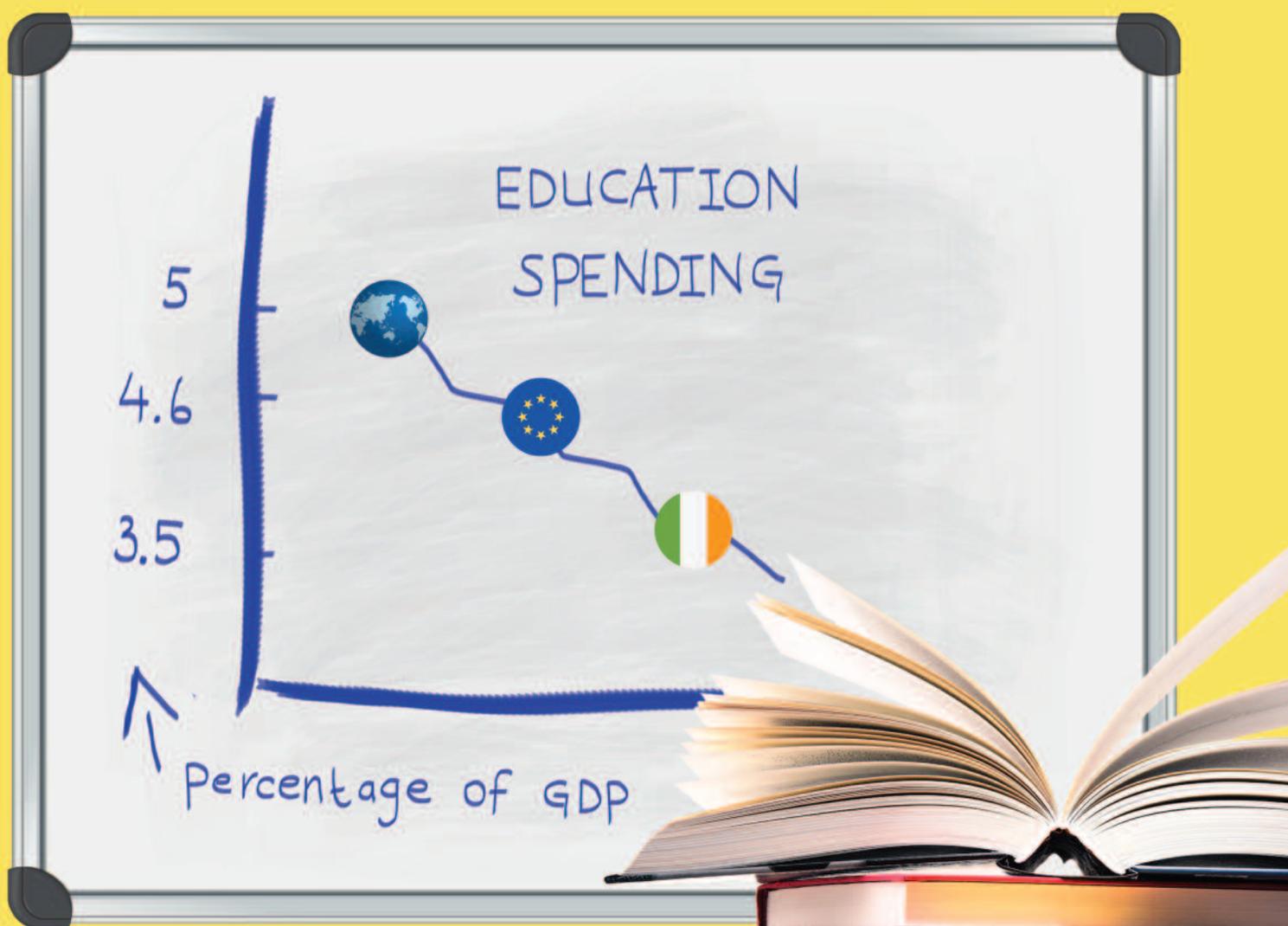


ASTIR

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland



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Convention
2019

SLAR
meetings



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EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK REMAINS PRIORITY

As this *ASTIR* arrives in schools during the ballot period, many members will have voted by the time they read this. If you haven't voted, I urge you to do so as soon as possible. Your voice is important. We have spent a number of years campaigning on this issue. We took strike action. I believe that the principled stance taken by the ASTI, including the use of our collective industrial muscle, forced the Government to finally take some action on this issue. While the proposal represents an improvement for post-2010 teachers, it does not achieve full equality. Full equality means equal pay for equal work: this principle remains a top priority for the ASTI.

Senior Cycle review

Earlier this year the NCCA initiated a review of Senior Cycle. Part of the review involves creating a network of 41 schools. The schools will examine current and future models for Senior Cycle education. The outcomes of such whole-school consultations will inform a national discussion paper in June 2019.

Research demonstrates that in countries highly regarded in terms of their education services, teacher unions play a key role in education reform. The ASTI will always resist so-called 'reform' movements that are really about implementing ideologically motivated changes in schools, which are more concerned with market-defined 'performance indicators' than value-driven educational outcomes. The ASTI is actively monitoring this consultation via the network schools and is participating in the three national seminars organised by the NCCA to review the key findings from the first phase of consultation. The ASTI must place itself as the relevant collective voice of teachers. We will organise our own consultation events with members in the months ahead so this collective voice is at the heart of any change process in Senior Cycle education.

Tackling disadvantage

Schools are arguably at the heart of society's efforts to address disadvantage and poverty. Second-level teachers can be proud of significant achievements such as: the second highest school retention rate in the EU; successful implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategy; and, strong pastoral care structures. Successive evaluations of the DEIS programme point to improvements in a number of outcomes for students. However, differences in achievement levels between DEIS and non-DEIS schools persist. The ASTI fully supports the ESRI's analysis that there is a strong case for additional funding for schools serving the most disadvantaged students. The fact remains, however, that the majority of disadvantaged students are in non-DEIS schools. The ASTI has long called for all schools to get the resources they need to meet their students' needs. Unfortunately, Budget 2018 did not address this issue. There is a need for a radical review of how schools are financed.



Breda Lynch
ASTI President

ASTI MEMBERS' INCREMENTAL DATES

Arising from the suspension of industrial action on June 10, 2017, an outstanding issue remains for ASTI members related to their incremental dates. During the period of industrial action, ASTI members endured a repugnant and punitive increment freeze under Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI) legislation. It is worth quoting from a letter received from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in May 2017 prior to the June 10 Special Convention that suspended industrial action: "A specific question was raised in relation to increment payment dates in future years and specifically whether these would revert to a teacher's original increment dates. The Department notes the position set out by ASTI representatives in our recent discussion. While the question does not fall to be considered at this point, it would fall to be considered in the context of the ASTI's formal entry to the applicable collective agreement".

This means that unless and until the ASTI signs up to a national collective agreement, e.g., the Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA), nothing will be done to ameliorate the long-lasting effects of this extraordinary imposition.

In November 2017, a commitment was secured from the DES to enter discussions on the issue of increments before any potential ballot that would formally draw the ASTI into such an agreement. Therefore, our members would know, while they are balloting, what the arrangements regarding the incremental dates would be if they accepted the agreement. But it was abundantly clear that it would only be in the context of formal entry to an agreement such as the PSSA that the outcome of such negotiations would be implemented.

Recently, the ASTI met with the DES to follow up on this commitment. They stated that if we were to ballot to enter the PSSA, they would engage with us, but at this point could not give any promise that there would be any incremental date restoration for the duration of the PSSA. They informed us that no more money would be made available during this agreement but that they were not ruling out final resolution of the issue. They followed up by issuing the ASTI with a statement including the following: "It must be noted that the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform has explicitly stated that the only matters in respect of pay restoration which are being funded in the lifetime of the current PSSA are those which are specified in the agreement. There is, accordingly, no provision under the Public Service Pay Agreement 2018-2020 to formally address the issue of incremental dates of ASTI members".

This is a most unsatisfactory and disappointing outcome. This matter must never be laid to rest. The ASTI will continue to pursue reparation for this gross injustice, which should never have been inflicted on our members. The long-term stakes are too high.



Kieran Christie
ASTI General Secretary

World Teachers' Day



Celebrating World Teachers' Day at school steward training in Kilkenny.

ASTI school steward training



Left: Pictured at the ASTI school steward training day on September 18 in the Ashling Hotel, Dublin, are (from left): Elaine Sweeney, Ciara Whelan, and Martina Farrell. Right (from left): Catriona Rosell, Breda Lynch (ASTI President), Conor McDonald (ASTI Industrial Relations Official), and Evelyn Lee.

Training for ASTI school stewards took place around the country in September and October. ASTI school steward training days provide practical support for the school steward team in schools. Topics addressed include:

- the role of the school steward
- complaints against teachers and disciplinary procedures
- contracts

- leave for teachers
- conducting school ballots, and
- update on equal pay and other national issues.

For more information on the role of school steward, see the school steward section of the ASTI website – www.asti.ie

New breastfeeding breaks circular issued

Circular 0060/2018, which extends breastfeeding breaks from 26 weeks to up to 104 weeks after the birth of a child, was published in September. The Circular entitles a teacher who has returned to work to one hour a day of breastfeeding breaks to be taken as one 60-minute break, two 30-minute breaks, or three 20-minute breaks. For second-level schools, the breaks should be covered through the Supervision and Substitution Scheme.

The Circular follows a claim by the teacher unions progressed via the Teachers' Conciliation Council.

For more information on breastfeeding breaks for teachers visit www.asti.ie.

ASTI member promotes blood donation



ASTI member Thérèse Glennon is spearheading a campaign to encourage young people to give blood. Thérèse and her students at Pobalscoil Neasáin in Baldoyle appear in a video to promote the giveblood.ie schools pack.

