

ASTIR

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland



Under pressure: young teachers face heavy workload for lower pay



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

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Letters, comments and articles are welcome

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

Government must honour agreements

Ag an am seo den bhliain táimid go léir an-ghnóthach agus tá cursaí scoile agus gnáth obair an mhuinteora faoi lán seoil. Tá súil agam go bhfuil na haidhmeanna a leagamar amach dúinn féin i dtosach na bliana ag teacht i gcríoch cé go bhfuil an-chuid constaicí curtha os ár gcomhair.

The last few months have been extremely busy for ASTI members. As a result of the ballot on the document *Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation* and its Appendix we find ourselves in a situation where we have unresolved issues regarding the Junior Cycle. Standing Committee decided to engage further with members through school stewards and branches to try to establish a way forward. The ASTI directive on Junior Cycle remains in place and has been reissued to members.

The second ballot was on the issuing of a directive to members not to undertake post of responsibility duties unless pensionably remunerated for this work. Members voted in favour of banning such work. Accordingly, the directive to members will be issued shortly by Standing Committee.

A country that undervalues its education system undervalues itself and its citizens. There has been a tradition in this country of trying to get things done on the cheap as far as education is concerned. It is a matter of grave concern that newly qualified teachers and even student teachers can be exploited as far as this type of work is concerned.

In the most recent of our ballots, members voted to reject the Lansdowne Road proposals. Standing Committee subsequently passed a motion stating that the ASTI would not be bound by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions Public Services Committee's decision to accept the Lansdowne Road Agreement. It also restated that the ASTI is currently party to the Haddington Road Agreement. Members have delivered and will continue to deliver in full on the commitments made under this Agreement. We demand that the Government does likewise.

The publication of the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI) Bill in early October was provocative, vindictive and inappropriate particularly given the fact that the ASTI was still balloting members on the Lansdowne Road proposals and also given recent statements by the Government that Ireland's economy is recovering.

Shame on any Government that continues to ignore the appalling situation it has created in schools by trying to downgrade the work of the classroom teachers, the professional educators. Any attempt by the Government to renege on commitments made under the Haddington Road Agreement will be met with the appropriate response by the ASTI.

Tá tréimhse dheacair romhainn amach ach is féidir le baill an ASTI a bheith cinnte go bhfuil guthanna láidre ag labhairt ar a son. Bímis dóchasach agus go n-éirí linn le chéile!



Máire G. Ní Chiarba
ASTI President

New teachers need our support and our protection

After a working life in teaching and in the service of teachers, this is the last time that I will write this column before I retire. I am privileged to have been able to teach and honoured to have had the opportunity to serve my fellow teachers.

Teachers are human beings with as many strengths and weaknesses as everyone else, but we provide outstanding public service. OECD reports affirm that, despite the lack of adequate funding, Ireland's second-level education system performs very well and Irish teachers deliver value for money. While the day-to-day work of teachers is extremely challenging, the truth is that good teachers are inspirational and transformative. So are good trade unions. Unions provide protection in the worst of times and good counsel in the best of times. Their influence goes well beyond the members they serve. While the research clearly demonstrates that you are better off in a union, it is also true that the campaign work of trade unions protects and supports all workers and, indeed, all of society. Recent examples of this include the Living Wage campaign (a coalition of trade unions and other organisations) and the Fair Shop campaign (Mandate trade union). In education, it is teacher unions who campaign for improved pupil-teacher ratios and who raise the alarm on issues such as unsound reform.

Times have been tough in recent years. We have endured a severe financial crisis in which teachers, schools and students have felt the full weight of cuts. This period, from which we are barely emerging, followed a period of unprecedented boom and confirms the need for a robust trade union movement ever-ready to enter uncharted waters.

I believe that engaging new teachers is the key to the ASTI's future. We must convince them that their interests are best served by their participation in the ASTI. Many of our younger members are unaware of the past battles and achievements of the ASTI and the Irish trade union movement. I have been around long enough to remember teacher redundancies and discriminatory treatment of female teachers (and other female workers). Today, the greatest challenges facing the teaching profession are those affecting new and young teachers. In recent years our work has resulted in gains for new teachers through better security of tenure, especially in eligibility for CID contracts after two years of temporary contracts and in negotiating some improvements in salaries for new teachers, who were unfairly targeted during the crisis.

We must stand together to protect those gains. We must ensure that young teachers' voices are heard and that their challenges remain priority issues for the union. If we don't then who could blame them if they quickly lose interest in their union? Our future lies in solidarity, in protecting the less privileged and those who need a helping hand in this profession.



Pat King
ASTI General Secretary

Junior Cycle update

Members voted to reject the document *Junior Cycle Reform – Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation* (including Appendix) by 55% to 45%. Members also voted to continue industrial action up to and including strike action by 70% to 30%. The ASTI Directive on non co-operation with the Framework for Junior Cycle has been re-issued. This directs members not to attend or engage in a number of activities including CPD, meetings associated with the Framework for Junior Cycle, and any activity relating to the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Why the ‘NO’ vote?

A consultation with members to identify the reasons behind the rejection of the *Junior Cycle Reform – Joint Statement* has been conducted at school and branch level. Key findings will be posted on the ASTI website in November.

What happens now?

The ASTI is working to ensure that the voice of teachers is heard in relation to reform of the Junior Cycle. Any move to further implement the Framework for ASTI members at such a sensitive stage of this industrial relations dispute will be resisted. The ASTI has a mandate from members for industrial action up to and including strike action.

Junior Cycle directive

At its meeting on September 25, 2015, and until further notice, Standing Committee directs ASTI members in all schools, including Junior Cycle Network Schools, to withdraw co-operation with the introduction or implementation of the Junior Cycle Framework Proposals as follows:

1. Not to attend CPD organised in connection with the Junior Cycle Framework Proposals.
2. Not to attend meetings associated with the Junior Cycle Framework Proposals.
3. Not to attend any planning meeting or participate in any planning activities organised in connection with the Junior Cycle Framework Proposals.
4. Not to engage in any aspect of school-based assessment for the purpose of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).
5. Not to engage in any development of or delivery of Junior Cycle Framework Short Courses.
6. Not to engage in any event or function related to points 1 to 5 above.

For updates, visit the ASTI’s Junior Cycle Campaign page at www.asti.ie.

**Doodle 4
Google**

For the 8th year running we’re inviting Irish school children to create their own doodle by taking part in the Doodle 4 Google competition. This year’s theme is ‘Ireland is...’.

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. The competition opens 22nd September 2015 and closes on the 26th November 2015.

Teaching Council elections 2016 – apply for ASTI endorsement/nomination

Elections to the 37-member Teaching Council will take place in spring of 2016. Eleven places on the Council are reserved for second-level teachers. Four of these are nominated by the second-level teacher unions – two by the ASTI – and the remaining seven are elected by teachers who are registered with the Teaching Council. The term of office on the Council is four years.

Did you know?

In addition to nominating two members to the Council, the ASTI also offers to endorse members who wish to stand for election to one of the seven elected positions. If you are endorsed by the ASTI, this means that you can include this endorsement on your election literature. Application forms for members seeking endorsement or nomination by the ASTI are available on www.asti.ie. Application forms are also being forwarded to schools and branches. Forms must be returned by Friday, January 8, 2016. Please note that closing dates for applications for ASTI nomination or endorsement are separate from Teaching Council election deadlines. Members who are interested in standing for election should familiarise themselves with Teaching Council regulations and deadlines on www.teachingcouncil.ie.

Retirement seminars

The ASTI is providing retirement information evenings for members who intend to retire during 2015 or 2016. These seminars will be held over two evenings, between 4.00pm and 7.00pm, in venues around the country. Topics covered will include:

- how to retire
- calculating your pension
- retirement options
- enhancing your pension
- increasing your retirement benefits
- planning your finances in retirement
- personal taxation and social welfare issues
- budgeting and money-saving ideas.

You must pre-register for these seminars. For information, see page 18, or visit <http://www.asti.ie/news/events/asti-retirement-seminars-1516/>.

Use of technology in classrooms questioned

A recent OECD PISA study of students’ digital skills, *Students, Computers and Learning: Making the Connection*, found that countries that have invested heavily in information and communications technology (ICT) have seen no noticeable improvements in their performances in PISA results for maths, reading or science. Ensuring that every child reaches a baseline level of proficiency in reading and mathematics will do more to create equal opportunities in a digital world than solely expanding or subsidising access to high-tech devices and services, said the OECD.

