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Letters, comments and articles are welcome

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

United we stand

ASTI President BRENDAN BRODERICK outlines the challenges facing teachers in the coming year.

I would like to send best wishes to all ASTI members for the new school year and to assure our new members that the ASTI will be there to support them as they begin their new career.

The new school year poses many challenges for us all. The economic downturn and the Government's response to it are impacting negatively on teachers, parents and students. In education, the austerity measures have the capacity to undermine teacher collegiality and damage teachers' good will. Changes to starting salaries and pension provisions for new entrants to teaching are particularly provocative and dangerous to the future well-being of the profession.

Non-permanent and new teachers

All sides of the political debate agree that education is central to economic revival and essential in building a fair and equitable society. As teachers on the front line, we are well aware that the increase in the pupil-teacher ratio, together with the many other education cutbacks, have adversely affected our most vulnerable students and our most vulnerable non-permanent teachers.

Over 90% of new entrants and over 75% of teachers under the age of 30 are in non-permanent teaching positions. Overall, more than 27% of teachers are on temporary contracts. These figures, taken from the 2009 OECD TALIS Report, do not take into account the unknown number of teachers currently unemployed.

Improving opportunities and conditions for non-permanent and new teachers – who are our most vulnerable members – is the greatest challenge facing our union and will be my top priority in the coming year.

Return on investment

Recent OECD reports show that Ireland failed to invest adequately in education even when the country was awash with money and producing record budget surpluses. It beggars belief that further cutbacks could be considered, given the dire consequences for the future well-being of the next generation, for the economy and for social cohesion.

The Leaving Certificate results again generated debate on the number of students taking higher level maths and other STEM subjects. Much of the debate is centred around curriculum content and teaching methodologies. But the learning environment cannot be ignored. Large class sizes and the need for adequate resource back-up to take account

of all students' needs are the main obstacles to better teaching and learning outcomes. The failure of successive ministers to implement the recommendations of the task force on the physical sciences is in stark contrast to the concerns expressed by these same ministers regarding improving uptake and results in these subjects.

The issues we face

As I write, the ASTI and TUI are engaging with the Department of Education and Skills on some very important issues. Most notably we are discussing a review of the redeployment scheme, proposed changes to the Junior Cycle, incidental inspections and the National Internship Programme. At all times we articulate our opposition to teachers assessing their own students for certification purposes and our vehement opposition to the introduction of unannounced incidental inspections and to the employment of 'second-class' intern teachers.

Over the coming months we will also be seeking meetings with the management bodies on issues in relation to the Croke Park Agreement, for example to draft an agreed protocol or guidelines for the operation of parent-teacher meetings. Teaching is the most important, the most difficult and the most stressful job in education and the right to work in a physically and psychologically safe working environment with a reasonable and manageable workload must be insisted on.

Get involved

Finally, I encourage every new teacher to join the ASTI and all members to engage with the issues at school and branch level. It is now more important than ever that we stand united as a trade union and as a strong advocate for education at second level.



Brendan Broderick
ASTI President

Sticking to the facts

ASTI General Secretary PAT KING wants teachers to be fully informed of the contribution they are making to economic recovery.

Uncorroborated assertions that teachers, public sector workers and their unions are holding back economic recovery appear in the media almost daily. Meanwhile, evidence that supports the contrary – that the public sector is contributing to recovery – receives little attention. This is true of the review of the Public Service (Croke Park) Agreement, published in June, which demonstrated that the Agreement was worth more than €650 million to the State in year one and has so far out-performed 2011 saving targets.

Teachers' contributions

The contributions of teachers to financial recovery include the pay cut and pension levy, the non-payment of pay increases, an additional 33 hours of work per year (worth €43 million annually) and the redeployment of 170 second-level teachers (which will result in a saving of approximately €3.04 million this year and annual savings of €9.13 million from next year on).

This edition of *ASTIR* contains an inventory of the contributions teachers have made over the past three years (p12). You may find this useful the next time you hear someone remark that teachers are holding back recovery.

Expenditure review

The Government is to publish its Comprehensive Spending Review shortly. Ahead of this the three teacher unions were invited to talks with the Department of Education and Skills "to identify a range of cost-cutting measures in education for the Government to consider". It was clearly stated to the unions that: "If alternative feasible measures to deliver these savings cannot be identified, appropriate increases in the classroom teacher allocation schedule will be introduced". The ASTI stated to the Department that any increase to the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) at second level will be detrimental to students' education chances and will be strongly resisted by teachers and their unions.

When the PTR was increased in 2009, the ASTI warned the then Government that the decision would force schools to drop subjects and increase class sizes. The Leaving Certificate statistics for 2011 indicate that some second-level schools have been forced to drop strategically critical subjects, including physics and modern languages, as a result of the worsening of the PTR. There has been a 3.4% drop in the number of students taking physics and a 4.8% drop in the number taking German. It is clear that if the PTR is targeted again, more schools will be forced to drop subjects that are vital to economic recovery.

If it's not broken ...

Educational reform should be evidence based and should take into account contextual issues and capacity for implementation. Change for the sake of change can be detrimental, as can failing to adequately fund

change. There should be strong input from educationalists, including teachers. The overall goal should be to improve the lives of young people.