The pack is designed for Senior Cycle teachers to deliver a fun, informative and interactive class that will raise awareness among students of the need for blood donation, educate them about its benefits for all patients from young babies to older people, and discuss the dos and don'ts of blood donation.

Thérèse started giving blood when she turned 18, and encourages her own students to do likewise when they are old enough: "I think the schools pack is an amazing idea. By introducing young people to the topic of blood donation at an early age, we want them to realise it's not just something older people do – but that they too from the age of 18 can regularly save lives".

Thérèse and her class helped to make two short videos to publicise the education initiative and these can be viewed at www.giveblood.ie, where teachers and students can also download the schools pack.

Reminder: applications are open for ASTI Centenary Scholarship Award

The ASTI Centenary Scholarship is an annual scholarship of €4,000, which aims to assist ASTI members in undertaking further third-level studies. The scholarship is awarded at the end of each school year to the applicant who best matches the below criteria:

- relevance of proposed course to the professional lives of teachers and second-level education
- potential for study to inform the ongoing policy agenda and work of the ASTI and
- potential for research to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

Any ASTI member who is currently in service, or who is on paid study leave, can apply for the scholarship. Those studying on both a full-time and part-time basis are eligible to apply. A member can apply at any stage during the calendar year.

You can read about the research carried out by the 2018 ASTI Centenary Scholarship award winner, Maeve Clancy, on page 14.

For more information or to download an application form, visit <http://www.asti.ie/asti-membership/services-and-benefits/services/asti-scholarship-award/>

Teaching Council news

Re-vetting for registered teachers

The Teaching Council is now commencing the process of re-vetting. Teachers who hold the older Garda Vetting Central Unit (GCVU) vetting will be asked to re-apply for a new National Vetting Bureau (NVB) disclosure via the online system.

Re-vetting letters will be issued to these teachers on a monthly basis and it will be linked to each teacher's renewal date. There is a five-month lead-in for registration, i.e., teachers will receive the first notification of re-vetting five months before the date of their registration renewal. Teachers who receive a re-vetting notice are advised to complete both stages of the vetting application process within the timeframe given. If a teacher does not complete the vetting, he/she will not be able to renew registration and will lapse from the register, which means that he/she cannot receive a State-funded salary.

Registered teachers can check their vetting status by logging on to the 'My Registration' section of the Teaching Council website – www.teachingcouncil.ie. Please wait until you are requested to apply for re-vetting, unless you intend to change jobs/schools as set out in DES Circular 31/2016.

Post-primary

Droichead

In the last school year 760 teachers working in 256 post-primary schools completed the Droichead induction process. In 2018/2019 Droichead is the only route of induction available to newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in:

- special education teaching (SET) posts, and
- employment of 200 hours or more, in post-primary schools with 400 or more students.

The Droichead application process is open for the 2018/2019 school year:

- If you are a teacher and wish to apply to commence Droichead, you can submit your application via the 'My Registration Login' of the Council's website. Any queries in relation to addressing the conditions should be emailed to conditions@teachingcouncil.ie and should include your Teaching Council number.
- If you are a principal, and wish to register your school for Droichead training, information and application forms can be found on the National Induction Programme for Teachers' (NIPT) website – www.teacherinduction.ie. Any queries in relation to school participation in Droichead should be emailed to info@teacherinduction.ie.

Talks open on State Examinations pay claim

The ASTI and the TUI have begun talks with the State Examinations Commission (SEC) in respect of our claim for a 30% increase in payments for teachers contracted to work for the SEC. The ASTI has long maintained that the work of examiners and superintendents is underpaid and that this underpayment is a major cause of the difficulties currently facing the SEC in recruitment. It is crucial that the integrity of the State examinations is maintained, and this means that this work must be undertaken by qualified teachers. At the time of writing, these talks are at a very early stage.

See www.asti.ie for updates.

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Kilkenny retirement function



The ASTI Kilkenny Branch held a retirement function in the Set Theatre, Kilkenny, in October. Pictured at the event were: Front row (from left): Jim Ahern, Fred Tuite, Siobhan Peters (Standing Committee Representative), Breda Lynch (ASTI President), Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary), Giliane Starrett, Sandra Morrow, and Ethel Dooley (Kilkenny Branch Secretary). Back row (from left): Robert Chaney (Kilkenny Branch Chairperson), Marie De Loughrey, Áine Murphy, Fergal Canton (Kilkenny Branch Vice Chairperson), Ailish O'Donnell, Mary Ryan, and Jim Morrow.

Raise the roof

ASTI President Breda Lynch and General Secretary Kieran Christie attended the Raise the Roof lunchtime rally outside Leinster House on October 3. Called for by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, in conjunction with the National Homeless and Housing Coalition, the rally brought together trade unions, political parties, students' unions, housing agencies and community groups to demand action on the housing crisis.



New Education Minister



Donegal TD Joe McHugh has been appointed as Minister for Education and Skills. Minister McHugh taught maths and geography in Loreto Convent in Letterkenny in the mid 1990s. He later taught economics at A-level in Dubai and worked as a youth worker in Letterkenny upon his return to Ireland.

He has said that he intends to draw on his experience in the education sector in his role as

Minister for Education, and that he understands the pressures that both teachers and students are under. He has also said that he intends to use his experience with the Gaeltacht and Irish language to bring the Irish language to the centre of Irish education.

Before his appointment as Minister for Education and Skills, Deputy McHugh served as Minister of State at the Department of Culture with responsibility for Gaelige, Gaeltacht and the Islands. Former Minister for Education and Skills Richard Bruton has taken over as Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

ASTI curriculum change event



The ASTI held a seminar and consultation on curriculum change in September. Topics included updates on Junior and Senior Cycle, updates on the work of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), and consultation on teachers' experience of curriculum change. Pictured at the event were (from left): Margo McGann, Patrick O'Driscoll, and Deirdre Mac Donald (ASTI Vice President).

Dignity at work survey

The ASTI will launch a dignity at work survey towards the end of November. The survey will be accessible through the ASTI website. The ASTI is committed to achieving inclusive workplaces for all members. The dignity at work survey is open to all members – heterosexual and LGBTI+ – and seeks to obtain information on the experiences and perceptions of ASTI members in relation to exclusion/discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. The results of the survey will assist the ASTI in its work at school and national level.

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Speech Writing Competition 2019



*Entries
now open*

Calling all young people aged 14-17 years old to speak up for change! Students write a speech on one of these three topics related to gender equality and sustainable development:

- If women had equal access to the workforce countries would develop more; or,
- Men and boys need to play a larger part in tackling gender equality for women; or,
- Gender equality is fundamental for every aspect of sustainable development.

First prize is a trip to Greece to see ActionAid's work first hand and learn how they can influence change.

Deadline to enter is January 18, 2019. Eight finalists will be invited to deliver their speech in front of a panel of judges at the national final in Dublin in March 2019.

Speeches should be 850-1,000 words long.

For all the necessary information on how to enter, see www.actionaid.ie/speech-writing-competition, call 01 8787911 or email comms.ireland@actionaid.ie.

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CAMPAIGNS UPDATE – BALLOT ON PAY

A ballot of members will decide the ASTI’s response to Government proposals on pay.



INTO President Joe Killeen, ASTI President Breda Lynch, and TUI President Seamus Lahart. The three unions have been working together on equal pay for equal work since 2017.

As this *ASTIR* goes to print, the ASTI is undertaking a ballot of members on the proposed Agreed Measure to Address Salary Scale Issues Under Section 4 of the Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA) 2018-2020. ASTI Central Executive Council (CEC) considered the Agreed Measure in October. It was noted that while the proposal represents an improvement for post-2010 teachers, it does not achieve pay equality. It is particularly important that all teachers affected by discriminatory pay arrangements vote in this ballot.

“ In 2016 the ASTI took two days of strike action in pursuit of equal pay. ”

CEC voted to put the proposal to a ballot of members without recommendation. In this context, members are being asked to consider all aspects of the Measure. Information has been distributed to schools, including a special *Nuacht*. Comprehensive information is available on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie. Members are also encouraged to attend branch meetings where possible.

Talks process

The proposal arises from a commitment contained in the PSSA to examine the salary scale issues of those who entered the public sector from January 2011. These entrants were subjected to a pay cut. In the case of teachers, new entrants also experience an ongoing loss of income due to their appointment at Point 1 (instead of Point 3) of the pay scale. In addition, post-January 2012 entrants do not receive a HDip/PME allowance.

A talks process began in April 2018. At the talks, the teacher unions made it clear that they expected all of the issues with regard to post-2010 teachers’ pay to be addressed. These were:

SLAR UPDATE

The ASTI continues to monitor the situation with regard to Subject Learning and Review meetings.

ASTI and PSSA

In 2017 the ASTI voted to reject the PSSA. While the other two teacher unions – the INTO and TUI – also voted to reject the PSSA, the agreement was accepted by the majority of trade unions and came into effect for public sector employees in January 2018. ASTI members are encompassed by the terms of the PSSA. This will continue to be the case unless the ASTI repudiates the PSSA.

- the pay cut applied to new entrants to the public sector in 2011
- the outstanding teacher qualification allowance, and
- the fact that post-2010 teachers are appointed to the first point of the pay scale instead of the third point.

Following the talks process, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform issued the Agreed Measure to Address Salary Scale Issues in September 2018. The ASTI expressed its grave disappointment that the latter two issues listed above were not addressed at all. The document containing the proposal has been distributed to schools and is available on the ASTI website.

Background

Teachers who entered the profession after 2010 are on different pay scales than their colleagues, even though they have the same duties and responsibilities. Budget 2011 slashed teachers' pay by 10%. In addition, from 2011, new teachers were appointed on the first point, rather than the third point, of the scale. In 2012, qualification allowances such as the degree and HDip/PME allowances were abolished for those entering teaching. While there has been some progress on pay restoration, it still remains that new and recently qualified teachers are placed on inferior pay scales.