Commenting, ASTI Assistant General Secretary Moira Leydon said that it confirms what teachers intuitively know: “Students learn best when they have high quality teachers who can distinguish different levels of need; where there is good classroom discipline; where teachers have high expectations of students. There is no ‘fast-track’ to high achievement using computers unless the basics are in place”.

However, she does not agree that this report should result in less investment in technology in our schools: “Schools need more technology to enable them to create different types of learning opportunities. Teachers’ skills and confidence in using technologies are the key to the latter’s effectiveness in our classrooms. We must continue to invest in teacher learning as part of an ongoing ICT-in-education strategy”.

Failure to provide certificate will cost you

Teachers who pay Class A PRSI contributions (all who entered teaching since 1995) must submit an MC1 Social Welfare Certificate to the Department of Social Protection if they are on sick leave for more than six consecutive days. This form is available from your doctor. The Department of Social Protection counts Saturday as a work day. If your absence continues into a second or subsequent weeks, you will also be required to submit an MC2 Cert for each subsequent week.

This is important, as it ensures that illness/injury benefit is payable to the Department of Education and Skills for your absence. In the event that you fail to submit the relevant certificates, you may be liable for the Department’s lost illness/injury benefit.

For more information, visit the sick leave section at www.asti.ie.

This issue in numbers...



PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS
who voted to reject the *Junior Cycle Reform – Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation* document including Appendix.
(P.5)



PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS
who voted to reject the Lansdowne Road Agreement.
(P.10)

Interested in running for the Seanad?

Graduates of National University of Ireland (NUI) colleges and the University of Dublin (Trinity College) will vote to elect six senators in the next Seanad.

Seanad Éireann elections must take place within 90 days of the dissolution of Dáil Éireann. NUI graduates will elect three senators for the NUI constituency and University of Dublin (Trinity College) graduates will elect three senators for the University of Dublin constituency.

The ASTI is inviting teachers intending to run in the NUI or University of Dublin (Trinity College) constituencies to apply for ASTI endorsement of their candidacy. Applications will be considered by ASTI Standing Committee at its January meeting.

Application forms are available at www.asti.ie (Campaigns Section).

Elect a teacher

If you are an NUI or University of Dublin (Trinity College) graduate, make sure you are registered (at the right address) in order to receive a ballot paper in the upcoming Seanad Éireann election.

University of Dublin (Trinity College) graduates can update their details here: <https://www.tcd.ie/academicregistry/seanad/>.

NUI graduates can update their details here:

http://www.nui.ie/news/2015/SERegister_Registration2015.asp.

Significant breakthrough on pregnancy-related sick leave

Pregnancy-related sick leave that occurred before the introduction of the new Public Service Sick Leave Scheme (i.e., prior to **September 1, 2014**) will now be discounted from a teacher's sick leave record for the purpose of calculating access to paid sick leave under the new scheme. This is as a result of concerns raised by the ASTI with the Department of Education and Skills, and also at the Teachers' Conciliation Council, that teachers who experienced pregnancy-related sick leave before **September 2014** – prior to the introduction of the new scheme – could have found themselves with limited or no access to paid sick leave. This significant breakthrough on the discounting of pregnancy-related sick leave that occurred prior to **September 2014** means that some teachers may now be able to avail of more sick leave on full or half pay. For more information on the new Sick Leave Scheme, see www.asti.ie.

Free, confidential support for you and your family – Carecall

Department-paid teachers who are experiencing personal and work-related problems, e.g., health or relationship issues, addiction, bereavement, stress, trauma, etc., can get direct access to free, confidential and immediate one-to-one support through Carecall, the employee assistance service. Where appropriate, this may involve free, short-term, confidential one-to-one counselling. This service can also be used by teachers' spouses, partners or parents, and by their children aged 16-23 or until conclusion of full-time education, whichever is earlier. This employee assistance service operates independently of the Department of Education and Skills and is completely confidential. The service can be accessed at any time by calling Carecall on 1800 411 057.

ASTI President visits Limerick



Pictured at a recent visit to King John's Castle, Limerick, were (from left): Matthew O'Connor (ASTI Standing Committee), Bernadette Normoyle (West Limerick Branch Chairperson), Máire G. Ni Chiarba (ASTI President), Linda Hall (King John's Castle Education Officer), Veronica Lavin (Limerick North Branch Chairperson) and Peter Quinn (ASTI Standing Committee).

500

NUMBER OF DELEGATES WHO attend ASTI Annual Convention each year.

(P.12)

269

NUMBER OF PRESIDENT'S Award Leaders (PALs) trained in 2014 who were second-level teachers.

(P.20)

Kieran Christie new ASTI General Secretary



Kieran Christie has been appointed ASTI General Secretary. Kieran is due to take up the position in January 2016, following the retirement of ASTI General Secretary Pat King at the end of 2015. Kieran is a teacher at St Attracta’s Community School, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo. A long-time ASTI activist, Kieran served as Honorary National Organiser for five years up to 2015 and previously served as a Standing Committee Representative and Branch Chairman. Kieran is also an elected member of the Teaching Council of Ireland.

Conditional registration – pay warning

The Teaching Council has commenced a review of conditions attached to teachers’ registrations. Letters and emails have been issued to all teachers whose conditions have an expiry date of December 31, 2015.

If you have received a letter or email from the Teaching Council in relation to conditions, please act upon it immediately. If all conditions are not met within the specified timeframe, and no extension has been granted, your registration will lapse and your pay will be stopped.

You can check the conditions attached to your registration, and the deadlines for meeting the conditions, by logging on to the Registered Teacher Login service on www.teachingcouncil.ie.

If you have already addressed a condition in full, please send the relevant documents to the Teaching Council without delay. If you face difficulty in meeting the deadline, or if there is any genuine reason that you cannot meet the deadline (e.g., maternity leave, career break, unemployment, etc.), please contact the Teaching Council, as you may be eligible to apply for an extension.

All queries should be emailed to the Teaching Council at conditions@teachingcouncil.ie, or call Lo-Call 1890 224 224.

Teaching about Government

The Think-thank for Action on Social Change (TASC) has created a Toolkit for Open Government, suitable for use by teachers of CSPE, Transition Year and economics. The Toolkit provides practical information and insights into how public decision-making works. It consists of ten guides on the themes of: policy-making; public spending; law-making; European Union; finding official information; freedom of information; open data; citizens and the environment; local government; and, citizen watchdogs.

Each guide contains the same section headings: what it is; how it works; do-it-yourself; and, resources. Most of the guides also include case studies highlighting some of the ways that Irish civil society groups and individuals are using Open Government tools to promote their causes. TASC also provides training on some of the topics covered by the Toolkit guides. For more information, visit www.tasc.ie/opengovtoolkit/about/.

Cosán consultation workshops

The Teaching Council is holding a series of evening consultation workshops for teachers on Cosán – the draft framework for teacher learning. Workshops are facilitated by teachers who are seconded to the Teaching Council, and are designed to gather a broad spectrum of opinion from the profession. It is possible to organise a school-based meeting by contacting the Teaching Council; where more than three teachers from a school are interested, they may wish to consider the school-based alternative.

Workshops are continuing in November. For more information or to register, visit www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Teacher-Education/Continuing-Professional-Development/Cosan-Consultation-Process/.

No requirement to purchase iPad/tablet for professional use

The ASTI wishes to point out that in schools where iPads, tablets or other IT equipment are used, there is no requirement on teachers to purchase or part-purchase such items for professional use in the classroom.

ASTI members vote to ban unpaid post work

ASTI members have voted in favour of a ban on unpaid post of responsibility work by 89% to 11%.

ASTI Standing Committee will issue a directive to members not to undertake any post of responsibility work unless pensionably remunerated for this work in November.

The directive will strengthen the ASTI’s campaign to have the moratorium on posts of responsibility removed. While the ASTI achieved a limited alleviation of the moratorium in recent years, there remain huge personnel gaps in every school and this has contributed to increased workload and responsibilities for classroom teachers, principals and deputy principals.

For details see www.asti.ie.

Show racism the red card

Registration is now open for the Show Racism the Red Card Anti-Racism Creative Competition 2016. Entrants are tasked to use creativity to produce a message arising from the themes in the Show Racism the Red Card DVD. They can do this through written, visual or audiovisual means.

Schools who register will receive a free DVD education pack. Schools who submit an entry before the March deadline will have access to two tickets to an Irish senior international soccer match. Other prizes include a laptop and a tablet.

All schools will be invited to send a group to the awards exhibition at the Aviva Stadium in April.

Students can register at www.theredcard.ie/competition.php.

