of a student’s achievement and learning experiences, including their attendance, their personal and social development, their learning disposition, etc.

### Standardised test results

Standardised testing in English, maths (and Irish in Irish medium schools) is due to be implemented at the end of second year from 2014, and in science from 2016.

## How will the school certificate be assessed?

### Subjects

Subject grades for certification will combine two components: final assessment (60%) and school work component (40%).

#### *Final assessment (60%)*

Final assessments will be administered at the end of third year. Initially, in most subjects, final assessments will be set by the SEC but administered and marked by teachers in the school. English, Irish and maths will be set, administered and marked by the SEC initially.

Eventually, it is planned that all final assessments will be set, administered and marked by schools.

#### *School work (40%)*

The school work component will be completed during second and third year through assignments, projects, orals, practical activities, etc. This may be presented in an e-portfolio or in other forms and will be marked by teachers in the school.

### Short courses

Grades in all short courses will be through assessments administered and marked by schools.

## What about students with special educational needs?

Some students with special educational needs (SEN) will study a separate curriculum based on priority learning units and will have a similar achievement profile to other students, i.e., a school certificate and a report on other learning experiences. The certificate will be equivalent to Level 2 of the National Qualifications Framework.

## When will the changes happen?

2012/13 – 2015/16: Junior Certificate examinations as usual.

2014/15: New framework for junior cycle begins to be phased in with introduction of new English curriculum and short courses for first years.

2016/2017 onwards: school certificate issued by school for subjects and short courses.

The ASTI wants to make sure teachers’ views on junior cycle reform are heard – see page 10 for information on the ASTI consultation on junior cycle reform.



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

[www.irishaid.gov.ie](http://www.irishaid.gov.ie)

**Bring the world into your classroom... by bringing your class into the Irish Aid Centre in O'Connell Street, Dublin.**

Schools workshops on development and Ireland's role in fighting global poverty and hunger.

For Transition Year, CSPE and Senior Cycle classes; workshops are free and last for 90 minutes. 10.00 and 12.00, Monday to Friday.

To make a booking phone Ruth Powell: 01-8546932 or send an email to [irishaidcentre@dfa.ie](mailto:irishaidcentre@dfa.ie).

Irish Aid Volunteering and Information Centre,  
27-31 Upper O'Connell St., Dublin  
[www.irishaid.gov.ie](http://www.irishaid.gov.ie)



**Irish Aid**

An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

*Irish Aid* is Ireland's Overseas Development Aid Programme. It is managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

By taking part in our workshops and guided tour of the interactive Khulungira exhibition, students will learn about the realities of life in a rural African community and learn about how Ireland is taking a leadership role in the fight against hunger.

Our education programme has been designed to meet the needs and interests of Transition Year, CSPE, Leaving Cert Geography, and Religion. We can also provide workshops for Leaving Cert Applied and Leaving Cert Vocational classes. Since 2008 more than 15,000 students have taken part in our workshops.

**IRISH AID**  
VOLUNTEERING & INFORMATION  
**CENTRE**

## Anti-bullying tools for teachers

ASTI members Sean Fallon and Mary Kent have created a complete anti-bullying programme for second-level schools. You can find out more and register at: [www.antibullyingcampaign.ie](http://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie).

## Call for papers on current issues in education

Limerick and Clare Education Centres invite expressions of interest from teachers to present papers on current issues in education at the 2013 conference to be held in Limerick Education Centre in March. Enquiries should be sent to: Pat Hanrahan ([pat@clareed.ie](mailto:pat@clareed.ie)), Dr Joe O'Connell ([joe@lec.ie](mailto:joe@lec.ie)), or Dr Kevin Haugh ([kmh54@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:kmh54@hotmail.co.uk)). The closing date for submissions is January 20, 2013.

## Grant for global issues education

EIL Intercultural Learning offers a small grant to anyone who has volunteered overseas and who now has ideas for ways to educate others about global issues. The deadline for applications is Sunday, December 2. More information can be found at [www.eilireland.org](http://www.eilireland.org).

## Show Racism the Red Card

Show Racism the Red Card produces anti-racist educational resources and organises school workshops. The charity also runs a creative competition and a summer camp. You can find out more or register for the charity's education pack at [www.theredcard.ie](http://www.theredcard.ie).

## Teacher's novel

Former ASTI member Mary McCarthy has just published her fifth novel, *After the Rain*. The book tells the story of a woman coming to terms with a terminal cancer diagnosis when retirement and freedom were supposed to be on the horizon. You can find out more about Mary's books at [www.poolbeg.com](http://www.poolbeg.com).

## Immersion courses in France and Spain

Courses for teachers of French and Spanish based in France and Spain will run in June and July 2013. Successful applicants receive financial support of up to €2,500 from the European Union Comenius/Grundtvig Lifelong Learning Programme available through Leargas, but you must book a place on a course before you can apply for a grant. The deadline for grant applications is January 16, 2013. Contact LFEE Europe as soon as possible to register for a course – Tel: 0044-131343-2222, Email: [ros@lfee.net](mailto:ros@lfee.net), or Web: [www.lfee.net](http://www.lfee.net).