A second-level teacher who entered the profession in September 2018 is currently earning approximately €4,000 less per year than they would be earning on the old (pre-2011) pay scale. During some of the initial years of teaching this loss is higher – as much as €6,000 to €7,000 per annum. This represents a substantial reduction in earnings over the duration of a teaching career.

Teachers entering second-level teaching have spent four to six years training, including attaining a two-year Professional Masters in Education.

In 2016 the ASTI took two days of strike action in pursuit of equal pay for post-2010 teachers. Since 2017, the three teacher unions have been working together to close the remaining gap in post-2010 teachers' pay.

For updates, including ballot information,
visit www.asti.ie.

SLAR meetings

The ASTI's policy on Subject Learning and Review (SLAR) meetings is as follows:

SLAR meetings will be scheduled within a school's timetable. A limited number of meetings may run beyond school tuition hours for some of the duration of the meeting.

The adoption of this policy by ASTI Central Executive Council is in line with the Appendix to the Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation, and with assurances from the Department of Education and Skills (DES; see below).

The ASTI is aware that in some schools attempts are being made to organise SLAR meetings entirely outside normal tuition hours. Such attempts contravene the Appendix to the Joint Statement and the assurances from the DES. In response to such breaches, the ASTI is issuing an Implementation Declaration to schools to highlight ASTI policy. This includes a poster for ASTI staff noticeboards. Where ASTI members are aware of breaches, they should bring the matter to the attention of the school steward, who will inform school management and ASTI Head Office. Such contraventions have serious implications for teachers' working conditions.

SLAR meetings – the official position

The Appendix to the Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation, Section 9.7 (July 2015) and DES Circular Letter 0015/2017 both state:

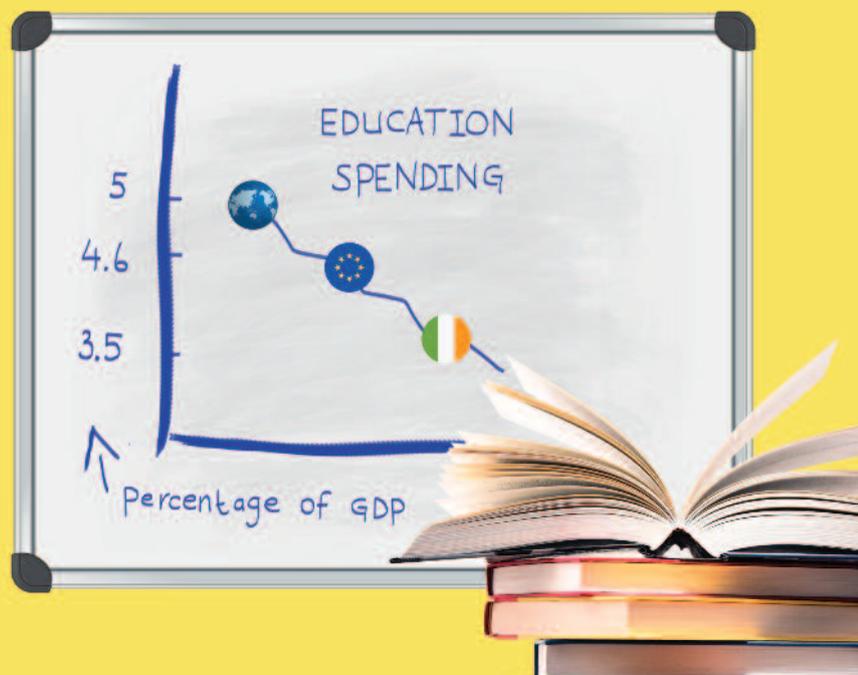
“The 40-minute professional time period provided within timetable is available to teachers on the basis that they will use this time flexibly, including bundling within timetable periods and carrying forward time, to facilitate professional collaboration. Teachers may also use the time periods for individual planning, feedback or reporting activities relating to Junior Cycle. In particular, time periods will need to be bundled to facilitate Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings. Since professional collaboration meetings can only be held when the relevant subject teachers can be present, a limited number of meetings may need to draw on teachers' bundled time to run beyond normal school tuition hours for some of the duration of the meeting”.

The DES' assurance to the ASTI in December 2015 states:

“The Department confirms that any attempt to impose the organisation of SLAR meetings entirely outside school hours would contravene the agreement. The intention is that SLAR meetings will be scheduled to commence within the timetable, involving the inclusion of a normal timetabled period. However, given the required duration, flexibility to run beyond the normal school day for some duration of the meeting is required. This flexibility is essential to the feasibility of organising SLAR meetings”.

OECD: ‘IRELAND NEEDS TO SPEND MORE ON EDUCATION’

Education at a Glance 2018 shows that Ireland’s spend on education has dropped significantly in recent years. GEMMA TUFFY reports.



The publication by the OECD of *Education at a Glance 2018* in September was accompanied by a stark warning: expenditure on education in Ireland has not kept up with the rising number of students.

Education at a Glance 2018 reveals that in 2015, Ireland invested 3.5% of GDP in education compared to the OECD average of 5% and EU average of 4.6%. In fact, out of 33 countries, Ireland is in joint last place for spending on education relative to national wealth. Investment as a proportion of GDP demonstrates the priority individual countries give to education, according to the OECD.

In terms of investment in second-level education, Ireland spends 1.1% of its GDP on second level compared to the OECD and EU averages of 2% (Table 1).

“ The ASTI believes the lack of information on class size hides issues of overcrowding, particularly in core subjects. ”

Investment pays off

Education at a Glance 2018 stresses the benefits of investment in education for individuals and countries. Adults who have completed second-level education are more likely to be in employment, achieve better pay, and experience a range of other positive social and personal outcomes. Investment in education also results in significant public benefits, including greater social well-being, social cohesion and equity, as well as a bigger tax return from higher skilled adults who have more earning potential. Ireland is specifically mentioned as one of three countries where the public returns on investment in education are “very large”.

Furthermore, the report states that: “It is crucial for policy makers to understand the economic incentives to invest in education”.

The report makes it clear that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are disproportionately affected by declining investment in education. Significant reductions are registered for Ireland, Portugal, Lithuania, Italy, Spain and Slovenia. In 2015, expenditure per student in Ireland was much lower than it was in 2010, the report notes. Spending decreased by 15% for primary to post-secondary (non-tertiary) education during that period.

The report verifies that the ASTI’s concerns about education funding in Ireland are justified. In particular, the ASTI is concerned by the failure to fully reverse key education cuts implemented during the financial crisis, including the worsening of the pupil–teacher ratio. The pupil–teacher ratio at second level in Ireland is higher than the OECD average. There is no class size data available for Ireland. The ASTI believes the lack of information on class size hides issues of overcrowding, particularly in core subjects.

High environmental awareness

This year’s *Education at a Glance* also focuses on awareness of environmental issues among 15 year olds. The report states that education empowers individuals to make changes in their own behaviour and consequently improve outcomes for all of society: “It is through the transformation of individuals’ own behaviour that they collectively contribute to sustainable development, by promoting the necessary societal, economic and political changes”. Based on scores from the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2015, the report finds that Irish 15 year olds scored higher than the OECD and EU averages across six out of seven environmental awareness areas of science proficiency. These areas are: greenhouse gases, nuclear waste, deforestation, air pollution, animal/plant extinction, and water shortage.

Table 1: Total expenditure on secondary education as a percentage of GDP.

1	Belgium	2.7	19	Slovak Republic	1.9
2	New Zealand	2.7	20	United States	1.8
3	Finland	2.6	21	Czech Republic	1.8
4	France	2.5	22	Chile	1.8
5	Norway	2.5	23	Hungary	1.8
6	Netherlands	2.4	24	Slovenia	1.7
7	United Kingdom	2.4	25	Spain	1.7
8	Portugal	2.4	26	Luxembourg	1.7
9	Korea	2.3	27	Latvia	1.6
10	Iceland	2.3	28	Poland	1.6
11	Austria	2.2	29	Greece	1.5
12	Germany	2.2	30	Japan	1.5
13	Israel	2.1	31	Canada	1.4
14	Australia	2.0	32	Estonia	1.4
15	Turkey	2.0	33	Ireland	1.1
16	Mexico	2.0			
17	Italy	1.9	OECD average		2.0
18	Sweden	1.9	EU22 average		2.0

Another positive outcome is that young people who are foreign born do better in Ireland than those who are foreign born living in other countries. For example, Ireland has one of the highest levels of tertiary-educated foreign-born adults in the world. In addition, there is no significant difference in Ireland between the proportion of native-born and foreign-born young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs). While Ireland has a lower proportion of NEETs than the OECD average – 13% compared to 15% – there are serious long-term implications for lower-skilled NEETs as economies and labour markets continue to be influenced by technological advances. To counter this, Ireland must ensure that there are adequate supports in place to ensure that school leavers can make the best choices for their future. In this context, the ASTI continues to lobby for the full restoration of the ex-quota guidance counselling provision for second-level schools. Employment prospects are slightly better for the native-born population in Ireland.

Maths equity

Ireland's second-level students perform above the OECD average in maths, coming 13th out of 35 countries. Performance in maths among 15 year olds in Ireland seems to be less dependent on factors such as gender, urban/rural location, and economic, social and cultural status than in other countries.

Working hours

Once again, *Education at a Glance* provides the evidence that Irish teachers spend more time in the classroom than many of their OECD and EU counterparts. In Ireland, second-level teachers are contracted to teach 735 hours per annum compared to the OECD average of 657 hours and the EU average of 635 hours. Countries with lower class contact time than Ireland include Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, France, Spain and Germany. As a result of higher teaching hours, students in Ireland have more instruction time: 924

hours at lower second level compared to the OECD average of 913 hours and EU average of 894 hours. In addition to classroom teaching time, recent RED C research, commissioned by the ASTI, found that second-level teachers spend more than 20 hours per week on non-teaching work.