Retirement after 37 years of service to the ASTI



Maura Harpur retired from the ASTI in October after 37 years working for the organisation. Maura was Staff Officer in the Accounts Department, where her responsibilities included administration of ASTI benefit schemes and processing members' expense claims. Maura excelled in assisting members who were in need in

accessing ASTI benefit schemes such as the Sickness Benefit Scheme and Benevolent Scheme. These schemes provide much-needed help to members and Maura provided information and guidance to members at these difficult times. Maura also processed all expenses forms from members, such as travel expenses for members attending ASTI committee meetings, CEC meetings or Annual Convention.

Maura's patience, kindness and discretion were always clear when dealing with members, and her cheerful presence was always welcomed by those who worked with her. She is pictured with Pat King, General Secretary, on the day of her retirement.

School steward training 2015



Pictured are Maria Conlon and Maurice Sinnot at school steward training in the Croke Park Hotel. The ASTI organised school steward training in venues around the country in September and October. School stewards received training on national issues affecting members, as well as information about how to help members in their schools.



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ASTI members reject Lansdowne Road proposals

ASTI members recently voted to reject the Lansdowne Road Agreement.



In a ballot held in October, ASTI members rejected the Lansdowne Road proposals by 74% to 26%. Having considered the ballot outcome, the ASTI Standing Committee passed a motion stating that the ASTI would not be bound by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) Public Services Committee's decision to accept the Lansdowne Road Agreement. Members of the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) also rejected the Lansdowne Road Agreement by 92% to 8%. The TUI has also stated that it will not be bound by the ICTU Public Services Committee decision.

The ICTU Public Services Committee accepted the Lansdowne Road Agreement in September after the majority of public service unions accepted it in individual ballots of their members.

ASTI President Máire G. Ní Chiarba said that the Agreement does not address the key concerns of teachers: "Teachers have taken significant cuts in pay in recent years. Working conditions have deteriorated through a combination of reduced resources and additional demands on teachers' time. Young teachers have been disproportionately affected due to the introduction of new pay scales and new pension arrangements. In addition, part-time teachers, who do not earn a full salary, will not benefit from the January 2016 pay increase".

Government publishes new FEMPI legislation

On October 9, the Government published the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI) Bill 2015. When enacted, this Bill will allow the Government to withhold increments from public servants who are "not encompassed by a registered collective agreement". It will also enable the Government not to pay the €1,592 payment due to teachers (in two parts) in lieu of the Supervision and Substitution allowance as agreed in the Haddington Road Agreement (HRA). The ASTI responded to the publication of the Bill by stating that it is vindictive and inappropriate given the Government's recent statements that Ireland's economy is recovering.

The ASTI also pointed out that the union is currently party to the HRA. The ASTI will continue to deliver on its commitments under the HRA and demands that the Government does the same. For further information visit the Lansdowne Road Update page at www.asti.ie.

What teachers have given since 2009

Cuts implemented since 2009 have included:

- 2009 public sector pension levy
- public sector pay cut averaging 6.5%
- introduction of inferior pay scales for 2011 and 2012 teacher entrants
- inferior pension scheme for teachers entering from January 4, 2013
- additional 33 hours non-teaching work per annum
- compulsory unpaid supervision and substitution
- continued loss of pay for teachers who availed of a one-off opt-out from supervision and substitution duties
- disimprovements to certified and uncertified sick leave arrangements
- increase in pupil-teacher ratio (partially restored in Budget 2016)
- abolition of ex-quota guidance counsellor provision
- moratorium on posts of responsibility
- cuts in capitation funding
- visiting teachers for Travellers service abolished
- withdrawal of many English language teachers

Budget 2016 and education

Budget 2016 included a number of announcements regarding teaching posts at second level.

Five hundred and fifty additional second-level teaching posts were announced in Budget 2016. Approximately 300 of these posts will arise due to an improvement in the second-level pupil-teacher ratio from 19:1 to 18.7:1.* Schools will be directed to use these newly created posts to augment guidance counselling services.

The remaining posts (up to 250) will be used "to enhance the role of deputy principals" in second-level schools with between 400 and 500 students. This will involve a change to current allocation arrangements whereby schools must have 500 or more students to be entitled to one deputy principal ex quota.

Budget 2016 also announced 370 teachers and 155 resource teachers for second-level schools to address demographic changes, teacher retirements, etc. It is important to note that these posts will be allocated in accordance

with the pupil-teacher ratio/allocation arrangements and are not newly created posts.

The table below shows estimated numbers of teachers in schools for the 2016/2017 school year.

Commenting on the Budget, ASTI President Máire G. Ní Chiarba said that while the decision to create more than 500 new teaching posts at second level is welcome, it is insufficient given the loss of approximately 1,700 teaching posts since 2009: "There have been more than 20 separate education cuts implemented since 2009. Schools are at breaking point. We see Budget 2016 as just the beginning of the reversal of these cuts".

For more information on the Budget, and its impact on education and teachers, see the ASTI's Budget 2016 web page on www.asti.ie.

*The pupil-teacher ratio is 23:1 for fee-charging second-level schools.

Teachers	Primary sector (teacher posts)	Second-level sector (teacher posts)	Total teacher posts
Projected numbers for end 2015	34,740	29,025	63,765
Estimated additional posts in 2016 from improvements in primary and post-primary schedules and supports for school leadership	+300	+550	+850
Estimated additional posts in 2016 to cater for increased demographics	+440	+370	+810
Estimated additional resource teacher posts in 2016	+445	+155	+600
Projected total number of teaching posts at end 2016	35,925	30,100	66,025

Source: Department of Education and Skills.

**BORD GÁIS ENERGY
STUDENT
THEATRE
AWARDS**

WHO CAN ENTER?
The awards are open to students from 3rd to 6th class in primary schools and all secondary schools students.

WHY TAKE PART?
We offer a chance for schools to gain recognition for excellence in drama and theatre, with selected schools invited to perform on the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre stage on 5 May 2016 at the awards shows.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFO?
Web: bgesta.ie
Email: sta@bordgais.ie
Phone: (01) 522 4840



Get those entries in!

- BEST DRAMATIC CRITIQUE
- BEST OVERALL SCHOOL PLAY
- BEST OVERALL SCHOOL MUSICAL
- BEST SHORT SCENE SCRIPT
- BEST DIRECTION
- BEST CHOREOGRAPHY
- BEST COSTUMES
- BEST MUSICAL NUMBER
- BEST SET
- BEST PERFORMANCE IN A SUPPORTING ROLE
- BEST FEMALE PERFORMANCE IN A LEADING ROLE
- BEST MALE PERFORMANCE IN A LEADING ROLE

Bord Gáis Energy

ASTI policy – have your say

Getting involved in and even attending the ASTI's Annual Convention is one way to have your voice heard in union matters.



Every year, 500 ASTI members travel to ASTI Convention to discuss the issues affecting teachers in their professional lives and decide what should be done in order to effect change.

Who decides on topics for debate?

The topics debated at Annual Convention are derived from motions drawn up by individual ASTI branches. Motions are presented to Convention and delegates speak to these motions. As ASTI Convention receives significant media coverage, motions provide important opportunities for ASTI members to highlight second-level teachers' key concerns to the public.

Branches normally decide on the topics they would like to see discussed at Annual Convention at their November branch meetings. Motions based on these topics are devised at branch meetings and forwarded to ASTI Head Office not later than November 30. A Convention Steering Committee – which consists of classroom teachers elected by Annual Convention each year – prepares a list of motions received from branches. The list is circulated to all branches before January 7. Branches are asked to prioritise motions for inclusion on the Convention agenda not later than January 31. They can also propose amendments to any of the motions circulated. Motions and amendments are considered again by Steering Committee and a final agenda is drawn up.

Who gets to go?

Each branch gets to send a number of delegates to Annual Convention. The number of delegates depends on the size of the branch. For example, branches with 121 to 180 members can send three delegates to Convention. Branches select their delegates at branch meetings, usually in January each year. Names of delegates attending Convention must be forwarded to ASTI Head Office not later than January 31. In addition to branch delegates, members of the ASTI Central Executive Council and Standing Committee attend Convention as delegates. All delegates receive a subsistence payment towards accommodation and meals. In addition, delegates can claim mileage/travel costs.

Example of Convention motion:
"That in the interest of equality for all its members, the ASTI demand the restoration of the pre 2011 common basic scale for all teachers".

Interested in attending?

If you would like to attend ASTI Annual Convention 2016 you should go along to your branch meetings so that you can participate in drawing up motions and indicate your interest in attending Convention. Ask your school steward for your branch's meeting schedule.

Where to stay?