Contrary to some media reports, the ASTI does not oppose educational reform. The union has a strong track record of seeking and participating in educational reform. The Irish second-level system has gone through, and continues to go through, reform of a transformative nature. This is one of the reasons why Ireland has the second highest school completion rate at second level out of 31 OECD countries.

The ASTI does not oppose reform of the Junior Cycle. As this *ASTIR* goes to print, ASTI representatives are participating in a consultation process on reform proposals. The ASTI has put forward a number of objectives for reforming the Junior Cert, including:

- transforming the learning experience from one that is content heavy to one that delivers a better balance between knowledge, skills and the development of students' capacity to apply learning to a range of situations;
- reducing (rather than exacerbating) social inequality; and,
- maintaining the high level of credibility and transparency of the current Junior Certificate qualification.

The ASTI believes that students should not be assessed by their own teachers for state exam purposes. Such a move would put the teacher in the position of adjudicator rather than advocate of his/her students. While no examination system is perfect, the Irish state exams provide young people with transparent, objective and highly credible accreditation, which is recognised by employers, education institutions, etc., both at home and abroad. Any steps to further broaden assessment techniques in the Junior and Leaving Certificates must retain this strength.

In the months ahead, as teachers and teacher unions come under pressure again, we must all challenge unsubstantiated statements and demand that those participating in public debate on education issues stick to the facts.



Pat King
ASTI General Secretary

ASTI rep meets President Obama



A group of public servants met with President Barack Obama during his visit to Ireland in May. Among them was ASTI Standing Committee representative and Fingal Branch member Ed Byrne. The gathering was organised by the Department of the Taoiseach. Ed was representing the teaching profession.



Pictured at a Limerick South Branch retirement function are: Back row (from left): Tony McKernan; Seosamhin O'Connor; Mary Guerin; Michael Cronin; Aidan O'Sullivan; Delores Monaghan; Margaret O'Neill; and, Marion Ring. Front row (from left): Catherine Canavan; Jack Keane, ASTI Immediate Past President; Jacinta Meehan; Maura Murphy; and, ASTI General Secretary Pat King.



Ann Piggott of the ASTI Cork South Branch (front, centre) was recently elected President of the Cork Trades Council. Ann is pictured with some of her ASTI colleagues. Back row (from left): Louise O'Mahony; Ann Coakley; Mary Sullivan; Aine O'Dea; John Mulcahy; Maria Kelly; Orna Coakley; and, Mick Evans. Front row (from left): Anne Taylor; John Byrne; Ann Piggott; Catriona McGrath; and, Paul McGrath.

Section 30 – the implications for you

When Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act comes into force, only teachers who are registered with the Teaching Council can be paid from State funds. The Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn, has announced his intention to have Section 30 enacted during this school year. As yet, there is no certain date for the enactment of Section 30. However, the Teaching Council has assured the ASTI that in advance of the commencement of Section 30, a system will be put in place to make sure all teachers have sufficient time and opportunity to become registered.

The ASTI encourages all members to make sure they are registered with the Teaching Council and has always supported Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act, as it will protect teaching jobs and the teaching profession. Because of the time involved in the registration process, we urge all serving and newly qualified teachers to begin the process as soon as possible. Teachers must re-register with the Teaching Council each year. Find out more at www.teachingcouncil.ie.

Best of luck

Best of luck to Patricia (Trish) Conroy, who is leaving ASTI Head Office after 30 years. Trish is Staff Officer working with the General Secretary Pat King. She has worked with four ASTI General Secretaries and has attended ASTI Annual Convention/CEC for more than 20 years.

World Teachers' Day

Celebrate teachers around the world on World Teachers' Day, October 5. World Teachers' Day is an opportunity for Education International and its member organisations to celebrate the profession and to promote international teaching standards. This year the celebration takes the theme 'Teachers for gender equality'. See www.5oct.org for more information on World Teachers' Day.

Why not get your staff together for a cake break on the day? You can recoup the cost of cakes from your ASTI branch.



ASTI shows Gay Pride

The ASTI banner was held aloft for the first time at the Gay Pride parade in June. The 'Banner Party' – ASTI Equal Opportunities Committee members, staff and members of the ASTI Gay and Lesbian Equality Network were joined by other ASTI members en route. ASTI, the TUI and the INTO marched together. The ASTI is committed to promoting the rights of all members. For more information on the ASTI Gay and Lesbian Equality Network, see the equality section of the ASTI website.

Pension confusion cleared up

Under the terms of the Croke Park Agreement, teachers who retire before February 29, 2012, will have their fortnightly pensions and pension gratuities calculated on 'pre-cut' salary. 'Pre-cut' salary is the salary these teachers were on before the public service pay cut imposed in January 2010. On retirement, these fortnightly pension payments will be subject to the cut, averaging 4%, imposed on all public service pensions in Budget 2011. The gratuity will be unaffected.

Those retiring after February 2012 will have their fortnightly pensions and gratuities calculated on the basis of post-cut salary, i.e., their actual salary at retirement. They will not be subject to the 4% pension cut.