Ireland has one of the highest enrolment rates for young people aged 16. This is important because unemployment is highly associated with school drop-out. On average across OECD countries, the unemployment rate is almost twice as high for those who have not completed upper second-level education than for those who have.

Teachers' pay

Ireland is 15th out of 33 OECD countries when it comes to the starting salary of second-level teachers. The salary tables provided in *Education at a Glance* hide the fact that the majority of second-level teachers experience precarious employment at the beginning of their careers, often lasting a number of years. After 10 years, Ireland moves to eighth out of 33 countries for teachers' pay, and to seventh place from 15 years onwards. While the report demonstrates that across the OECD second-level teachers earn approximately 91% to 96% of the average graduate salary, there is no individual figure for Ireland. In 2014, Irish second-level teachers earned approximately 81% of the average graduate salary for Ireland.

Read *Education at a Glance 2018* here:
www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2018/executive-summary_eag-2018-5-en.

Read *Education at a Glance 2018 Country Note: Ireland* here:
www.read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2018/ireland_eag-2018-51-en#page1.

WHY THE LACK OF SUPPLY?

Maths and Irish teacher Maeve Clancy spent two years in DCU researching why we're seeing teacher shortages in certain areas.



Maeve Clancy, a teacher in St Benildus College, Stillorgan, who undertook research on teacher supply.

Where were you studying and what was the title of your research?

I studied for an MSc in Public Policy from DCU and the title of my thesis was 'The teacher supply crisis: examining the shortages of post-primary teachers in key subject areas in Ireland'. The course itself was initially established as a response to the economic crisis. One of its aims was to look at the problems in policy making in general in Ireland and I looked at education in particular as part of my research.

Could you tell me about your research and the main findings?

The idea for the research came anecdotally from hearing colleagues, friends of mine and school principals talk about the difficulties they face in hiring teachers in certain subjects, specifically Irish, maths, physics, home economics, and modern languages. I wanted to see why that was a problem, why there was a surplus of teachers in certain subjects and an undersupply in others, and if the Department of Education and Skills was making any changes to alleviate that problem. What I found out was that this problem has been allowed to develop over the last number of decades, as far back as 1965. The 'Investment in Education' report back then noted that if teachers were to be restricted to the subjects that they were qualified to teach, shortages would be felt in some areas. When those restrictions did come into effect when the Teaching Council Act was initiated, shortages become much more prevalent. The fact that you can't teach a subject that you're not qualified for or that you shouldn't be teaching a subject that you're not qualified for has made the problem significantly worse in the last number of years. Principals have found it difficult to find teachers, first and foremost to fill permanent positions, but even more so for temporary positions. Those were the main findings of my research. The reason this has become a problem is the fact that there's really no model for workforce planning in the Department of Education. As it stands, it doesn't really have a proper forward planning system for knowing the number of teachers needed in specific subject specialisms. That was one of the main findings and that really needs to be developed.

I looked at it in an international context and the Scottish system is probably the one most similar to ours. They have put in place a forward planning system that allows them to determine how many teachers they'll need and in what subjects a couple of years in advance. Pay and conditions are another reason why there's a shortage of teachers in certain subjects now, because the opportunities in STEM and modern languages in industry and the private sector are more appealing. The pay and conditions are better in those sectors and graduates just aren't going into teaching as much as they did in the past.

How do you hope this work will help teachers/the ASTI?

If it isn't already, teacher supply is going to become a major problem in schools over the next few years, especially as the Department tries to implement plans in STEM and modern languages. In 2017, it released the STEM Education Implementation Plan, and in modern languages, the Languages Connects programme. Schools are going to need significantly more teachers who are qualified to teach those subjects. However, for example, in 2015 only seven postgraduates in the Professional Master of Education came from a physics background. I was hoping that the research would highlight the fact that something needs to be done to improve teacher supply in those areas. How I thought it might help the ASTI is that they've really been to the forefront on pay equality for recently qualified teachers. The existence of the inferior pay scales is contributing to the shortage of teachers in certain areas.

What is the potential of this research to improve learning in schools?

For schools, the research highlights how important it is and the absolute benefit of having a teacher who is qualified to teach their subject. It is also important for students in terms of equality of access. Schools in certain areas are finding it more difficult to get teachers in certain subjects. It is not fair or equal to allow students to be taught subjects by teachers who are not qualified to teach them.

BETTER LIFE ABROAD?

In recent years, more and more young teachers have left the unequal pay and precarious working conditions of the Irish education system to teach abroad. *ASTIR* spoke to two of them.



Aisling Fagan – Australia

From Inchicore in Dublin, Aisling graduated from UCD in 2008 with a BSc (Hons) in Biochemistry and went on to do a Postgraduate Diploma in Education in 2009. She also holds a Masters of Educational Studies in Behaviour Management from the University of Queensland. She teaches science, biology and nutrition at The Essington International Senior College, Darwin.

I applied to all ends of the country for every role that appeared. I worked in some great schools in Dublin teaching biology, science, learning support and some team teaching. Some weeks the timetable would be filled with relief, others not so much. I also had a second job working evenings and weekends in a hospital as a healthcare assistant.

I was fed up with the two-tier pay system and inconsistent hours. I had always wanted to travel but had hoped to secure the elusive CID, or even a permanent role, and travel during the summers. I came to realise I could be years waiting. My partner and I decided we would travel to Asia and Australia. He works in finance so is quite flexible. So we left for a year ... five years ago.

I was recruited through an agency, which called and asked if we would be interested in a move to Darwin and could they forward my CV to the principal as I was a prime candidate.

School life

Teaching is very different here. I think the workload is a little heavier – I teach year 11 and 12 mostly (5th and 6th year) and 70% of assessment is internal – I mark it and samples are moderated later in the year. Classroom-based assessment is a huge part of our working time. Students all have their own laptops and they can frequently email work to you as a draft piece or contact you for help.

Teaching here has brought my students and I on snake-catching trips with a herpetologist, dissecting crocodiles, assisting turtle hatchlings into the water on sandy islands, and much more.

Students here don't rely on the end-of-year exam only to demonstrate and apply their knowledge. Some senior-level subjects have no exam at all, but would have a report that is assessed by an external marker. I think it gives more students the confidence to achieve. The Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training is the equivalent to the Leaving Cert as such. It is credit based and students can also complete a vocational course, which will contribute credits. For example I have some students who are out one day a week training to obtain their Cert 1 or 2 in automotive, beauty, retail, etc. There is a wider array of school subjects to choose from. At times the workload can be a little overwhelming with the amount of time it takes to mark and give feedback. Being one of the top-performing schools in the Northern Territory, we are continuously pushing our students to achieve to their full potential. We don't have as many holidays (about a month less) but that doesn't bother me.

Life in Darwin

It's a permanent position, and I'm earning significantly more than I would in Ireland. In the past 18 months, we have managed to comfortably save to pay for our wedding at home, honeymoon and buy a house, while still maintaining a great lifestyle. I also completed a partially government-funded Masters of Educational Studies in Behaviour Management. I am sure we would have been struggling to do one of these things at home.

The lifestyle is so different and relaxed. There is a huge emphasis on sport and the outdoors. We live in an elevated house with a pool, five minutes from the beach. There are great public amenities, barbecues in the park, well-kept sporting facilities and heaps of events. There's something for everyone each weekend in the dry season in Darwin.

Future plans

Having bought a house we plan to stay for the next four to five years. We really do love our lifestyle here and the work, though time consuming, is enjoyable. Our students are great and I am part of an amazing team of teachers.

In one way the only pull we feel back to Ireland is family and friends. But we are fortunate that our friends and families have come to visit us and support us.

If we were to return to Ireland, while I'd never say never, I'm not sure I would go back into education unless things are more stable and achieving a decent contract and standard of living is possible. Saying that upsets me – it's a great job, and Irish students deserve to have good teachers who are well qualified and happy.

Final thoughts

My situation is unique. I almost have Australian citizenship and have set up in a part of the world I had never thought of. Being a teacher has opened a lot of those doors for me and I am so grateful for that. Changes are needed in the Irish system. Retaining quality teachers, improving outcomes and changing curriculum won't happen overnight, but listening to the people at the forefront, in the classroom and parents, is essential in getting the process started.





Áine Geoghegan – Canada

Áine is from Dublin, and graduated in 2008 from UCD, qualifying in English and geography. After working in Australia, Spain and Abu Dhabi, she is now based in Vancouver in Canada, where she has just begun a new role in curriculum development for elementary and middle schools.

I was working for about a year and a half before I left Ireland. I got lots of short contracts in mostly private schools around Dublin: two weeks here and there, and sometimes I was lucky to get longer contracts of a few months. I left Ireland initially by choice as I wanted to travel and explore. I had no official offer from any school in Dublin, or any type of permanent contract keeping me in Ireland.

As nearly 10 years have now passed, coming home to teach is proving more difficult than it ever was back in 2009.

I did not have a job arranged before arriving in Canada; however, I got work once I arrived, as teachers are in demand here.

Working life

I have been seeking a role in curriculum development since qualifying as a teacher. British Columbia is going through a major curriculum change for primary and secondary levels, and it's an exciting time to be here. Working here is very different to Dublin, in the sense that people seem to be consumed by their jobs. People work much longer hours than I remember at home, and work-related stress is often discussed. I am lucky to get all the opportunities that I have gotten here, that I would never get at home. I have been interested in developing curricula for a long time, but in Ireland I was never able to find those opportunities. I have worked with lots of different curricula over the past nine years and have learned so much.



I am very grateful to have the opportunity to be creative, and work with teachers to develop curriculum.

In terms of lifestyle, Ireland is the clear winner. My family and friends are all there and that's a huge pull factor. If I could have the same job that I have here, but in Dublin, I would be gone in a heartbeat.