ASTI Convention 2016 is being held in the Clayton Hotel Silver Springs, Cork. Convention hotel accommodation is limited and is allocated to delegates/CEC on a first come, first served basis. You can book accommodation in the Convention hotel by contacting them directly on 021-452 9300, or by emailing resmanager.silversprings@claytonhotels.com. The ASTI also provides details for other hotels and guesthouses near the main Convention hotel. More information about booking accommodation for Convention will be available on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie – and in the January *ASTIR*.

Can I bring my children?

The ASTI organises child-minding facilities each day during Convention sessions for delegates' children. Places must be reserved well in advance – not later than February 13, 2016 – so if you are attending please book your children's places as early as possible. For more information, visit www.asti.ie.

Where can I get more information?

The ASTI has a Convention 2016 page on its website. Visit www.asti.ie and go to Events.

Annual Convention 2016 – key dates:

- November 30, 2015 – deadline for submission of motions from branches
- January 31, 2016 – deadline for prioritising motions for Annual Convention 2016
- January 31, 2016 – deadline for submission of names of delegates to Convention 2016 to Head Office.



Fuelling Their Progress

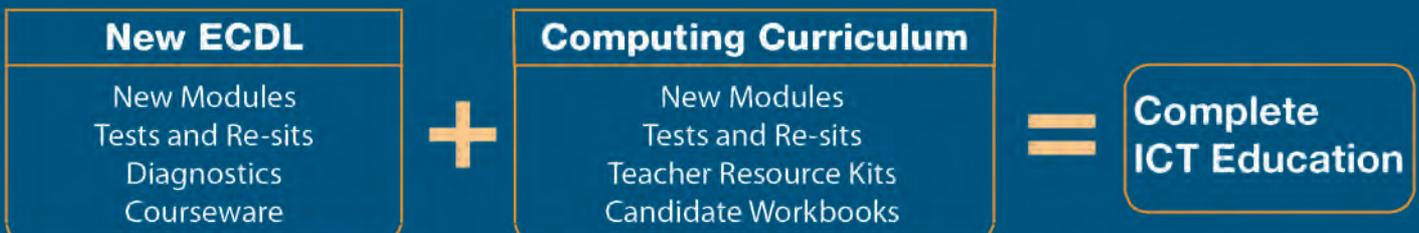
A Complete ICT Programme for Students

This year ICS Skills offers a blended programme combining **New ECDL** and the **Computing Curriculum**. Flexible, practical and certified, this is a **Complete ICT solution** for secondary schools covering students from first year right through to sixth year.

New ECDL modules cover new technologies and how to use them to get a head start.

The **Computing Curriculum** brings computer science to secondary school students, teaching them to code and use multimedia to create purposeful artefacts.

To learn more about our ICT programme for your students, please send your contact details to: computing@ics.ie



This new blended programme will continue to offer all the benefits of New ECDL including quality certification, flexibility and support.

Speaking out on the issues

As the autumn progressed, a number of important issues for teachers were addressed by ASTI members in the media.



Ingrid Miley of RTÉ News interviewing ASTI President Máire G. Ní Chiarba on September 24.

Lansdowne Road Agreement

“Teachers have taken significant cuts in pay in recent years. Working conditions have deteriorated through a combination of reduced resources and additional demands on teachers’ time. Young teachers have been disproportionately affected due to the introduction of new pay scales and new pension arrangements. In addition, part-time teachers, who do not earn a full salary, will not benefit from the January 2016 pay increase,” she said.

Máire G. Ní Chiarba, ASTI President, *Irish Times*, October 14

“The Lansdowne Road Agreement gives everyone on under €24,000 [annual salary] a year a 2.5% increase from next January. An awful lot

The no vote is probably explained by a lack of trust in the Government. There is deep distrust from teachers...

of our teachers will not get that. They’re on low pay, they’re on low salaries, they’re earning less than €24,000 a year but they get none of the benefit; they’ve been left behind by the Lansdowne Road Agreement.”

Pat King, ASTI General Secretary, *The Last Word*, Today FM, September 17

Junior Cycle

“Teachers needed far more clarity and detail about how the process will operate in reality ... ASTI members are committed to educationally sound reform of the Junior Cycle. We have participated in a robust campaign, including two days of strike action, which led to significant advances in negotiations.”

Máire G. Ní Chiarba, ASTI President, *Irish Times*, September 24

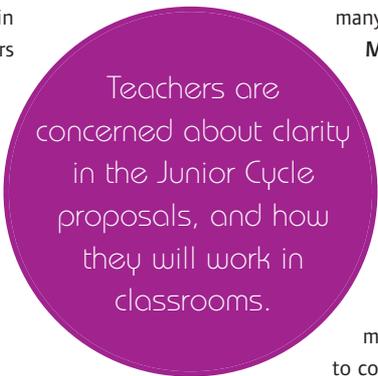
"The no vote is probably explained by a lack of trust in the Government. There is a deep distrust from teachers considering what they experienced in the last seven years ... I went to five of the eight regional meetings we had and that seems to be the big issue. People just don't trust them, they don't believe they will resource things in the way that the document says that they will ... Some of the moves by the Minister with regard to the reforms, teachers just don't have any trust in."

Ed Byrne, ASTI Vice President, *The Last Word*, Today FM, September 24

"We asked our teachers what they thought of the proposals and they've given them an answer and now we will have to talk to them to find out exactly the issues they are concerned about. Our understanding from meeting them around the country is that they're concerned about clarity in the proposals and detail, and how these proposals will actually work and how they will actually work in classrooms."

Pat King, ASTI General Secretary, *News at One*, September 24

"It's fine having a document and theory but the classroom practitioners are those who know whether something will work in the class or not and people are very concerned. As well as that, there is a deep mistrust;



many of our members, they don't trust the Government."

Máire G. Ní Chiarba, ASTI President, *Six One News*, RTÉ One, September 24

Young teachers

"Last year was my first year as a fully-fledged teacher. It's all I've ever wanted to do so I had that energy, but it is an extremely tough year. You don't have as much experience or as many resources or as many plans as your older colleagues ... I'm still trying to come to terms with the pay issue. It's very difficult. My starting salary is considerably lower than other teachers'."

Michael Browne (27), English and history teacher and ASTI member, *Irish Times*, August 31

"I just want to talk about teachers in Ireland at the moment. You're saying that young people in Ireland aren't being discriminated against and that we won't be this age forever. Teachers who are qualified post 2012 are on a totally different pay scale ... I'm working beside people that are getting thousands more, thousands more, for doing the exact same job."

Keith Howley, teacher and ASTI member, *Claire Byrne Live*, RTÉ One, October 19, 2015



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Educating the future

INFORMATION EVENING on the following programmes THURS 12TH NOV, 6-8PM, T1 18, TARA BUILDING

EDUCATION TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

- Structured PhD in Education
- Master of Education (M.Ed) Part-time & full-time delivery
- M.Ed. in Educational Leadership and Management
- M.A. in Music Education
- M.A. in Education and Well-being of the Older Person
- M.A. in Education & the Arts (META)
- Graduate Diploma / M.Ed. in Special Education Needs
- M. Oid. san Oideachas Lán-Ghaeilge
- Graduate Certificate/Diploma/M.Ed. in Professional Studies in Education
- Graduate Certificate / Diploma / M.Ed. in Mentoring in Education
- Graduate Diploma / M.Ed. in Adult and Further Education
- Graduate Diploma / M.Ed. in Information and Communication Technologies in Primary Education

- Graduate Diploma / M.Ed. in the Teaching of Science & Technology (Primary Teaching)

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

Learning, Society & Religious Education; Language, Literacy and Mathematics Education; Reflective Pedagogy and Early Childhood Studies; Arts Education and Physical Education; Special Education.