## Help update educational resources

The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice is currently updating its online educational resource WhyCare? and is looking for teachers and recent graduates to get involved in the project on a voluntary basis. See [www.jcfj.ie](http://www.jcfj.ie) and [www.whycare.ie](http://www.whycare.ie) for more information.

## CSPE action project initiative

The Irish Human Rights Commission (IHRC) is inviting CSPE students to create images that express what human rights in Ireland mean to them for display at a national exhibition running in February. Full details are available on the IHRC's website – [www.ihrc.ie/cspe](http://www.ihrc.ie/cspe).

## Support for learning support

The Irish Learning Support Association (ILSA) provides CPD to second-level teachers through the Drumcondra and Blackrock Education Centres. The Association also supports local branches so teachers can organise themselves, share best practice, and facilitate professional development locally. The ILSA will also host a conference, 'Finding Better Ways', in Drogheda on March 8. Find out more at [www.ilsa.ie](http://www.ilsa.ie).

## Volunteer in South Africa

An independent school in South Africa is looking for teachers or student teachers to teach for a year or over the summer months. Find out more at [www.motherofpeace.org.za](http://www.motherofpeace.org.za) or [www.motherofpeace.ie](http://www.motherofpeace.ie).

## Join the Teachers Musical Society

The award-winning Teachers Musical Society will perform Bryan Flynn's *Michael Collins – A Musical Drama* as their main show for 2013. For more information Tel: 087-263 1186, or Email: [teachers.ms@gmail.com](mailto:teachers.ms@gmail.com).

## Appointment of examiners for Leaving Certificate Examinations 2013

Application forms for the oral and practical examiner positions are now available at [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie). The closing date for applications is Friday December 7, 2012.

## Teacher's book

Retired ASTI member Mícheál de Barra has just published an Irish language book, *Gaeil Faoi Bhhratach Eureka*, which tells the story of the Eureka Stockade – a rebellion during the gold rush in Victoria, Australia in 1854. For more information see [www.coisceim.ie](http://www.coisceim.ie).



## Global Schoolroom needs you

Supported by the ASTI, Global Schoolroom works directly with teachers and communities in developing countries to build high standards of teacher education. Global Schoolroom is hoping to recruit 36 volunteers this year. If you would like to be one of them, visit [www.globalschoolroom.net](http://www.globalschoolroom.net). The closing date for applications is November 30, but late applications may be considered.

# RSTA news

The evolution of the teachers' pension scheme was outlined at the recent RSTA Annual General Meeting.

The RSTA evolved from an ASTI campaign in the late 1950s to obtain proper and adequate pensions for secondary teachers. The RSTA continues to support the ASTI's work for teachers' pension rights – work that has never been more vital, given the current attacks on public service pensions in the media. We were honoured to have the presence of the then President of the ASTI, Brendan Broderick, at our AGM in May. During the course of his speech, he outlined the evolution of the teachers' pension scheme since 1995. We believe that what he said about current pension arrangements should be of great interest to all teachers.

## The evolution of teacher pensions since 1995

Since 1995 significant changes in pension terms for public servants (including teachers) have resulted in three different schemes now in existence, and a fourth scheme about to be introduced.

Scheme A: teachers who commenced employment prior to April 6, 1995:

- pay class D PRSI;
- total pension entitlement paid by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) based on final year salary and number of years' pensionable service;
- full pension after 40 years' service regardless of age;
- retirement is compulsory at the end of the academic year following the 65th birthday;
- voluntary retirement from age 55 onwards, provided a minimum of 33 years' service (based on a four-year training course);
- voluntary retirement at age 60, irrespective of service;
- cost-neutral retirement available from age 50; and,
- pension benefit based on final salary but pay parity link has meant increases are applied in line with those applied to serving teachers' salaries.

Scheme B: teachers who commenced employment between April 6, 1995, and March 31, 2004:

- pay class A PRSI;
- co-ordinated pension paid by DES and Department of Social Protection (DSP) based on final year salary and number of years' pensionable service;
- full pension after 40 years' service, regardless of age;
- retirement is compulsory at the end of academic year following the 65th birthday;

- voluntary retirement from age 55 onwards, provided a minimum of 33 years' service (based on a four-year training course);
- voluntary retirement at age 60, irrespective of service;
- cost-neutral retirement available from age 50; and,
- pension benefit based on final salary but pay parity link has meant increases are applied in line with those applied to serving teachers' salaries.