Education in Canada

The main difference is that religion is not a part of the Vancouver public system. Vancouver is an incredibly diverse city, and this is reflected in the schools. It is really inclusive. There are specific religious private schools, which also get part funding from the state.

British Columbia is going through a huge change in its approach to education. While there are some teachers who are not comfortable with it, I am very excited. It's moving to a more holistic, student-centred approach focusing on 21st century skills and inquiry-based principles, which fits with current international standards and research.

When I was teaching in Ireland nine years ago, I did not experience this kind of learning through any of the curriculum I worked with. However, I am keeping an eye on all the changes taking place at home too.

The downside is the very rigorous teacher certification process here. To be registered as a teacher in BC, it can take up to six months and you cannot teach without it. They are currently experiencing a teacher shortage, so this process will hopefully become quicker over the next few months.

“ I would love to get back to Ireland and share all the great things I've taken on board, and all I have learned from other incredible teachers I've met along the way. ”

Future plans

I would love to get back to Ireland and share all the great things I've taken on board from some of the places I've taught, and all I have learned from other incredible teachers I've met along the way. I am not sure if that is going to happen any time soon though. My brother, who only just qualified as a secondary teacher in 2017, came home after a year in China, and is still looking for subbing work. I am always searching for opportunities at home and hope something comes up. I've met so many great Irish teachers abroad and really hope they can all come home some day and enrich education in Ireland with all they've learned.

Final thoughts

I would love to see huge reform of the Leaving Certificate, and would love some day to be a part of that reform.



ASTI ANNUAL CONVENTION 2019

Every Easter approximately 500 ASTI members attend Annual Convention to discuss and vote on the Association's policies for the year ahead.



Next year, Annual Convention will take place in the Clayton Whites Hotel, Wexford, from April 23-25, 2019.

Highlighting key issues for teachers

Key debates on education, teachers' terms and conditions, and the ASTI's role as a trade union take place during Convention. ASTI Annual Convention attracts significant media attention and provides opportunities to highlight some of the key issues for second-level teachers, for example conditions for recently qualified teachers. Coverage focuses on key speeches made during Convention, including the President's address on Tuesday evening, and on key debates throughout the conference.

You decide the topics for debate

Topics for debate are dictated by motions, which are submitted and selected at ASTI branch meetings. In other words, ASTI members get to decide what is debated at Annual Convention. Motions are presented to Convention and delegates speak to these motions.

If there is an issue that you believe should be on the agenda for Convention 2019, make sure to attend your branch meetings, as branches normally decide on the topics they would like to see discussed at Annual Convention at their November meeting. If you are unsure when or where your branch meets, ask your school steward for your branch's meeting schedule.

A Convention Steering Committee, which consists of classroom teachers elected by Annual Convention each year, prepares a list of these preliminary motions received from branches around the country. The list is then 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 in early February and a final agenda is drawn up.

Attending Convention

Delegates to Convention are selected at branch meetings. Each branch is entitled to send a number of delegates to Convention depending on the number of members in their branch. Branch delegates must have been members of the Association for at least one year prior to being elected as a branch delegate. Branches must submit the names of their chosen branch

delegates to ASTI Head Office not later than January 31, 2019. In addition to branch delegates, members of the ASTI Central Executive Council and Standing Committee also attend Convention as delegates. If you wish to attend Convention 2019 you should go along to your next branch meeting and put your name forward.

Costs involved

The cost of travel and an overnight allowance is paid to all delegates attending Convention. There is also a registration fee of €30, which is paid directly to Head Office by delegates' branches.

Where to stay

Convention 2019 is being held in the Clayton Whites Hotel, Wexford. Accommodation for delegates to Convention 2019 will be available at the Clayton Whites Hotel. Please be advised that Convention hotel accommodation is limited and is allocated on a first come, first served basis. There are several other accommodation options in Wexford; details of other hotels and guesthouses in the surrounding area are available on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.

Childcare

In order to make Convention easier for members with children, an ASTI play centre is available for delegates' children aged 2-12. The play centre is run by experienced, qualified childcare professionals.

Where can I get information about Convention?

The ASTI website – www.asti.ie – is where you will find information about Convention 2019. The Events section will be updated with all the details when they are finalised in early 2019.

Key dates

- November 30, 2018 – Deadline for submission of motions from branches
- January 31, 2019 – Deadline for submission of branch delegates' names to Head Office
- January 31, 2019 – Deadline for prioritising motions for Annual Convention 2019

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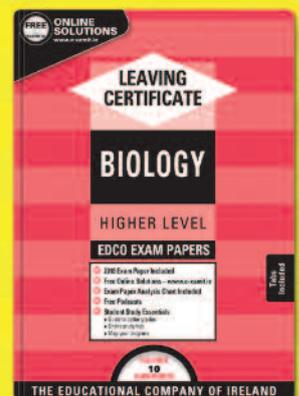
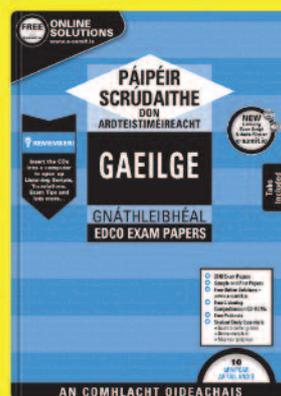
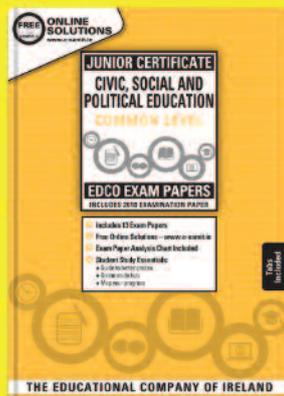
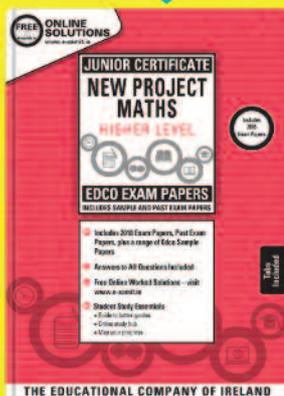
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LOOKING FOR FAIR TREATMENT

ASTI interaction with the media has focused on equal pay, and on bullying in schools.



“What we’re looking for is fairness and what has happened in education at the moment is that we have classrooms out there with no teacher to teach in them in many subjects. I thought last night as I reflected on this, the three newly qualified teachers that I would have known best, who were most active in our branch, are now living in Canada, Dubai and Kuwait. This is what’s happening if teachers are treated unfairly and the profession is not respected. This Minister – we’re talking about the future economy. You damage education and you damage society and the economy.”

Breda Lynch, ASTI President, interviewed about the new entrant pay deal – *The Pat Kenny Show, Newstalk, September 25*

“Teachers who entered the profession after 2010 are on different pay scales than their colleagues even though they have the same duties and responsibilities. The ASTI has been campaigning on this issue for the past number of years and took strike action in 2016. While the proposed measure announced from the Department of Expenditure and Reform represents some progress, it does not achieve equal pay for equal work.”

Breda Lynch, ASTI President, *The Irish Times, October 13*

Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI) President Breda Lynch described the findings on spending as “alarming”.

Ms Lynch said the OECD previously warned that Ireland needed to up its game in terms of investment in education.

“Despite improved economic circumstances, we are languishing at the bottom when investment relative to national wealth is measured. What does this say about the value we place on our children and young people?”

Breda Lynch, ASTI President, *The Irish Times, September 11*

“We believe newer entrants to the profession – which is not the correct term since they’re now in the profession eight years – that these people deserve the same pay rates as their colleagues who started in the profession before 2010.”

Breda Lynch, ASTI President, interviewed about new entrants and the upcoming ballot – *The Last Word, Today FM, October 15*.

“I was shocked by the UNICEF figures [on violence and bullying in schools] and in fact I was very upset by it because statistics are an indicator of a malaise, and this malaise, this bullying and violence, are so profound in their impacts on young people’s lives that really it’s sending out a very strong message that we need to rethink what we’re doing ... Schools are critical and what the research shows is schools are critical in managing behaviour but also in terms of mitigating the risk factors and increasing the protective factors around young people to ensure they don’t end up being bullied or being the bully, and to ensure they are protected from violence.”

Moira Leydon, Assistant General Secretary, *The Last Word, Today FM, September 6*

“Teachers are frequently the targets of bullying online by students and it’s often forgotten. Whether it’s something as trivial as how a teacher dresses, to more extreme homophobic bullying, it can have devastating effects for teachers.”

Deirdre Mac Donald, ASTI Vice President, *thejournal.ie, October 17*



LIFE-LONG LEARNING: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Féilte 2018 was an opportunity for teachers to celebrate the wonderful work they do, and to meet and exchange ideas.



President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins pictured at Féilte 2018 with (from left): Tomás Ó Ruairc (Director, Teaching Council), Sabina Higgins, Noelle Moran (Chairperson, Teaching Council), and Eugene Wall (President, Mary Immaculate College).

Féilte 2018, the Teaching Council's annual Festival of Education in Learning and Teaching Excellence, was held in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, on Friday and Saturday, October 5 and 6. Féilte is a celebration of the wonderful work that teachers do in their schools and classrooms, and provides a space where teachers can meet each other and collaborate in sharing their work and ideas. The festival also offers the public a glimpse into just some of the outstanding work that our members engage in. It's about celebrating what teachers themselves are doing: their ideas for teaching and learning, and their generosity and willingness to share this with others.

Making a difference

This year's festival was formally opened by President Michael D. Higgins, who has close links with Limerick. The theme was 'Life-Long Learning: Making a Difference'. A lot of valuable work being undertaken by teachers in our schools was showcased at almost 60 stands addressing important educational issues, and organised around the following themes: digital initiatives; cross-curricular initiatives; languages; teaching methodologies and collaborative practice; STEM; inclusion; and, well-being.