LIBERAL ARTS POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

- Structured PhD in Philosophy of Art & Culture (with UL and NUIG)
- M.A. in English Language and Literature
- M.A. sa Ghaeilge
- M.A. in German Language & Culture in Europe (with UL)

- M.A. in Local History (with UL)
- Structured PhD in Applied Linguistics
- M.A. in Applied Linguistics (on line)
- M.A. in History
- M.A. in Media Studies
- M.A. in Theological Studies
- M.A. in Christian Leadership in Education

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

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

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.mic.ul.ie/postgradstudies/Pages/default.aspx

Mary Immaculate College, South Circular Road, Limerick, www.mic.ul.ie

Download MIC App





A-Z of leave

Type of leave	Purpose	Maximum period
Adoptive Leave	To allow adopting teacher a period of placement with adopted child	24 consecutive weeks from date of placement with further option of an additional 16 weeks' unpaid leave
Bereavement/compassionate leave	Related to bereavement and/or attendance at funeral	Five consecutive days in the case of a spouse/child or parent, three consecutive days in the case of brother/sister/grandparent/aunt/uncle or parent in law
Career break	Break from normal duties for purpose of travel/further study, personal/professional development	10 school years in total. A maximum of five school years at any one time
Carer's leave	Care for "relevant person" certified as in need of care	104 weeks in respect of one "relevant person"
Casual/personal leave	May be granted for any reason deemed sufficient by the Board of Management	Five school days in a school year
Force majeure leave	Urgent family illness requiring presence of the teacher with the family member	Three school days in any 12-month period or five school days in a 36-month period
Job-sharing	Reduction of timetable to 11 hours per week	Minimum period of 12 months from the beginning of the school year – subject to BOM approval
Jury service leave	Legally summoned to serve on a jury	Period of time required
Marriage leave	Leave may be granted for a teacher's own wedding/civil partnership and days following	Seven consecutive days including Saturday and Sunday and must include the date of the marriage
Maternity leave	Birth and early care of child	26 consecutive weeks with further option of an additional 16 weeks' unpaid leave
Parental leave	Care of young children	18 weeks per child up until the child concerned turns 13
Paternity leave	Caring responsibilities soon after the birth or placement of a child	Three days to be taken consecutively or individually (proposed changes announced in Budget 2016 will extend this)
Other leave related to parenthood	Time off to attend antenatal appointments and one set of antenatal classes	Paid time off for pregnant teachers to attend appointments related to their antenatal care and one set of antenatal classes in a working career (expectant fathers are entitled to paid time off to attend the last two antenatal classes in a set)
Sick leave	Certified and self-certified sick leave available for teachers for absence due to illness	Ordinary illness – A maximum of 92 days on full pay in a year followed by a maximum of 91 days on half pay in a year subject to an overall maximum of 183 days in a rolling four-year period. Temporary rehabilitation remuneration will not exceed 18 months in the case of ordinary illness. Critical illness – A maximum of 183 days on full pay in a year followed by a maximum of 182 days on half pay in a year subject to an overall maximum of 365 days in a four-year rolling period. Temporary rehabilitation remuneration will not exceed 24 months in case of critical illness
Sport leave	Leave for teachers wishing to take part in certain approved sporting activities at international level and affiliated to the Irish Sports Council	For period approved by the Department of Education and Skills
Unpaid leave	May be granted in exceptional circumstances where employer is satisfied that there is a compelling obligation involving absence from duty	10 school days in any school year

The above information is intended to provide an overview of leave provisions. If you intend to apply for leave, please contact ASTI Head Office to discuss your specific situation.

Paid/unpaid	Type of cover	C/L reference with full details
24 paid weeks	Non-casual teacher appointed	Circular letter 0018/2013
Paid	Paid substitution provided	Circular Letter 19/00
Unpaid	Fixed-term teacher appointed	Circular Letter 0010/2011
Unpaid (there may be an entitlement to a social welfare payment – see www.welfare.ie)	Non-casual teacher appointed	Circular Letter PPT 17/03
Paid	Colleagues cover – no paid substitution provided	Discretion of school – not guaranteed
Paid	First day of absence covered under S&S Scheme – paid substitution provided for any subsequent days	Circular Letter 17/99
Half-pay	Fixed-term teacher appointed	Circular letter 0018/1998
Paid	Paid substitution provided	
Paid	Colleagues cover – no paid substitution provided	Discretion of school
26 paid weeks	Non-casual teacher appointed	Circular Letter 0009/2013
Unpaid	Casual teacher appointed	Circular Letter 0026/2013
Paid	Paid substitution provided	Circular Letter PPT 23/01
Paid	Paid substitution provided	Circular Letter 0009/2013 (Section 10)
Full pay followed by half pay followed by temporary rehabilitation remuneration	Paid substitution provided	Circular Letter 0059/2014 also refer to Note for Transitional Arrangement
Paid	Teacher arranges for suitable substitute at their own expense	
Unpaid	Paid substitution provided	Circular Letter 0035/2010

RETIREMENT SEMINARS FOR ASTI MEMBERS RETIRING IN 2015 OR 2016?

In order to facilitate members who are considering retirement during 2015 or 2016 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 2015 or 2016.
Attendance is required on **both** evenings from 4pm to 7pm.

You must pre-register with Danielle Cullen on 01-6040 160 or dcullen@asti.ie

VENUE	DAY 1	DAY 2
DUBLIN Maldron Airport Hotel	Monday 2 November	Monday 9 November
	You must attend both days	
GALWAY CITY Clayton Hotel	Tuesday 3 November	Tuesday 10 November
	You must attend both days	
LIMERICK Southcourt Hotel	Monday 16 November	Monday 23 November
	You must attend both days	
CORK Silversprings Hotel	Tuesday 17 November	Tuesday 24 November
	You must attend both days	
DUBLIN Stillorgan Park Hotel	Monday 18 January	Monday 25 January
	You must attend both days	
CARRICKMACROSS Nuremore Hotel	Tuesday 19 January	Tuesday 26 January
	You must attend both days	
SLIGO Radisson BLU Hotel	Monday 1 February	Monday 8 February
	You must attend both days	
TULLAMORE Tullamore Court Hotel	Tuesday 9 February	Tuesday 23 February
	You must attend both days	
KILKENNY Newpark Hotel	Wednesday 10 February	Wednesday 24 February
	You must attend both days	

TEA/SANDWICHES WILL BE AVAILABLE ON ARRIVAL

You may only attend if you have pre-registered with Danielle Cullen on 01-6040 160 or dcullen@asti.ie

ASTI RETIREMENT SEMINARS

ASTI
A century of service

Signs of confidence

MAGGIE OWENS is a teacher in St Mary's School for Deaf Girls, Dublin, and a member of Athy Toastmasters.



Pictured at the Youth Leadership Programme celebration were: Back row (from left): Bridie Corrigan, Maggie Owens, Alexis Liao, Aimee Ennis McLoughlin, Shauna Hathaway, Emma O'Higgins, Jodie Doran, Ted Corcoran, Shauna Murphy, Amy Corr, Edward Barr and Anne Doyle. Front row (from left): Flor O'Mahony, Afolabi Okesanya, Darwin Zapata, Adrian Melia, and Brendan Haughton.

Many people have felt awkward in conversations or speaking to an audience, so you can imagine that for some deaf people this can be multiplied by ten! However, there was no evidence of this awkwardness at a recent celebration of ten deaf students from St Mary's School for Deaf Girls and St Joseph's School for Deaf Boys who completed the Toastmasters' Youth Leadership Programme (YLP).

Leading

The YLP is a programme designed by Toastmasters to develop young people's speaking and leadership skills. As a Toastmaster myself, I thought that the YLP would be an excellent initiative for our Transition Year students. Adrian Melia, a fellow Toastmaster from Kildare Toastmasters Club, Brendan Haughton, the Toastmasters District 71 YLP Director, Flor O'Mahony, a teacher in St Joseph's, and I co-ordinated the programme over eight sessions.

Introducing the YLP into St Mary's and St Joseph's was initially a challenge due to the variety of communication styles of the students. Some use Irish Sign Language (ISL), others Total Communication, and some use speech only. But promoting language acquisition through effective communication epitomises the teaching styles of both schools. Before beginning, we invited Transition Year students from Kilcoole VEC, who had completed the Programme, to share their experience with us. This turned out to be an excellent idea because those students had also studied ISL. All the students engaged in a small group discussion about the programme and participated in some impromptu speeches. The collaboration inspired our students and they became very excited about starting the YLP.

Amazing progress

Observing our students over the eight weeks, I witnessed each and every one of them progress and overcome their shyness and their habits –

such as hands stuck inside pockets while speaking, lack of connection with an audience by not using eye contact, etc. I saw them creating and presenting memorable and effective speeches on topics of their own choosing such as 'The Great Wall of China', 'Capturing Memories', and many more. I felt privileged and proud to see them enhance their eloquence, interaction and leadership skills, through their preferred mode of communication, within the friendly environment of the YLP. Former World President of Toastmasters International, Ted Corcoran, said that he was "really, really impressed, entertained, amused and inspired", as he observed our students confidently taking the floor at the celebration day.

Benefits

The students acknowledge the benefits of the YLP. St Mary's student Aimee said: "When I started the programme, I was nervous. Ever since I began to stand up and speak, my confidence grew each week and the next thing I know is that I'm more confident and it's all thanks to Toastmasters!"