Scheme C: teachers who commenced employment since April 1, 2004:

- pay class A PRSI;
- co-ordinated pension paid by DES and DSP based on final year salary and number of years' pensionable service;
- full pension at age 65 after 40 or more years' service (portion of co-ordinated pension paid by DSP, i.e., contributory old age pension, withheld until age 65);
- compulsory retirement age abolished;
- voluntary retirement between age 55 and 65 on a cost-neutral basis only; and,
- pension benefit based on final salary but pay parity link has meant increases are applied in line with those applied to serving teachers' salaries.

Scheme D: proposed new scheme – implementation date yet to be decided:

- pay class A PRSI;
- co-ordinated pension paid by DES and DSP, based on career average earnings and number of years' pensionable service;
- pension after 40 or more years' service or at contributory State pension retirement age, which is being increased to 68 on a phased basis;
- retirement is compulsory at age 70;
- voluntary retirement from age 55 on a cost-neutral basis only; and,
- pay parity link between serving and retired teachers to be replaced by linking pensions to the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The legislation required to introduce the new pension arrangements for incoming public servants has passed through the different stages in the Dáil and will be enacted in the near future.

The new scheme breaks the link between serving teachers' salaries and pension benefits and will mean that new teachers pay a lot more, for a lot longer, and for a lot less.

CROSSWORD

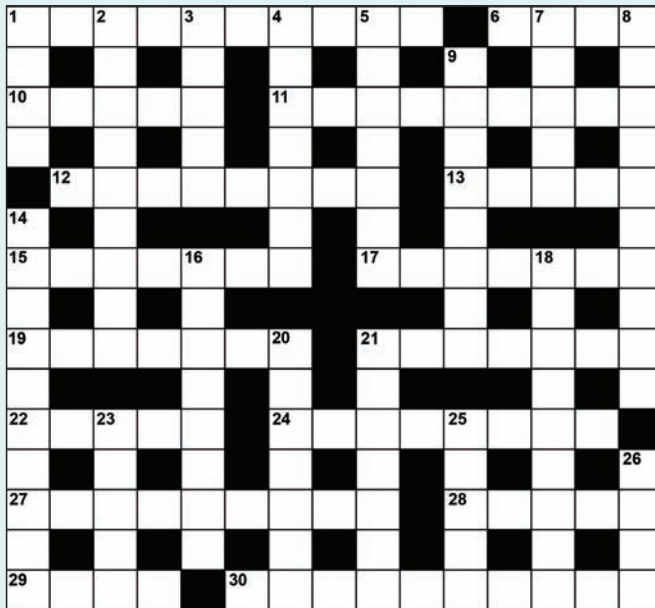


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ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 1205

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. 1205, Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, December 7, 2012

CLUES ACROSS:

- 1 Tree favoured by koalas (10)
- 6 Irish symbol (4)
- 10 Sit here while you preside over the meeting (5)
- 11 Colin Farrell the eponymous hero in this film (9)
- 12 The gentleman dated as ordered (8)
- 13 Hindu princess (5)
- 15 Quick reply from a letter I posted (7)
- 17 Abandons the gullies (7)
- 19 Creeper keeper (7)
- 21 Friendly drink? (7)
- 22 Batman's partner (5)
- 24 Deer and insect run off (8)
- 27 Crept near a wood worker (9)
- 28 Asparagus piece (5)
- 29 Dead (4)
- 30 Ten sellers could be rigid and inflexible (10)

CLUES DOWN:

- 1 Engrave with acid (4)
- 2 It's wild and found in preserves (9)
- 3 Tabloid headlines are sometimes this (5)
- 4 What baby does quietly with toy, perhaps (7)
- 5 Turned over a pun on the deed (7)
- 7 "Thousands have lived without love, not one without water", he wrote (5)
- 8 Work in reverse in a pig-headed way (10)
- 9 The storyteller could rant and roar (8)
- 14 Demosthenes was noted for this prowess (10)
- 16 Conversation breaks (8)
- 18 Overhead covering (9)
- 20 Suddenly frighten with rattles (7)
- 21 A little bed beside a great lake for the clique (7)
- 23 French topper (5)
- 25 Listen to music by a Hungarian composer (5)
- 26 Love can give you a sore back (4)

Solution to ASTIR Crossword No. 1204

Across	Down
1. Toscanini	2. Oracle
9. Pounds	3. Chides
10. Sadistic	4. Natter
11. Simian	5. Nicking
12. Allege	6. Bovine
14. Icon	7. Envision
15. Siren	8. Asininely
16. Benign	11. Sober
18. Angrier	13. Gigi
21. Arsenal	17. Lassitude
24. Sunder	19. Generate
26. Perch	20. Egret
30. Leda	22. Sect
31. Utopia	23. Sparrow
32. Throat	25. Elated
33. Reindeer	27. Rubies
34. Duties	28. Holder
35. Swissroll	29. Lineal

**Congratulations**  
to the winner of Crossword No. 1204: Louise Curtin, Midleton College, Midleton, Co. Cork. Cork East Branch member.

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