Féilte also offers a valuable opportunity for teachers to share their education research with one another. One highlight of this year's festival was the opportunity to engage with recipients of research funding from the Teaching Council under the first round of the John Coolahan Research Support Framework on their research to date and their experience of conducting research. As always, there were lots of interesting workshops, keynote events and panel discussions

across the two days. Chris and Ciara from 2fm broadcast their show live from Féilte on Saturday, featuring attendees live on air.

A year of firsts

This was the first year that Féilte took place over two days. It was also the first time that the Teaching Council took its celebration of teachers, and the great work that they do, outside of Dublin. This year's festival also encompassed Féilte Fringe; fringe events included a Teachers got Talent competition on Friday night, and an early morning dance, yoga and well-being event, Morning Gloryville.

The Teaching Council is currently chaired by ASTI member Noelle Moran (Tuam Branch). In her opening address on Friday evening, Noelle outlined the various events taking place at the festival and encouraged attendees to engage with as many as possible during their time at Féilte. She also congratulated Limerick on their All-Ireland win in the senior hurling championship last September! She took the opportunity to thank the many teachers in Limerick schools who played their part in contributing to this achievement through training the county players in their younger years of hurling. She further acknowledged and thanked teachers countrywide who give so generously of their time, voluntarily, to extra-curricular events for the benefit of their students every year.

Féilte is a growing festival with returning and new attendees every year. Féilte 2018 was a great success and we look forward to Féilte 2019, which will be taking place in Galway during the last weekend in September. The Galway-based Chairperson wishes to extend an early invite to all ASTI members!

ASTI EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

The ASTI Equal Opportunities Committee celebrates its 30th year in 2018, prompting reflection and renewal.



The members of the ASTI Equal Opportunities Committee (from left): Maura Greaney (Chairperson, ASTI Equal Opportunities Committee), Bill Lonergan, Bernadette Normoyle, Adrienne Healy, Rosabelle Crampton, Sinéad Moore, Therese Glennon, Tony McKernan and Eimear Holly.

It was Convention 1988 that first established an 'Equality Committee' in the ASTI. This committee arose out of a motion to the 1987 Convention calling for an investigation of "the imbalance that exists in representation of women within the formal structures of the ASTI". Unfortunately, despite some progress, the same motion would not be out of place today. The motion led to a report recommending the establishment of a committee, and members were duly elected in May 1988. The first members of the Committee were: Leonie Warren (Chairperson), Gabrielle Daly (who was replaced by Mary Dowling Maher), Catherine Fitzpatrick, John McCarthy, and, Paddy Mulcahy. The President and General Secretary were also members of the committee. Professional support was provided by Maire Mulcahy, a role she continued to perform until 2014.

Equality through the years

Not surprisingly, given the motion that led to its establishment and to the times during which it began its work, the Committee's early years were dominated by dealing with issues of gender equality. Over the years, while

gender-related issues still continue to occupy much of the committee's time, its role has expanded to include all of the nine grounds of discrimination. However, it is interesting to note that women are still underrepresented in most of the roles and committees in the ASTI. Female representation rarely reaches 50%, never mind the 70% that would reflect the proportion of the ASTI's membership that are women.

The Committee has involved itself in many issues over the years. Among the most notable was the support of the campaign to repeal Section 37.1 of the Employment Equality Act. This campaign achieved some success for, while the Section was not repealed, it was amended in a significant manner. The amendments to the Act mean that today it is much more difficult for an employer to use Section 37.1 to discriminate against an employee on the basis of lifestyle, gender preference or religion. The ASTI, through this Committee, has been an active supporter of such initiatives as the Yellow Flag Programme (promoting multiculturalism in schools) and the White Ribbon Campaign (men leading the fight against violence against women).

EQUALITY FOR LIFE

Former ASTI President Mary Dowling Maher was a member of the first Equality Committee.



What a surprise for me to be asked to share some of my memories of the first 'Equality Committee', as it was then known. It seems like another era to me. My best memories are of the committed colleagues who served with me, some sadly no longer with us. There were at least two men serving in what could have been considered an unusual role at the time. Equality, a very broad topic, was to stay with us all for life, in fact.

Beginnings

I attended a Mercy Convent day school where I was afforded all the subject

choices I desired in the sciences. I was brought up to believe that if I worked hard I could go to college in Cork. So my first introduction to inequality as a major issue was in fact in UCC, where lunchtime lectures were delivered to my best memory by ANC activists and sympathisers, truly eye-opening events in the early 1970s.

I taught in an all boys school beginning in 1975, and started to see first hand the unequal chance of higher education for some, as the participation rate at third level was minimal in certain postal areas in Dublin and numerous pockets outside the capital. Equal pay was introduced, whereby single men and single women received some very welcome 'back money' as a European intervention dictated that one pay scale should replace the 'married scale' and the 'single scale'. Originally it was a 'married man's scale', with all other teachers on a lesser pay scale.

Sylvia Mary Meehan April 2, 1929 to September 6, 2018

Sylvia Meehan, pioneering rights campaigner and committed ASTI activist, passed away in September. Sylvia was forced to give up her job in a legal library upon her marriage in 1954. A few years later she returned to college to retrain, and she began her career as a teacher in 1968. Just one year later her husband Denis passed away, and she became a widow with five young children to care for as a newly qualified teacher. It was at this point that the different pay rates for men and women teachers really hit home for her. She became involved in the women's movement,

campaigning for equal pay for women. A committed trade unionist, she believed in equality for all and held many positions relating to this aim, including her role as the first chairperson and CEO of the Employment Equality Agency, Chair of the ICTU Women's Committee, founder member and former President of the Senior Citizen's Parliament, and board member of Age and Opportunity, Aontas and the Irish Family Planning Association. In 2010 she received the Dublin Lord Mayor's Award in recognition of her lifelong pursuit of equality for women and for empowering older people.

Work continues

Today's Committee, now known as the Equal Opportunities Committee, struggles with many of the same issues that have occupied its predecessors. For many years, the report of the Equal Opportunities Committee to Annual Convention has contained recommendations to Standing Committee, and Standing Committee has now referred these recommendations back to the Committee for further development. These recommendations are as follows:

- that Standing Committee consider submitting a rule change to Convention, which would oblige the ASTI to have as one of its objects the promotion of equality
- the adoption of an equality proofing policy, which would examine structures, rules, policies, procedures and outcomes of negotiations to ensure that they disadvantage no group within the ASTI
- training courses in leadership roles within the union, and
- consultation with branches about quotas and thresholds for CEC and Standing Committee.

The Committee is now working on these recommendations with a view to bringing suggestions first to Standing Committee and then to Annual Convention.

In addition to this major task, the Committee, chaired by Maura Greaney,

is engaged in many other projects. At the time of writing, a survey of ASTI members on issues affecting members of the LGBTQI+ community is about to be launched. It is hoped that this survey will provide valuable information on how LGBTQI+ members feel they are treated by their schools and by their union. The Committee has also commenced a series of meetings with representatives of other bodies concerned with the promotion of equality and inclusion. It has met with representatives of the Travellers' organisation Pavee Point, and with the Chief Executive of Red Cross Ireland to discuss the issue of refugees in Ireland. In particular, the Committee is interested in trying to connect with any refugees who may be qualified teachers to see if the ASTI can assist them in any way. Further meetings with relevant bodies are in the planning stage. The ASTI is represented on the ICTU Women's Committees and Disability Committee and on the National Women's Council of Ireland, and the Equal Opportunities Committee receives regular reports from these. The Committee also ensures active participation in the annual conferences of such bodies and keeps a watching brief on legal and other developments affecting equality. Thirty years on, the Equal Opportunities Committee has established itself as a key player in the development of ASTI policy and is aiming to continue in that role. It has a major job of work ahead of it but is well prepared and ready for that job.

Learning curve

My first real introduction to gender inequality was at the initial meetings of the Equality Committee, where I learned terms like 'networking', 'gender equity' 'achievement of girls in the co-ed setting' and 'glass ceiling'.

The focus of the committee's work in the early days was mostly concerned with gender issues. The opening up of principalships to lay people in the voluntary secondary system led to the realisation that women were as capable as men of doing this job even if this didn't always occur. The composition of interview boards became significant in terms of having women and men interviewing prospective candidates, which is now taken for granted. By the same token, it was noticeable that the most senior positions in the wider trade union sector were largely held by men. For example, only four women had been elected to be ASTI President in the first 80 years since its foundation (I was elected the fifth in 1993, 85 years after foundation).

Big issues

ASTI Annual Convention considered the report of the work of the Equality Committee every year and the debate began about participation of women, albeit

gradually. Maire Mulcahy stayed with the Committee over the years and assisted many teachers who felt aggrieved in this area, as relevant legislation was enacted. Maureen Bohan of the Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate also took a very active lead on equality matters, accessing European funding for training to help women to see themselves in leadership roles.

The other issue that became of some importance was the topic of subject choice in school and how timetables were set in coeducational schools, which led to girls taking 'girls' subjects and boys taking 'boys' subjects. This inevitably led to few females doing apprenticeships.

More to do

The years have passed and the whole equality agenda has grown. However, in the last week I read about "a new drive to encourage girls to seek apprenticeships" and, even more shocking, I am still reading about the 'glass ceiling', which exists in so many walks of life.

I can be forgiven, I hope, for paraphrasing the saying: "A lot done, a lot more to do".

REVIEWING SENIOR CYCLE

As the NCCA begins its discussions with schools on Senior Cycle education, the ASTI is taking steps to ensure that the voices of teachers are heard. MOIRA LEYDON reports.