St Joseph's student Darwin Zapata agreed: "It's always good to hear recommendations, even though you may feel it's a bad recommendation. Remember, they're not criticising you, they're only trying to help you improve your speaking skills".

The structure of the Programme also gives the students excellent evaluation skills. When St Mary's Principal Eimear O'Rourke stood up to speak at the celebration, she began by commenting: "I am nervous standing up here today, speaking in front of such expert speakers and evaluators!"

I believe that all schools should try the YLP. It gives students a very valuable speaking/signing experience that will set them up for life. As Shauna Murphy, one of our students, said: "If you can speak/sign, you can influence; if you can influence, you can change lives".



Pictured outside Gaisce’s Gold Ceremony in Dublin Castle, marking the 30th anniversary of Gaisce, recent Gaisce Gold Awardees are joined by Gold Award Ceremony MC Mary Kennedy (a former ASTI member).



President’s Award Leader and second-level teacher Anne Dollard with her students attempting to achieve their Gold Gaisce award on a hike in Glendalough in August 2015.

Gaisce – The President’s Award

Hundreds of second-level teachers help their students to achieve their Gaisce – The President’s Award each year. JENNY DUNNE spoke to some ASTI members about their experiences as President’s Award Leaders.

Gaisce – The President’s Award is a self-development programme for young people in which they take part in personal, physical and community challenges.

Participants choose their own activities and goals for these challenges, with the support of their trained, adult President’s Award Leader (PAL). There are three levels of Gaisce – Bronze, Silver and Gold – each of which requires a different amount of time and energy. The Gaisce programme is delivered by over 1,500 PALs, many of whom are second-level teachers. Of the 472 PALs trained in 2014, 57% were from second-level education. Yvonne McKenna, CEO of Gaisce, commended the contributions of second-level teachers to the Gaisce programme:

“Hundreds of second-level teachers across Ireland volunteer as President’s Award Leaders, supporting thousands of second-level school students to take part in the Gaisce challenge”.

The key responsibilities of a PAL are to decide with the participants which activities they will undertake for the Award, to help them to register for the programme, to guide and evaluate participants’ progress, and to review and approve participants for the Award.

The Gaisce programme is delivered by over 1,500 President’s Award Leaders (PALs), many of whom are second-level teachers.

Focusing on success

Fidelma Lipsett teaches in Sligo Grammar School and acts as a PAL to Transition Year students completing the Bronze award and to Senior Cycle students completing the Silver award: “It’s quite busy in September and October as we have to get everybody up and running. I help them to choose their activities and get them all registered for Gaisce. After that, I have an hour a week where participants can meet me and discuss any issues or concerns they may have, and then I spend another one or two hours a week on things like checking their progress and making sure their documents are all in order”.

There is also plenty of planning involved in the adventure challenge for the award: “For the Bronze award participants, this involves a 25-30km hike and an overnight stay. We always do the adventure challenge at the end of the year to motivate participants to complete their other challenges in order to go on the trip. This also means that everyone on the trip is very focused on having it go well, as it is their final step in achieving their award”.

Anne Dollard is a teacher in Scoil Chríost Rí, Portlaoise, where she has been delivering the Gaisce programme since 2001. She acts as a PAL to approximately 180 students, from Transition Year to sixth year. Most pupils in the school attempt the Bronze award for Transition Year, and many fifth- and sixth-year students then choose to attempt the Silver and Gold awards under Anne's guidance. Anne believes Gaisce is an excellent way to help her pupils give back to the community and to mature as people: "For example, my fifth-year students doing their Silver award have to plan a two-night adventure trip and cook all their own meals during it. They really become a lot more responsible through the Gaisce programme".

Fidelma talks about the benefits of becoming a teacher PAL for Gaisce: "If you're thinking about becoming a PAL, I would say go for it, because you will really get a lot out of it. It's a great way to connect with your students, especially the adventure part of the award. It's also really satisfying to see your students' progress throughout the year, particularly students who may not always be successful in academic subjects, or even very academic students who would not often try things outside of their comfort zone".

Training

One-day training workshops are held nationwide on a regular basis for those wishing to become PALs. After this initial training, PALs are supported by Regional Development Officers who help them to get

started, and provide support for any issues that may arise while delivering the programme.

Anne says that her Regional Development Officer has been a huge support to her since she became a PAL: "My Regional Development Officer, Mary Orr, is fantastic. I can ring her any time, about anything, and I know she will help me. Her positivity has helped me to remain enthusiastic and excited about Gaisce through the years".

Gaisce is always looking for new ways to support PALs, says Yvonne McKenna: "We're introducing a new initiative this year – PAL Connect – which will be an ongoing series of knowledge-sharing and networking events for PALs across the country. PAL Connect provides a forum for PALs to share their experience of delivering the Gaisce programme – learning, challenges and successful approaches. We have also recently launched a new series of online guides, toolkits and resources for PALs, which are available on the Gaisce website".

How can teachers get involved?

Visit www.gaisce.ie to download a PAL application form and begin the process of becoming a Gaisce President's Award Leader. All PALs attend training to provide them with the information and resources required to support young people to take part in the Gaisce programme. If you have any questions on becoming a PAL, contact Gaisce at 01-617 1999, or email mail@gaisce.ie.



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29 March - 01 April 2016

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Cost: €695 (inclusive of travel, (hand luggage), hotel and entrance fees)

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

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In celebrating our 75th anniversary this year, we would like to thank the many thousands of you who have assisted us in preparing and correcting examination papers over the years. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to all our customers, past and present.

...Thank You

Working for equality

In this issue, *ASTIR* looks at the work of the ASTI Equal Opportunities Committee.

The members of the ASTI Equal Opportunities Committee are the ASTI President and Vice-President, Elizabeth Cooney, Rosabelle Crampton, Jim Duffy, Sheila Flynn, Maura Greaney, Bill Lonergan, Tony McKernan, Yvonne Rossiter and Aaron Wolfe. The Deputy General Secretary provides professional support for the Committee.

The Equal Opportunities Committee advises ASTI Standing Committee on matters relating to equality, particularly issues relating to the nine grounds on which it is unlawful to discriminate against a person according to the Employment Equality Act 1998-2011.

These grounds are:

- gender
- civil status
- family status
- sexual orientation
- religion
- age
- disability
- race
- membership of the Traveller community.

At each meeting, the Committee considers issues relating to the nine grounds and how they relate to ASTI members.

Current issues

Recently, a key issue that has been discussed is pregnancy-related sick leave. The Equal Opportunities Committee has looked at the differences in the treatment of ordinary illness and pregnancy-related illness, and how the changes to the way that pregnancy-related illness is treated have affected members. Although there have been recent improvements in the treatment of pregnancy-related sick leave, the Equal Opportunities Committee is continuing to work to achieve further improvements in this area.

Another issue of concern to the Committee is gender balance within the ASTI. Although membership of the ASTI is approximately two-thirds female, women are in the minority on most ASTI committees, as well as on CEC, Standing Committee and as delegates to ASTI Annual Convention. The Equal Opportunities Committee regularly publishes figures on the number of women on ASTI committees, and will be bringing proposals to Standing Committee to try and achieve proportional female representation in the ASTI at decision-making level.

Training

The Equal Opportunities Committee organised a training day for branch equality officers in early November. This included a seminar delivered by Sylvia Ryan from the ICTU about the problems faced by people with illnesses or disabilities who are returning to work, and how they can be



Rosabelle Crampton (Committee Chairperson), with Tom Meagher (White Ribbon) and Diarmaid de Paor (Deputy General Secretary).

supported. Rosabelle Crampton, Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Committee, spoke to the equality officers about the work of the Committee, and Diarmaid de Paor, Deputy General Secretary, gave an overview of the current legal issues relating to equality as they apply to teachers.

Ongoing projects

The Equal Opportunities Committee also makes contact with outside organisations relevant to its work. The Committee recently met with Tom Meagher, a representative of the White Ribbon campaign, a male-led campaign to end violence against women. White Ribbon is hoping to introduce modules on issues around men's identity and violence into the curriculum. Mr Meagher met with the Equal Opportunities Committee for advice on this and the Committee has recommended to Standing Committee that it supports the initiative.

Supporting LGBT teachers is also a priority of the Committee. This includes participating in the Dublin Pride march, organising meetings with the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN) at Annual Convention, campaigning for the abolition of Section 37 of the Employment Equality Act and reviving the ASTI Gay and Lesbian Equality Network.