Those currently in receipt of a public service pension have had an average cut of 4% in their fortnightly pension payments since January 2011.

Current pension holders	Retiring before end February 2012	Retiring after end February 2012
Pension and lump sum was determined at retirement	Pension and lump sum based on pre-cut salary	Pension and lump sum based on post-cut salary.
Average of 4% cut has been applied to pension payments since January 2011	Average of 4% cut will be imposed on pension payments	
	Lump sum unaffected	



Teachers must give a minimum of **three months notice** prior to retirement. You must give notice of your intention to retire to both your school and the Department of Education and Skills. This three-month

deadline is very strict so make sure you notify both your school and the Department on time.

New trade union resource for schools

The ICTU has developed a new programme, Youth Connect, targeting all second-level students. Fully supported by the teaching unions, the programme is designed to engage students with the world of work through a series of lesson plans, activities and projects. Youth Connect is offering all schools a visit by one of its trained champions, who will deliver an introductory lesson to a class and leave you with a free copy of the teaching

resource book. The programme has a number of support materials for teachers and students including a teaching resource book, a website and a youth membership pack. Take a look on www.youth-connect.ie to find out more. Students can also purchase a student identity card – iConnect – which will entitle them to a range of discounts. Student Councils can contact Fiona.dunne@ictu.ie to find out more.





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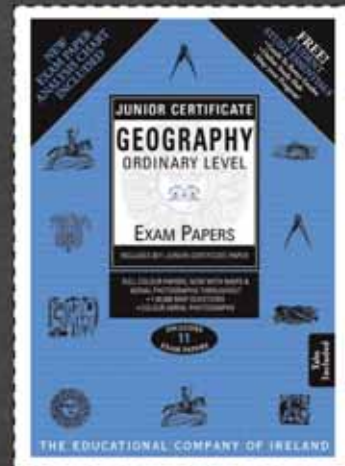
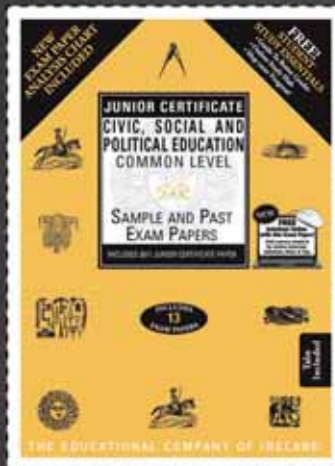


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Irish students compete in global entrepreneurship World Cup

Three Transition Year students from St Michael's Holy Faith School in Finglas represented Ireland at the Students for the Advancement of Global Entrepreneurship ("SAGE") World Cup tournament in July. Amy Bell, Sarah Carruthers and Megan Fitzpatrick competed against students from 14 countries, with support from their teachers Jackie Pierce and Amy McElroy (pictured). The students had set up a company called 'The Red Dot Project' selling recycled plastic pencils to raise money for the people who were affected by the recent natural disaster in Japan. The girls delivered presentations on the topic of 'The importance of recycling' in local primary schools. They also taught primary students about what happened in Japan on March 11.



Twenty new schools to be established in next six years

Twenty new post-primary schools are to be established in the next six years, the Minister for Education and Skills has announced. The schools will meet the demand created by the estimated additional 24,900 second-level students due in schools by the start of the 2017/'18 school year. Additional school extension projects will also cater for the growing population. The Minister has announced that the decision regarding patronage of these schools will place a particular emphasis on parental demand for plurality and diversity of patronage. Applications for patronage will be considered by the New Schools Establishment Group, which will make recommendations for consideration by the Minister. The new second-level schools, which will cater for up to 1,000 students each, will be established in counties Dublin, Wexford, Galway, Meath, Kildare, Louth, Cavan, Wicklow and Cork. For more, see www.education.ie.

ASTIR answering your financial questions

How will the new pension fund levy affect me?

In May the Government announced a plan to fund its jobs initiative by imposing a 0.6% levy on private pension funds for each of the next four years. The levy will NOT be applied to public sector pensions or approved retirement funds (ARFs). However, the new 0.6% per annum levy will be applied to funded pension schemes and personal pension plans – this includes AVCs, personal retirement savings accounts (PRSAs) and retirement annuity contracts. If you have an AVC, the levy will be based on the total value of your AVC fund and not on your AVC contributions. To see how this levy will affect your AVC fund over each of the next four years, we have provided a quick reference chart below.

The levy will be deducted once a year and is due on June 30 each year. It will apply for a period of four years commencing in 2011. All your pension contributions (superannuation, notional service, AVCs, etc.) will continue to get the same full income tax relief in 2011. However, since January 1, 2011, pension contributions do not receive relief from PRSI or from the new Universal Social Charge.

Advice received by the ASTI from: Ivan Ahern, Director, Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd.

If you have a financial question you would like answered in ASTIR, send it to astir@asti.ie.

Table

Annual fund value	€10k	€20k	€30k	€40k	€50k	€60k	€70k	€80k	€90k	€100k	€110k	€120k
0.6% levy per year	€60	€120	€180	€240	€300	€360	€420	€480	€540	€600	€660	€720

This issue in numbers...