In September this year, the NCCA commenced a consultation process on Senior Cycle education by establishing a network of 41 second-level schools. Unlike the model for Junior Cycle reform, this time around the NCCA review was not preceded by a discussion paper. Instead, the network schools will participate in two cycles of discussion, each of which will culminate in a summary report, which will then be discussed by the education stakeholders, including the teacher unions. The first cycle will focus on the purpose of Senior Cycle and thinking about the future; the second cycle will explore pathways and flexibilities in Senior Cycle. The consultation process in each school is taking place at three levels: teachers, parents and students. The NCCA has provided materials to support each of these discussions, all of which are available on the Council's website and can be used by non-network schools to start their own discussions.

Hearing the teacher's voice

A resounding lesson from the reform of Junior Cycle education was the need to respect teachers' voices in the change process. The ASTI's extensive consultation with members in spring 2013 on the NCCA's proposals for change resulted in a landmark report appropriately titled 'Teachers' Voice'. One of the key conclusions of this report was the crucial importance of the curriculum to teachers' day-to-day working lives. The curriculum not only determines what and how teachers teach; it also determines the pace, depth and intensity of their work. Moreover, as the literature on teacher agency underlines, events that occur in the classroom have the greatest impact on teachers' motivation and sense of self-efficacy. The ASTI also underlined that teaching is an intensely emotional practice because it is primarily rooted in relationships with young people. For all of these reasons – and more – teachers were outraged by what they perceived as a superficial consultation process on change.

“ This time around, it must be different. Teachers must be at the heart of the change process. The ASTI will be organising events to ensure that its members have opportunities to meaningfully influence any proposals for change. ”

Irish teachers were not unique in their experience of curriculum change. Education policy is increasingly driven by global education trends, which are not necessarily congruent with the values, traditions and practices at national or local level. These trends typically emphasise teachers as agents of change but, in practice, sideline the teacher in formulating the change agenda.

This time around, it must be different. Teachers must be at the heart of the change process. The ASTI will be organising events to ensure that its members have opportunities to meaningfully influence any proposals for change. Its representatives on NCCA structures will also ensure that the concerns, experiences and values of the classroom teacher are strongly articulated. It will engage with the other education partners and with the Department of Education and Skills at all stages of the review process. The hard but valuable lessons learned from the Junior Cycle experience will be channelled to ensure that the classroom teacher is a respected and central partner in any change process.

Timeframe for the consultation process (Source: NCCA).		
2018-2019	Event	Action for schools
August 27- October 12	Review cycle one	School-wide discussions of research questions Collation of staff, parent and student voice
October 12	Closing date	Submission of collated feedback to NCCA
November 6-12	National Seminar Series	Selection of schools to attend seminars (Galway, Dublin, Cork)
November 30	Publication of overview report from cycle one	
November 14 January 8	Review cycle 2	School-wide discussions of research questions Collation of staff, parent and student voice
January 8	Closing date	Submission of collated feedback to NCCA
February 6-12	National Seminar Series	Selection of schools to attend seminars (Athlone, Limerick, Waterford)
February 28	Publication of overview report from cycle two	
March	Final overview report	
March-May	Public consultation	
June	Final advisory report	



Holocaust Education Trust Ireland

Berlin Study Visit

23 – 26 April 2019



Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe

A visit to the city of Berlin in the country where National Socialism originated. It includes an overview of Jewish Berlin and its history and also visits to Holocaust sites. Working with Holocaust scholars and educators, the programme allows participants to grasp the enormity of the Holocaust and its resonances within the city.

Visit includes:

- Tour of Jewish Museum; Topography of Terror Exhibition; Walking Tour with a focus on Jewish historical sites and commemoration of Nazi victims; Memorial for the murdered Jews of Europe; House of the Wannsee Conference; Grunewald Deportation Site; Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp; The Anne Frank Centre; Otto Weidt House and the Silent Heroes Archive

Cost: €895 (inclusive of travel, hotel and entrance fees)

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

Holocaust Education Trust Ireland, Clifton House, Lower Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.
Tel: + 353 1 6690593 Email: info@hetireland.org www.hetireland.org

Seminar at Yad Vashem, International School, Jerusalem

Continuous Professional Development
for teachers and educators

13 – 22 July 2019

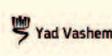


Valley of the Communities, Yad Vashem

An eight day programme for teachers at Yad Vashem International School for Holocaust Studies. This course is specifically tailored for Irish teachers, providing an in-depth exposure to the many facets of the Holocaust. Working at the exceptional Holocaust Museum and Archives Centre, participants can avail of resources, expertise and personal testimonies.

Fee: On application.

This programme can be taken independently or as part of the Certificate in Holocaust Education awarded by Trinity College






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

Holocaust Education Trust Ireland, Clifton House, Lower Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.
Tel: + 353 1 6690593 Email: info@hetireland.org www.hetireland.org

ARE YOU BEING PAID THE CORRECT SALARY?

In order to ensure that you are receiving the correct amount in your pay slip each fortnight, it is important to check whether you are on the correct salary scale and on the correct point of this scale.



Which pay scale am I on?

The pay scale you are on is determined by both the date you were first paid by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and by the date of your first qualified service in a DES-funded position.

- Teachers who were first appointed to a Department-paid teaching position prior to January 1, 2011, are paid according to a common basic salary scale plus qualification allowances. Teachers on this scale would have commenced on point three of the scale.
- Teachers who were first appointed to a Department-paid teaching position between January 1, 2011, and January 31, 2012, are paid in accordance with the revised salary scale, which includes the Honours Primary Degree Allowance, and any applicable qualification allowances. Teachers on this scale would have commenced on point one of the scale.
- Teachers who were first appointed to a Department-paid teaching position on or after February 1, 2012, are paid in accordance with the revised salary scale, which now includes the Honours Primary Degree Allowance. Teachers on this scale commence on point one of the scale.

To view these salary scales, visit the pay section of the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.

How do I calculate my point on the scale?

Depending on which scale you were on, you will have commenced on either the first or third point of the scale (see above). Incremental progression is determined by your own employment history, i.e., the number of hours completed and types of contract secured. For example, 600 hours are required to move up one incremental point.

Only qualified service counts towards incremental progression.

To check that you are getting the correct salary, look at the figure in the 'Basic Pay' section of your payslip. If you are on full-time hours, multiply this figure by 26.09 and check that it matches the annual salary for your point on your salary scale.

What if I am not on full hours?

If you are not on full hours, take the figure in the 'Basic Pay' section of your payslip and multiply it by 26.09. This will give you your annual pro-rated salary. Then divide your annual pro-rated salary by the number of hours you are contracted to teach, and then multiply this figure by 22. This should equate to your point on the salary scale.

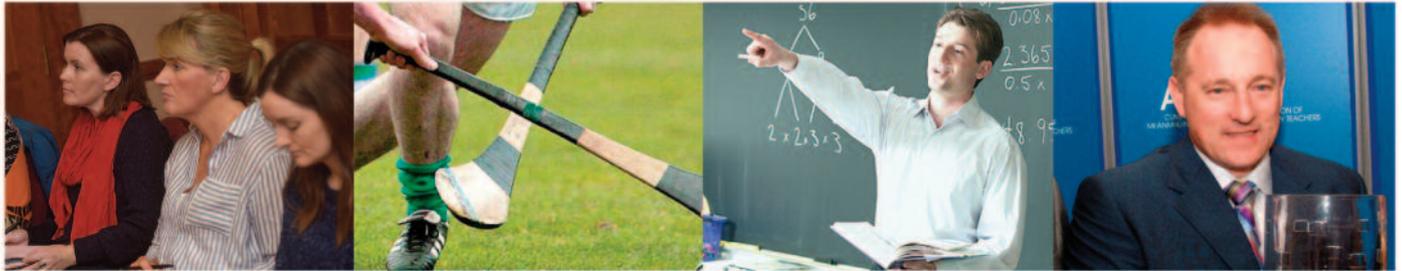
What should I do if I don't think I am being paid the correct amount?

If you think there is any discrepancy between what you are being paid and what you should be receiving, please contact the payroll department of the DES. You should do this if you believe you are being paid too much or too little.

Visit www.asti.ie for more information on pay and salary scales.



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 8th, 2019

www.asti.ie
1850-418400
www.twitter.com/astionion
www.facebook.com/astiteachers

**ASTI**
A century of service

RSTA IN SOLIDARITY WITH ALL TEACHERS

New RSTA President Pádraic O’Doherty writes about the importance of retired and working teachers standing together.

A new experience awaits all teachers during the first term of the school year as they encounter their new cohort of students. It is especially significant for newly qualified teachers, but also for the recently retired, having left the classroom after a lifetime career. I am indeed aware of both groups as I begin my first term as RSTA President. May the year be successful and fulfilled for all teachers, whether working, retired or entering the service.

This September marked the tenth anniversary of the economic crash. We are only too aware of the havoc it reaped and the shattered dreams it produced in the aftermath. Society is still grappling with the fallout. On a positive note, we are stronger and more secure as we stand together in solidarity. It has been reassuring to observe the ASTI, with the TUI and the INTO, working together to seek resolutions to the injustice of pay inequality for teachers employed after 2010. All newly qualified teachers are recommended to join the ASTI and become active members in their branches. To those who have retired you are encouraged to join your colleagues as members of the RSTA where new opportunities and experiences await you.

Recognising the value of collegial solidarity, the RSTA has played an active role in establishing the Alliance of Retired Public Servants, now recognised as a consultative voice representing 140,000 retired public servants. Carmel Heneghan, RSTA Immediate Past President, is now an

officer of the Alliance, while the ASTI has nominated Susie Hall, Marie Doyle, Ger O’Donoughue and Carmel Heneghan to serve on the Retired Workers’ Committee (RWC) of the ICTU. Marie Doyle is an officer of the RWC and has contributed in her role to the budget submission at Dublin Castle over the years. Our strength and solidarity derives its energy from the support of the members.