The Equal Opportunities Committee is elected at ASTI Annual Convention every second year and the Committee meets between three and seven times a year. To find out more about the work of the Equal Opportunities Committee, visit <http://www.asti.ie/about-asti/committees/equal-opportunities-committee/>.

Dublin South County

Branch Secretary Seán O'Neill spoke to *ASTIR* about this small but influential ASTI branch.

Members

Dublin South County has about 200 members, drawn from six schools:

- Clonkeen College
- Holy Child, Killiney
- Loreto College, Foxrock
- Loreto Abbey, Dalkey
- Cabinteely Community School
- St Laurence College, Loughlinstown.

Branch officers

Chairperson: Michael O'Flaherty
 Vice Chair: Christy McGinn
 Secretary: Seán O'Neill
 Treasurer: Tony McGennis
 Equality Officer: Catherine Downey
 Honorary Organiser: Trevor Murray

History

This is a young ASTI branch (relatively speaking) and was formed in the late 1970s. It has still had its fair share of influential members, however, as Sean O'Neill explains: "We've got quite a lot of luminaries in our branch, including former President Patricia Wroe, and well-known members Patrick Pender and Joseph Keating. These are people ASTI members would know, and are the reason many of us got involved in the union".

Branch meetings

The branch meets five times a year in Baker's Corner, Kill O'The Grange. "The first meeting of the year usually involves a visit from the Industrial Relations Officer for our region, Sarah Fagan, to talk to us about issues of concern for the Branch." Sarah's visit was postponed this year due to a busy agenda for the first meeting, but the Branch hopes to welcome her at a later date. While keeping numbers up at meetings is an ongoing challenge, Seán feels that Dublin South County has been very successful at keeping schools involved: "We have representatives from every school at our meetings. We also have very good relations with our sister branch in our region, Dublin South 2".

Burning issues

Like many other branches around the country, the dispute over Junior Cycle reform is a big talking point for Dublin South County, as is the ballot on posts of responsibility. Seán is also particularly keen to promote the branch structure as a vital point of contact for teachers, with each other and with ASTI Head Office: "The branches are the most important element of the union because that's what got everybody involved: we all started off going to branch meetings. We feel that issues that come from the branch need to move quickly to reach the higher echelons of the union so that members feel they are being listened to".

Meetings give members a chance to discuss issues in a confidential environment.

"The branch gives a sense of security for people to speak out on issues that are of concern to them without fear of repercussions in their school environment. We always want more people to be involved in our branch. It's only by being involved that change can happen."

Seán also feels strongly that branches should be active within the ASTI by submitting motions to Convention: "We had a lot of motions at Convention last year. Being a small branch is no deterrent to being quite influential. The union is for everybody: we're all part of this and we all need to get involved".

Would your branch like to feature here? Contact astir@asti.ie.



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Erasmus+ offers funding for projects designed to improve education provision across Europe, including mobility for school staff (Key Action 1) and strategic partnerships for schools (Key Action 2).

We're holding **Information Sessions** throughout Ireland starting in November. We'll follow these with **Application Workshops** in December and into the new year.

Application deadlines: 02 February (KA1) and 31 March (KA2)

Check online for details:

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Brendan Gilmartin – an appreciation



I had the privilege of working with Brendan at St Mary's Secondary School, Nenagh, for 15 years and also had the good fortune to share his company on many social occasions where we chatted and discussed a wide range of topics from classroom challenges to cosmic concerns. Brendan was a talented man: bright, curious, well read, reflective and loved to engage with people and with ideas.

On his own admission he could be socially awkward, an unusual mixture of shyness and yet steely independence. As a teacher, Brendan loved his students, loved interacting with them and genuinely admired and celebrated their youth, vibrancy and freedom. He had a recurring phrase – young people are marvellous! And they are: but I would be struggling with the more mundane aspects of classroom life while Brendan waxed lyrically about young people's courage, honesty and vitality.

A recurring image that I have of Brendan in school is seeing him in the corridor at break time with a group of students huddled around, confiding in some aspect of their lives, and Brendan listening. He always had a maths book and the daily paper under his arm, as he headed for the staffroom, at ease with students as with colleagues. To say that Brendan was complex would be an understatement. His time in St Flannan's and Maynooth gave him a great educational grounding, becoming a Greek and Latin scholar before turning to maths. I suspect that going to Maynooth and then changing direction left a deep imprint on his life.

A line from the late Seamus Heaney comes to mind when he said that through language and memory we learn to stand up to what we stored up as we grew up. In his rich and complex life Brendan was, like all of us on the journey, constantly trying to work things out. He did this with intelligence, grace and compassion.

Brendan loved discussing sport, politics, theology, and current affairs, and kept himself well versed in a wide range of issues. He could be described as an amateur philosopher, as he loved ideas. He could get very animated about philosophical ideas, whether religious or secular. Krishnamurthy was a famous eastern writer whom he enjoyed many years ago – he believed that life ultimately was utterly simple. Just live it honestly, without pretence, without sham. Be yourself, help others along the way and rejoice and be glad. Brendan accomplished this with enormous grace.

May he rest in peace.

L O'C

Brian McDermott – an appreciation



A bright smile and a hand stretched out in welcome will always represent Brian McDermott for those lucky enough to have worked with him in St Mary's Secondary School, Nenagh. Everybody mattered – the shy first year and the stressed Leaving Cert student felt important and at ease in the presence of Mr McDermott. There was nobody on the staff who didn't welcome a chat with Brian. He epitomised the best of St

Mary's and we all miss him so much.

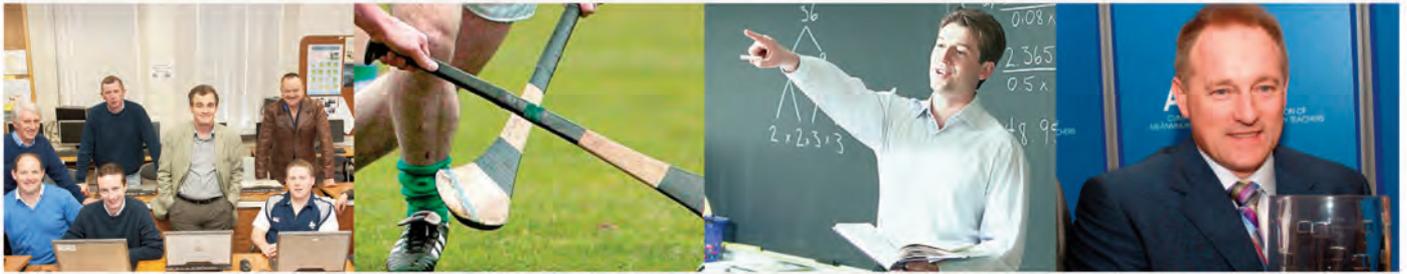
The messages came slowly on that July morning. A text from my daughter, a former student of the school, was typical: "Did you hear anything about Mr McDermott?". Knowing he had just returned from the USA, I wondered briefly if perhaps St Mary's would be preparing for a visit from Obama (arranged by Brian, of course). Sadly, all too soon we heard the unimaginable. Brian was dead. That great force of life and energy was no longer with us. Students, past and present, parents, grandparents and teachers made contact. Arriving at St Mary's to sign the book of condolence we were met with queues, tears and stories: everyone had a favourite Mr McD. memory. All spoke of his friendship, his caring nature, and of the big and little deeds of help and support, which saw him travel that extra kilometre or ten assisting somebody. Brian was an eternal student and an inspiring teacher of English, economics, business, geography and vocational preparation. More importantly, by word and deed, he prepared his students for life. Everybody who knew Brian knew of his love of Ballaghaderreen. Fittingly, his last journey was home. Those who travelled to his funeral were welcomed warmly by his own people and had an opportunity to say farewell in St Nathy's Cathedral, a place close to Brian's heart. To his brothers Martin and Michael, his sister-in-law Aine, his aunt Nuala (Goatstown, Dublin) and his dear nephews, Rossa and Arann, we extend our heartfelt sympathy. As it does life goes on and, impossible as it seems, St Mary's continues to educate its students. We are all poorer without Brian McDermott, but so much richer for the years he spent with us. "Anois teacht an Earraig"
Tā Brian i measc a mhuintir fhéin san iarthar anois ach beidh cuimhne ar a chinéaltacht agus ar a fhlaithúilacht i measc mhuintir an Aonaigh go deo.

Suaimhneas Sioráí duit, Brian.

M Dillon



Take a bow



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

Nominate an outstanding teacher or teaching team for their achievements
in school or outside 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 find out more or to nominate a colleague.