4%

The average cut to public service pensions since January 2010. (P7)

€43m

The amount saved to the Exchequer by teachers working 33 extra hours per year as part of the Croke Park Agreement. (P12)



Top of the crop!

This group from St Josephs Secondary School, Stanhope Street, Dublin 7, took top spot at the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards 2011 for their innovative community garden project 'Correcting our School'. The group is pictured here receiving their award from Guest of Honour Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland, and President of the Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice, and ECO-UNESCO National Director Elaine Nevin. The ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards programme is open to any group of young people aged 10-18. Groups have until the end of November 2011 to register for the 2012 awards. See www.ecounesco.ie for more.

The year ahead

The Department of Education has released details of the standardised school year 2011/2012, as well as details of school closures for the years 2012/'13 and 2013/'14.

October 2011 mid-term break

All schools will close from Monday October 31, 2011, to Friday November 4, 2011, inclusive.

Christmas 2011

All schools will close on Thursday December 22, 2011, which will be the final day of the school term. All schools will re-open on Monday January 9, 2012.

February 2012 mid-term break

Second-level schools will close from Monday February 13, 2012, to Friday February 17, 2012, inclusive, unless changes are required as part of contingency arrangements to make up for time lost due to unforeseen school closures.

Easter 2012

All schools will close on Friday March 30, 2012, which will be the final day of the school term. All schools will re-open on Monday April 16, 2012.

For full details of the school years 2011/'12, 2012/'13 and 2013/'14, see Circular 0034/2011 on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.

SciFest winners

Aoife Sutton and Tara O'Carroll from Presentation Secondary School, Thurles, Co. Tipperary, are awarded the SciFest Intel Best Project Award 2011 by Pat Collins, Intel, and teacher and SciFest Project Manager Sheila Porter.

SciFest is a series of one-day science fairs, funded by Intel Ireland and Discover Science and Engineering as project partners, and hosted nationwide by the institutes of technology. The closing date for receipt of entries to SciFest@College 2012 is March 2, 2012 – see www.scifest.ie for more.



8

The number of ASTI information evenings for new teachers being held around the country this September. (P19)

24

The number of pilot schools surveyed by the ASTI about Project Maths. (P30)

Croke Park – the facts

The Croke Park Agreement was worth more than €650 million in savings to the State in year 1.

Some 27,000 second-level teachers are working an extra 33 hours per school year as part of the Croke Park Agreement. The aggregate value of these hours is €43m annually. This is one of the findings contained in the Public Service Agreement (2010-2014) First Progress Report, which was published in June. Second-level teachers are delivering 890,000 extra hours each year, according to the report. The review – undertaken by the Croke Park implementation body, which has an independent Chair, and union and management representation – states that the deal has facilitated payroll savings worth almost €290 million in the year to March 2011.

A total of 170 second-level teachers were identified for redeployment in spring of this year, which will result in a saving of approximately €3.04m this year and annual savings of €9.13m from 2012 onwards.

The report notes that in the education sector, the redeployment of teachers in resource, support and co-ordination roles to regular teaching positions will mean that 1,100 fewer teachers will be recruited from September 2011 (and a further 270 fewer from September 2012). The report states that these measures will result in costs avoided of approximately €15m in 2011 and

some €50m in a full year. The report also identifies at least €308m worth of non-payroll savings in the first year of the deal.

Other savings

The report also acknowledges the non-Croke Park contributions of public servants to reducing the cost of delivering public services, including:

- the pension levy: the report states that the public service pension levy (approximately 7% per public sector worker) saved approximately €945m in 2010;
- non-payment of increase under Towards 2016: the non-payment of this increase saved in the region of €990m in 2010; and,
- the pay cut: the public sector pay cut implemented in 2010 saved over €1bn in 2010.

Making savings

The report states that the public service pension levy (approximately 7% per public sector worker) saved the Exchequer approximately €945m in 2010 – see www.asti.ie for more information.

The report is available on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie

Teachers' economic contribution

What have teachers and schools given since the onset of the economic crisis?

- ▶ An average 7.5% pay cut in the form of the public sector pension levy
- ▶ Non-payment of 3.5% pay increase due on September 1, 2009, under Towards 2016
- ▶ Non-payment of 2.5% due on June 1, 2010, under Towards 2016
- ▶ A pay cut averaging 6.5% (public sector pay cut)
- ▶ An additional 15% pay cut for new entrants to teaching
- ▶ Changes in taxation/levies (e.g., the new Universal Social Charge)
- ▶ A 4% cut in pensions for retired teachers
- ▶ A moratorium on posts of responsibility (promotional opportunities for the vast majority of teachers have been taken away)
- ▶ Curtailment of the Supervision and Substitution Scheme (this has resulted in significant losses to part-time and temporary teachers)
- ▶ An additional 33 hours of non-teaching work per year
- ▶ An extra rota period for teachers doing supervision and substitution
- ▶ Redeployment of teachers deemed excess to requirements
- ▶ Provision of cover when another teacher's class is taken out of the school
- ▶ Increase in the pupil-teacher ratio in 2009
- ▶ Withdrawal of a number of supports and resources in schools (e.g., English language teachers and resource teachers for Travellers).