At this time of year the RSTA branches are holding their AGMs and planning activities for the coming year. Some have made an early start. Waterford Branch members are en route to Catalonia and will sample the delights of Tossa De Mer. Mayo and Cork members are also embarking on a cultural trip to the Madrid and Malaga regions. RSTA representatives will attend the 2018/2019 retirement seminars organised by the ASTI. We look forward to meeting those considering retirement in the near future. Information is available on the RSTA website – www.rsta.ie – and rstasecretary2018@gmail.com.

Ní neart go cuir le chéile.

Pádraic O’Doherty
RSTA President

RSTA membership application/renewal

Name:

Address:

Home phone:

Mobile:

Email:

RSTA branch:

Annual subscription: €24

Annual renewal date: September 1

Payment options: Bank standing order (recommended by RSTA) or cheque (payable to RSTA)

Return to: Mrs Muriel McNicholas, Cordarragh, Kiltimagh, Claremorris, Co. Mayo.

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

Standing order set-up form

Please complete in **BLOCK CAPITALS** using black or blue pen.

To: The Manager (Bank name and full address)

I hereby authorise and request you to DEBIT my account:

Account name/s:

IBAN

And to credit the account of:

RETIRED SECONDARY TEACHERS’ ASSOCIATION

IBAN: IE55 AIBK 9323 6112 7290 80 (**BIC:** AIBKIE2D)

with the amount of **€24** (twenty four euro)

Start Date: ___/___/20___ **Frequency:** Annually until further notice

Reference: (To identify member’s subscription on RSTA bank statement):

Member name and RSTA branch

Signature: Date: ___/___/20___

SHOW RACISM THE RED CARD

Show Racism the Red Card invites schools to participate in the third annual Wear Red Day on Friday November 23, 2018. The anti-racism organisation is asking students and staff to wear red to school on that day and donate €2 each to Show Racism the Red Card. Participants can take pictures and post them online using the hashtag #WRD18.



To register your interest and receive an activity pack, register at www.redcard.ie.

ENTRIES NOW OPEN FOR ACTIONAID SPEECH WRITING COMPETITION

ActionAid is inviting all young people aged 14 to 17 to enter its national Speech Writing Competition 2019. The competition, now in its fifth year, aims to engage both girls and boys with gender equality and global issues, while developing their public speaking, research skills and confidence. Students choose a topic from the list below and write a speech – roughly between 850 and 1,000 words – on their chosen topic:

- if women had equal access to the workforce countries would develop more
- men and boys need to play a larger part in tackling gender equality for women or
- gender equality is fundamental for every aspect of sustainable development.

The prize for the two winning students is a trip to ActionAid in Greece, accompanied by their teacher and ActionAid, where they will get to see ActionAid's work with refugees and learn about how they can influence change from the individual to EU level.

The Speech Writing Competition is funded by Irish Aid, which funds ActionAid's Women's Rights Programme in Ethiopia, Kenya and Nepal with a public engagement focus in Ireland to raise awareness about these global issues. ActionAid uses this funding to work with vulnerable communities in an effort to end early girl marriage, prevent gender-based violence, gain land rights for women and help children to receive an education.

For more details about the competition and how to enter visit actionaid.ie/speech-writing-competition/. The closing date for entries is January 18, 2019.

STEP BY STEP WITH SAMARITANS

The Samaritans Step by Step support service is now available for schools across Ireland so they can respond effectively following the suspected or attempted suicide of a young person.

Nobody likes to think about a death in school. Yet suicide is a leading cause of death for young people in Ireland and the UK. Sadly, it is a possibility that a student, parent or member of staff might choose to take their own life. Step by Step is a free service, which enables Samaritans volunteers with specialist training to visit a school following a tragedy to support teachers, who in turn support pupils, parents and each other. Booklets are also available outlining advice for schools, parents and pupils faced with a suspected or attempted suicide.

The postvention service aims to:

- reach out to education communities to reduce the risk of further suicide
- enable communities to be prepared for, respond to, and recover from a suspected suicide, and
- prevent stigma and isolation within a community.

'Postvention' is the term given to activities and programmes that are intended to assist those who have been bereaved by suicide to cope with what has happened.

Research on the impact of a death by suspected suicide tells us that young people who have been exposed to a suicide bereavement may be at increased risk of suicidal thought or attempts, and that people bereaved by suicide experience stronger feelings of shame, stigma, responsibility and guilt.

Samaritans Ireland has over 60 years' experience supporting people through their most challenging times, and it is hoped that by sharing their knowledge, volunteers can support schools and communities if they have to cope with a tragedy.

For information on Step by Step, please email stepbystep@samaritans.org or call 1800 805 731.

BIRDWATCH IRELAND TEACHER RESOURCES

BirdWatch Ireland has made a number of resources available for teachers on its website. The conservation organisation has created lessons and worksheets, which teachers can download and use in class. Spread over 11 blocks, these lessons cover topics such as identifying types of birds, the different environments that birds live in, and how the change of seasons affects birds. Each block includes worksheets with suggestions of different activities suitable for various age groups. There are also a number of free lectures and practical training sessions aimed at teachers, which are available to view as videos on the BirdWatch Ireland website.

For more information, visit www.birdwatchireland.ie.

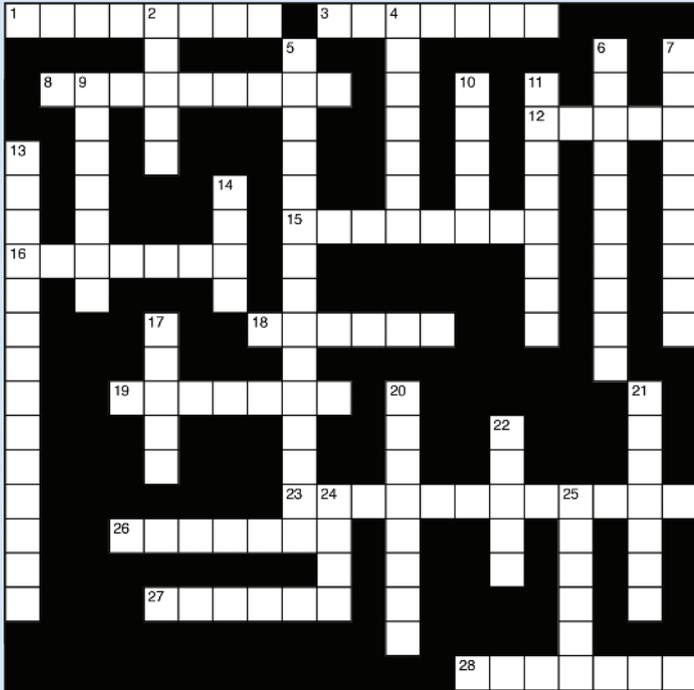


Sponsored by ASTI Credit Union

ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 1805

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. 1805, Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, December 7, 2018

CLUES ACROSS:

- 1) The UK seems to keep stepping back from this part of the Brexit deal (8)
- 3) Popular US holiday destination in Florida (7)
- 8) Many of our teachers remain ... (9)
- 12) The judge demanded this and then made one (5)
- 15) A type of fruit and one of the most widely spoken languages in the world (8)
- 16) What they call a caravan in the US (7)
- 18) Munster town where the ASTI was founded (6)
- 19) A Caribbean island nation (7)
- 23) Soldiers can't beat a certain type of lizard in this regard (12)
- 26) "Rapping on my ... door" Poe (7)
- 27) Last name of the Minister for Health (6)
- 28) Burn when feeling angry (7)

CLUES DOWN:

- 2) A vegetable and a nationality (5)
- 4) This spotted cat is no cheater (7)
- 5) Some animals are naturally lighter than others (15)
- 6) Hades was lord of the Ancient Roman ... (10)
- 7) As they started to tire, the marathon runners were told to ... (9)
- 9) This sea creature may be good in a joust (7)
- 10) You'll be over the moon with a dog named this (5)
- 11) It's important to keep going once you have this (8)
- 13) They will not divide us! (14)
- 14) An alternative to an engine to drive a boat (4)
- 17) People rave or whine if the drink from this fruit is good or bad (5)
- 20) Brazilian martial arts (8)
- 21) Where you find metal castings (7)
- 22) Frasier Crane's brother (5)
- 24) Greek god of war (4)
- 25) A pack of rashers and a range of mountains (6)

Réiteach do Crosfhocal ASTIR 1804

Trasna

- 1. Ramhar
- 4. Stoc
- 9. Aoire
- 10. Uillinn
- 11. Cneasta
- 12. Iarla
- 13. Cluainmeala
- 17. Orgán
- 19. Comhrac
- 22. Céachta
- 23. Crann
- 24. Ailp
- 25. Damhsa

Síos

- 1. Riasc
- 2. Muineál
- 3. Aneas
- 5. Triúr
- 6. Consan
- 7. Cumannachas
- 8. Cleite
- 14. Ainmhí
- 15. Lármhach
- 16. Dorcha
- 18. Geall
- 20. Macra
- 21. Cónra

Did you miss?

- Better life abroad? 16
- Are you being paid the correct salary? 26

COMHGHAIRDEAS

Comhghairdeas le buaiteoir
Crosfhocail 1804:
Catherine Dolan, Loreto College,
Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
Tullamore Branch

Bring the world
into your classroom...
bring your class into
the Irish Aid Centre in
Clonmel Street, Dublin 2

SCHOOLS' WORKSHOPS ON DEVELOPMENT AND IRELAND'S ROLE IN FIGHTING GLOBAL POVERTY AND HUNGER

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CSPE
Senior Cycle

- » Workshops are FREE
- » 90 minutes long
- » 10.00 and 12.00 Mon–Fri
Afternoons on request

"Excellent, full of
information and
interactive -
students very
engaged! Thanks!"

Visiting teacher



Students from Wicklow Outreach participating in an Irish Aid workshop

To make a booking:
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E anamaria.barbu@dfa.ie

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www.irishaid.ie

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