The closing date for applications is
Friday, February 12th, 2016

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**ASTI**
A century of service

Update on pension restoration

The RSTA has replied to the Alliance of Retired Public Servants conveying its disappointment with the timeframe of pension restoration, while welcoming the principle of restoration.

The Alliance has stated that flat rate pension restoration is substantially less than pay restoration, and further improving economic indicators make the continuing use of FEMPI emergency powers questionable. Consequently, it hosted a lobbying day in Buswell’s Hotel in October to ask politicians to progress the case. Once again the RSTA appeals to retired teachers to join the campaign. It welcomes passive as well as active

members, but numerical strength is crucial. A strong voice is necessary.

Christmas get-together – change of venue

The Christmas social get-together for retired teachers, kindly sponsored by the ASTI, will take place this year in Wynn’s Hotel on Tuesday December 15, from 2.00pm to 4.30pm.

RSTA Membership Application/Renewal

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

Annual Subscription €24. Payment options:

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

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO:

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

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS using black or blue pen.

To The Manager: Date:

(Name of Member’s Bank)

Bank Branch and Full Address:

I hereby authorise and request you to DEBIT my account.

Bank Account No: National Sort Code (NSC):

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

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

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

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

Member’s Name & RSTA Branch:

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

Member’s Signature: Date:

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

Youth for Decent Work Competition

Youth Connect, an Irish Congress of Trade Unions/Irish Second-level Students' Union initiative, invites all second-level and Youthreach students to take part in its video competition. Students must work in teams of two to four people to create a three-minute video about safe and healthy workplaces in the context of Decent Work. Each team and their classmates will be invited to an Oscars-style Youth for Decent Work award ceremony in the Savoy Cinema in Dublin in March. All shortlisted videos will be shown on the big screen and the winning team will be announced. The top prize is a fantastic five-day trip to New York for the winning team and their teacher. Youth Connect is asking students to consider the importance of a safe and healthy workplace in the context of the Decent Work framework, what it means to students and workers, and its importance to wider society. They also want teams to portray their understanding of the role for trade unions in achieving Decent Work, and helping to keep our workplaces safe and healthy for everyone. All teams must register their interest in the competition by November 19, 2015.

For more information, including instructional videos to help students learn more about filmmaking, visit www.youth-connect.ie.

Anti-bullying resources for teachers

Free anti-bullying website resources, part-sponsored by the ASTI, are available for teachers in primary and post-primary schools. Get all the free resources you need (and an explanatory video) to change the culture among the pupils in your school, to deal effectively with the universal problem of bullying, and to fulfill all requirements of the mandatory DES Anti-Bullying Procedures. You can register at: www.antibullyingcampaign.ie. Check out our "Video Links" page for great anti-bullying resources. With over 5,000 teachers registered, for further information contact Seán Fallon at 01-4513314 or 086-8496460, or email: fallonsfamily@eircom.net.

Training in assistive technology for students, parents, teachers and SNAs

The Assistive Technology Outreach Programme in University College Cork (UCC) is offering training in assistive technology (AT) to secondary school students in the UCC catchment area who have learning difficulties/disabilities, and to their parents, teachers and SNAs. AT is any technology that improves the functional capacity of students with disabilities. Use of AT can help to make schoolwork and homework easier and more effective for these students, when the traditional pen, paper and texts don't suit them. It can offer more choices for how they learn, level the playing field and make them more independent in their work. Regular training sessions are held in UCC. For those who cannot come to UCC to attend the hands-on sessions, the Programme is also running hour-long webinars to give an overview of the relevant technologies. You can engage with the webinars from your school or from home. In-school presentations, demonstrations and hands-on training are also available when numbers warrant them. For more information contact: Deirdre Madden, Assistive Technology Outreach Co-ordinator, Disability Support Service, UCC, Tel: 021-490 2784 (Wed to Fri), Mob: 086-792 2072, email: deirdre.madden@ucc.ie, or log on to <http://www.ucc.ie/en/dss/atoutreach/>.




Commencing: January 2016
Deadline for Applications: 4th December 2015

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



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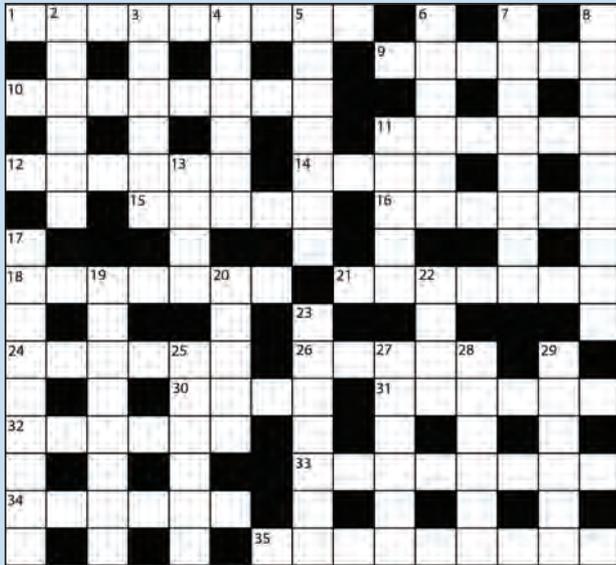


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ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 1505

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. 1505, Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, December 4, 2015

CLUES ACROSS:

- 1 For example, fibre optic transmission (9)
- 9 Auntie pinned it to his cravat (6)
- 10 See 11 across
- 11 & 10 across: General Secretary Designate
- 12 Are old experiences long and painful? (6)
- 14 "I am given, sir, secretly to understand that your younger brother Orlando hath a disposition to come in disguised against me to a fall." (Shakespeare: *As You Like it*) (3,1)
- 15 Smile contemptuously (5)
- 16 Taut or strained (2,4)
- 18 Current General Secretary (3,4)
- 21 Rub once and you might find the man at the door! (7)
- 24 Begin to poke fun at the cups and saucers! (6)
- 26 Composition of eight (5)
- 30 Asian language (4)
- 31 Did some pressing work! (6)
- 32 Don't hold your breath! (6)
- 33 Archaism for compelling charm (8)
- 34 "No flower of her kindred, no rosebud ..." (Thomas Moore) (2,4)
- 35 Known as "the home of the British army" (9)

CLUES DOWN:

- 2 Her return to the job causes her anger (6)
- 3 Puts up with though biased (6)
- 4 "No one will ever win the ... of the sexes; there's too much fraternising with the enemy" (Henry Kissinger) (6)
- 5 Admittance prohibited sign (2,5)
- 6 *Pieta* artist (6)
- 7 Dispersed picadors are off-again-on-again (8)
- 8 No spring chicken! (2,2,5)
- 11 Where a noted environmental treaty was signed in 1997 (5)
- 13 Moan tirelessly against (4)
- 17 A tacit heap shows no emotion (9)
- 19 & 23 down: It's your regulatory body (8,7)
- 20 Saltpetre, KNO₃ (5)
- 22 A manipulative sort of consumer (4)
- 23 See 19 down
- 25 Mark Anthony gave one for Caesar (6)
- 27 Harangue (6)
- 28 They're up for discussion (6)
- 29 Meet so we can give the appearance of (4,2)

Solution to ASTIR Crossword No. 1504

Across

- 1. Ní Chiarba
- 9. Rasher
- 10. Operettas
- 11. Slip up
- 12. Identical
- 13. Taurus
- 17. Job
- 19. Amnesia
- 20. Ethical
- 21. Net
- 23. Sullen
- 27. Genealogy
- 28. Obsess
- 29. Agreement
- 30. Narrow
- 31. O'Sullivan

Down

- 2. Impede
- 3. Herons
- 4. Attain
- 5. Bravado
- 6. Gaeltacht
- 7. Shipwreck
- 8. Proposals
- 14. Lansdowne
- 15. Enclosure
- 16. Aspersion
- 17. Jan
- 18. Bet
- 22. Emerges
- 24. Reveal
- 25. Alumni
- 26. Agenda

DID YOU MISS?

All you need to know about ASTI Convention
A-Z of leave

12
16

Congratulations

Congratulations to the winner of
Crossword No. 1504:
Michael Stack, CBS Secondary,
James's Street, Kilkenny City,
Kilkenny. Kilkenny Branch
member.

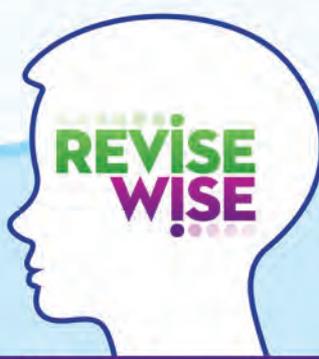
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