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Defending education

In the last month ASTI representatives have appeared on radio and TV and in the national and regional newspapers discussing a wide range of important issues.



Brendan Broderick outside ASTI Head Office.



Pat King at RTÉ studios.

Resisting any increase in the pupil-teacher ratio

“If you change the pupil-teacher ratio at second level, schools will lose teachers. And therefore they will lose subjects ... it means that a whole generation of young people will suffer and suffer into the long term because they get one chance to do a Leaving Cert examination and if they can't do physics or a language or another subject, they will suffer permanently ... how can you on the one hand say we need more investment in science, literacy, and numeracy, and on the other hand withdraw teachers from schools?”

Pat King on Newstalk Lunchtime, August 4

“It would be more honest if the Department were to say ‘we’re going to cut science in schools’, or ‘we’re going to cut languages’. That would be a more honest way of saying ‘we’re increasing the pupil-teacher ratio’, because that’s the effect of the pupil-teacher ratio increase.”

Pat King on RTÉ Six One News, August 4

“If you worsen the pupil-teacher ratio, you are worsening the chances, damaging the futures, limiting the expectations of a whole generation of children.”

Pat King on Tonight with Vincent Browne, TV3, August 4

Replacing myths with facts

“A young teacher starting this year, if they get a job, will start on a salary 30-35% lower than they would have started on two years ago. That is a massive cut by any estimation. Teachers, like all public servants, have taken their fair share of pay cuts.”

Pat King challenges the notion that teachers have not taken a pay cut on Newstalk Lunchtime, August 4.

Discussing calls for compulsory driving lessons in schools

“Schools are in the business of preparing young people for life, but in the present times it’s hard to know where the funding and resources are going to come from for this initiative.”

ASTI President Brendan Broderick on TV3 News, August 9

Warning of the impact of mid-year retirement deadline

“The Government proposal ... may work in other areas of the public service, but in schools there would be a major problem – you could be leaving a group of students without a Leaving Cert honours maths teacher for example. So our view is that it should be extended to the end of the school year so that there would not be the chaos that could ensue.”

Pat King, Newstalk, August 8

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ASTIR has the answers to all the questions you might have as you start a new teaching job.

First day of school?

What kind of contract do you have? What kind of contract do you want? What does that mean for your salary? What does that mean for your career? Don't panic! We're here to clear up any confusion.

Your job

The number of teacher appointments in any school is linked to the number of students attending that school. The current pupil-teacher ratio is 19:1, so for every 19 students, one permanent full-time teaching position is allocated. These positions are called 'in-quota' positions and are funded by the Department of Education and Skills.

Schools can also apply to the Department for 'concessionary' teaching hours. These extra hours are granted depending on a school's individual needs. Some schools may also pay for teaching hours directly from their own funds.

Many newly qualified teachers will begin their teaching careers in temporary positions covering for teachers on leave or covering concessionary hours.



Your contract

The type of contract you hold depends on the reasons for the vacancy and the type of hours you will cover. In-quota positions are permanent, while concessionary hours will normally result in a non-permanent contract. Outside of concessionary hours, a non-permanent contract should only be given when the need for the teacher's service is genuinely a temporary one, for example where you are replacing a teacher on leave.

You should make sure that you receive clear written information on the terms and conditions of your job, either in the form of a letter of appointment, a written contract, or a written statement. You are entitled to this information and it's important that you keep a copy of all documents, as they may be important in future. If there is anything you are unsure of, ask your ASTI school steward or ASTI Head Office for clarification or advice before you sign anything.

We're here for you

The ASTI is here for you whenever you need it. You can get help or advice in school from your ASTI school steward, or you can contact ASTI Head Office to speak to a professional industrial relations adviser. See www.asti.ie for contact details.

Many newly qualified teachers will begin their teaching careers in temporary positions covering for teachers on leave or covering concessionary hours.

Part-time and non-permanent

Unfortunately, most new teachers will not find permanent or full-time employment right away. Instead, most new teachers teach part-time hours or on non-permanent contracts. There are four categories of non-permanent teaching contract for qualified teachers:

A regular part-time teacher is appointed where the need for a teacher for a certain number of hours is viable for at least a year. For example, you would have a pro-rata contract where you are covering concessionary hours or for a career break.

A temporary whole-time teacher is appointed to work full hours on a temporary basis, normally for at least one year, for example, where you are replacing a teacher on secondment or the Department does not sanction a permanent position.

A non-casual part-time teacher is appointed where there is a specific need for a teacher for less than a year but for more than 150 hours in total in the year, for example, if you are covering for a teacher on maternity leave.

A casual-part time teacher is appointed where there is a casual need for hours to be covered, for example, where you are replacing a teacher on short-term sick leave.

Get connected to your union

As an ASTI member, you have a say in what your union does and how it operates. We want to hear your voice.

ASTI members want the same things: better conditions for teachers and the best possible education for students. Everybody has ideas on how to achieve these aims. Use your union to progress your ideas. Get more involved in your union to help build ASTI strength in your school and nationally. The stronger we are, the more protection we can offer.

Get involved

The ASTI is always there to give you support when you need it. But there are plenty of reasons to connect with your union even when you don't.

The ASTI is organised into 56 branches, which meet regularly to discuss issues and progress ideas. You can use these meetings to:

- get to know other teachers in your region;
- share your professional experiences and ideas; and,
- influence your union's priorities.

The ASTI has a voice in a range of areas and you can influence what we say. Have a look on the ASTI website to find out more, to contact your ASTI representatives, or to learn more about becoming one yourself.

Keep informed

As an ASTI member you will be informed about what's going on in second-level education, in the teaching profession and in schools nationwide. We'll let you know what's happening through regular communications, and exclusive information evenings and seminars. You can make sure you are always up to date by attending branch meetings, visiting our website, or interacting on Facebook or Twitter. Find out more at www.asti.ie.



Help new teachers to settle in

- Part-time hours can mean some teachers feel like strangers in the school; make sure to introduce yourself when you get the chance.
- Think about your first few weeks and make an effort to help new teachers out with the things that confused or daunted you.
- Consider organising a back to school event to help everybody get to know each other.
- Include new teachers in staffroom chat, and if they accidentally use your mug, don't ask for it back!
- No teacher is perfect – make sure new teachers know that too! Share your experiences, good and bad.

Check that your contract:

- sets out the nature and duration of your employment;
- clarifies the type of contract under which you are employed;
- clarifies the number of hours per week you are contracted to teach;
- names the subjects and levels you will be teaching;
- gives the reason for the vacancy you are filling; and,
- tells you whether you will be paid by the Department of Education, the VEC or the school.



Regular part-time contracts, non-casual part-time contracts, and temporary whole-time contracts are fixed-term contracts.

You can find out more detailed information about the different forms of non-permanent contracts on the non-permanent teacher section of the ASTI website – www.asti.ie/pay-and-conditions/non-permanent-teachers.

Permanent vs. CID

Some teachers entering service for the first time may just be lucky enough to find full-time permanent positions. Such teachers may receive a probationary contract, but once the probationary period has been served the teacher should receive a permanent contract. If you have been employed on four successive fixed-term contracts, you may be entitled to a contract of indefinite duration (CID). A CID affords the holder the same rights and entitlements as a permanent teacher, except that their salary is based on the number of hours they teach per week.

For more information, see the CIDs page on the non-permanent teacher section of the ASTI website – www.asti.ie/pay-and-conditions/non-permanent-teachers.

Non-casual part-time teachers are paid salary for the duration of their contract.

Your salary

Your salary will depend on when you were first appointed, your qualifications, years of service, number of hours, the period of your contract and the nature of your contract. A permanent full-time teacher is paid based on a 25-point incremental scale. In addition to this basic salary, you will receive a degree allowance and HDip/PGDE allowance.

Regular part-time teachers and temporary whole-time teachers are paid over 12 months and their salary is based on a pro-rata fraction of the relevant point on the salary scale plus allowances, depending on how many hours they teach.

Non-casual part-time teachers are paid salary for the duration of their contract. They are paid an hourly rate (including 56% holiday pay), based on a pro-rata fraction of the relevant point on the salary scale plus allowances.

A qualified casual part-time teacher is paid an hourly rate for each hour of teaching. After 150 hours at the casual rate in one school year, the teacher is paid a personal non-casual hourly rate based on his or her qualifications and previous experience for the remainder of that school year.

If you have any industrial relations queries, call 1850 418 400 or email info@asti.ie. You can find direct contact details for your industrial relations official at www.asti.ie.

Salary scales

Two salary scales are now in operation for second-level teachers. Which scale you are on will depend on when you were first appointed to a Department-paid teaching job. See page 20 for details.

More on the web

Anything we haven't covered, you can find on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie. You'll find hundreds of pages of information, including dedicated sections for new teachers and non-permanent teachers.

See the new teachers' section of the ASTI website to find out more about:

- teaching hours, contracts and salary;
- the practicalities of your teaching job;
- job hunting; and,
- accessing ASTI support.

See the non-permanent teachers' section of the ASTI website for:

- detailed information on contracts;
- a guide to CIDs;
- your salary and payslip explained; and,
- frequently asked questions for non-permanent teachers.

ASTI

A century of service

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland

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VENUE	DATE	TIME
Clarion Hotel, Dublin Airport	Wednesday September 7	6.30-9pm
South Court Hotel, Limerick	Thursday September 8	6.30-9pm
Best Western Hotel, Sligo	Monday September 12	6.30-9pm
Stillorgan Park Hotel, Dublin	Wednesday September 14	6.30-9pm
Silver Springs Moran Hotel, Cork	Monday September 19	6.30-9pm
Newpark Hotel, Kilkenny	Wednesday September 21	6.30-9pm.
Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar	Tuesday September 27	6.30-9pm
Carlton Hotel, Galway	Thursday September 29	6.30-9pm

All new/temporary/part-time teachers welcome.
For more information/registration contact Eileen
O'Rourke on tel 01 604 0170 or email
asti.library@asti.ie.



Salary cut for new teachers

The Department of Education and Skills released details of a 15% reduction in pay for 'new entrants' to teaching in July.



This cut includes a 10% cut in basic pay and allowances, and a requirement for all 'new entrants' to begin on point 1 of the salary scale. Hourly rates for casual and non-casual part-time teachers have also been reduced.

This pay cut, detailed in Department of Education Circular 40/2011, is the result of last year's Government decision that the pay scale for all new public servants, including teachers, would be reduced by 10%, and that all 'new entrants' to the public service would start on the first point of the scale.

New entrant or not?

If you worked in a Department-funded teaching position, or analogous teaching position, prior to January 1, 2011, you will not be treated as a 'new entrant' for the purposes of salary. In addition, a person with a written offer of employment before January 1, 2011, will not be regarded as a 'new entrant'. If you were first appointed to a teaching position after January 1, 2011, having

never worked in a Department-funded teaching position prior to that date, you will be regarded as a 'new entrant' and you will be paid according to the new salary scale, beginning at point one. Retired teachers who return to teaching will also be considered new entrants and will re-enter the profession on the first point of the scale.

Incremental credit secured for experienced 'new entrants'

As a result of representations made by the ASTI and other teacher unions, the Department of Education and Skills has agreed that 'new entrants' with previous privately paid teaching service or service abroad may be awarded incremental credit for this service. This means that while 'new entrants' with previous non-Departmental paid teaching service will be appointed to the new entrants' pay scale, their previous teaching service may entitle them to incremental progression when they are appointed to the new entrants' pay scale. Any privately paid teacher who secures a Department-paid post should contact the ASTI for advice.

Keep up with the ASTI campaign 'New Teachers Deserve Better' at www.asti.ie.

ASTI campaign

The ASTI knows that the measure of any trade union is how it protects its most vulnerable members. We will continue to campaign to reverse the unfair cuts to new teachers' pay and to protect and improve conditions and job prospects for new teachers. Find out more at www.asti.ie.

New entrant pensions

The Government has also indicated its intention to impose a new and inferior pension scheme on all new public servants, including teachers. Legislation has yet to issue on the proposed new pension scheme, and the definition of what will constitute a 'new entrant' for the purposes of pensions has not yet been established.

The ASTI is running a campaign of opposition to the proposed changes to teachers' pensions, and will continue to update members on this issue via the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.

New and non-permanent teachers

The first in a series of articles setting out ASTI priorities for representing teachers and protecting second-level education looks at issues of concern to new and non-permanent teachers.

The measure of a trade union is how it protects its most vulnerable members. In supporting and fighting for new and non-permanent teachers the ASTI is working to:

Restore fair and equal pay

A core aim of the ASTI is to reverse the unjust pay cuts imposed on new and non-permanent teachers this year, and to restore a single salary scale for all teachers.

The ASTI has raised this with the Minister for Education and Skills and in meetings with the Department of Education, and has denounced the unfair treatment of new teachers publicly at every opportunity.

As the pay cut applies across the public service, we are also tackling the issue through the ICTU Public Services Committee. We will continue to argue the case for fair and equal pay for all teachers, and in any future restoration or improvement of teachers' salaries, this will be a priority.

As well as pursuing specific policy priorities, the ASTI engages with the Department of Education and school management throughout the year to improve security of employment for teachers and the realisation of teachers' rights.

Oppose the proposed new pension scheme

New entrants to teaching face the imposition of a proposed new public service pension scheme, which would mean that teachers pay more in pension contributions than they will receive in pension benefit. The proposed scheme will mean that new teachers will work longer, pay more and get less.

The ASTI is running a campaign against the imposition of this unfair pension scheme, the next stage of which involves a meeting with Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform Brendan Howlin. Keep updated on the campaign at www.asti.ie.

Secure teaching jobs

Although the Government has pledged to create and protect jobs, new and non-permanent teachers' already poor employment prospects are under further threat.

The 2009 Budget saw the pupil-teacher ratio increase, leading to the loss of up to 1,000 teaching jobs. Budget 2011 removed even more support teaching jobs.

In August it was reported that the Department of Education and Skills is considering a further increase in the pupil-teacher ratio. The ASTI was

quick to respond to this in the media and has made it clear that it will resist any such increase.

The redeployment scheme, although difficult to bear for many teachers who were redeployed, has avoided any permanent teacher redundancies. While redeployment diminished the number of temporary teaching jobs on offer this school year, teaching remains the one area in the public service where vacancies are being filled. It is our view that the redeployment scheme will help to ensure a secure career path for teachers.

The ASTI is committed to pursuing the establishment of a panel system to fill teaching vacancies. We can be sure that this will be resisted by the management bodies, but it is the ASTI's view that such a system would bring certainty, order and fairness in the system. We have made this case to the Minister for Education and Skills, who responded favourably to the idea.

End the 'hours' culture

The ASTI is calling for a review of the allocation of teachers as part of the development of a sustainable policy for second-level teacher recruitment, retention and employment. We are calling for a system that would provide curricular protection for schools, as well as an end to the current situation where a great number of teachers find themselves with teaching hours, rather than a teaching job.

As a first measure, the ASTI works to ensure the enforcement of a Department circular instructing schools to give consideration to requests by teachers to transfer from part-time to full-time work, or to increase their working time should the opportunity arise.

Ensure jobs for qualified registered teachers

The ASTI has successfully campaigned to ensure that Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act will be enacted in full and without amendment.

The commencement of Section 30 will protect teaching jobs and the teaching profession by ensuring that only qualified registered teachers can be employed as teachers and paid from State funds.

Find out more

Want to know more about our policies?

T: 1850-418400

E: info@asti.ie

W: www.asti.ie



Non-permanent teachers committee

The ASTI Non-Permanent Teachers Advisory Committee advises on ASTI policy in relation to issues of concern to part-time and temporary teachers. Find out more at www.asti.ie.

Exceptional women

ASTIR talks to ASTI member Anne Clare about her book charting the history of the Gifford sisters.

Retired teacher Anne Clare's book about the Gifford sisters and their role in Irish history is epic in subject and epic in creation. Twenty years in the making, Anne's first book, *Unlikely Rebels: The Gifford Girls*, was written and researched mostly in deserted classrooms in hospitable All Hallows College during summers off from her teaching job in Holy Faith Glasnevin, Dublin.

Anne came relatively late to teaching, beginning her career as a civil servant working in the Department of Defence. She went to college by night and completed her Bachelors Degree, Masters and HDip in that way. Though it wasn't a nine to five lifestyle, but rather nine to nearly midnight, she says, the effort was worth it. Recalling the day she started her teaching career in Wesley College, Dublin, she says: "I thought, 'Anne Clare, are you out of your mind? You've given up a permanent, pensionable job to go teach a bunch of adolescents – some of them boys. You're cracked!' But from the word go, I loved it!"

From Wesley Anne moved to teach in Holy Faith, Skerries, and then on to Australia, where her brother lived at the time. Returning to Ireland, she went to teach in her own alma mater, Holy Faith Glasnevin, and spent the remainder of her career teaching there and writing in her spare time.

Family links

Teaching English and history, Anne always had a particular interest in the 1916 period, its characters and stories. It wasn't just from history books that she drew her sources for *Unlikely Rebels*, however, but from the surprising amount of information about the period left untouched by historians but known to individuals and families, and passed on by generations through stories.

Indeed, it was family connections that drew Anne to the Gifford sisters in the first instance. Following the death of her sister's chihuahua dog – a much loved pet – she joined the DSPCA, where she met and was befriended by Maeve Donnelly who, it transpired, was the daughter of Nellie Gifford. Seeing her keen interest, Maeve gave Anne her mother's papers, which contained a wealth of fascinating stories that had yet to be told about the family.

There were six sisters and six brothers in the Gifford family. Their mother was Protestant, their father Catholic. At the time, tradition held that girls would be baptised in the religion of their mother, and boys in that of their father. This was the case in the Gifford family, but the boys, though baptised Catholic, ignored the religion and had nothing to do with republicanism. In contrast, the girls, Protestant by baptism, developed friendships with prominent republicans like George Russell (AE) and became deeply immersed in the republican cause. In fact, Muriel Gifford married ASTI founding member and 1916 Proclamation signatory Thomas MacDonagh while Grace – the most well known of the sisters – married Joseph Plunkett just before his execution in Kilmainham Gaol following the 1916 Rising. *Unlikely Rebels* traces the history of the sisters in the context of that period of Irish history. The book was a long time in the making, but with



Anne Clare presents a copy of her book, *Unlikely Rebels: The Gifford Girls*, to President Mary McAleese.

such a rich period to examine, it might have been even longer, the author says: "You could go on forever with something like this; I was constantly finding more information to add. In the end my parish priest Fr William King, an author himself, said if I didn't stop then and do something with it I never would. My manuscript was sent to his agent, who had it accepted by two publishers including Mercier Press, specialists in historical material. It's a great relief to say 'finit!' and to hold your one and only historical biography in your hand".

The Gifford sisters developed friendships with prominent republicans and became deeply immersed in the republican cause.

Continuing on that high, Anne decided to start at the top and wrote to ask President Mary McAleese to launch the book. As the President does not usually launch commercial books, however, it was in fact Mary Hanafin who very eloquently sent *Unlikely Rebels* on its journey from Kilmainham Gaol, a very suitable launching pad.

At about the same time, Anne got a great surprise when the President's office wrote to invite her to tea. And so, she says, she got to meet another "exceptional lady", having come to know six others over the course of writing her book.

Unlikely Rebels: The Gifford Girls by Anne Clare is published by Mercier Press.

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[LC HL *Active Maths 4* Book 1 available end of September, 4 sample chapters available on folensonline.ie now]

MOIRA LEYDON, ASTI Assistant General Secretary, recently spoke about teachers' important role in education transformation at an Intel Open Forum event.

Transforming education



Pictured at the recent Intel Open Forum event were (from left): Peter Hamilton, Intel Education Technology Development Manager; Tommy Walshe, President, National Parents Council Post Primary; Moira Leydon, ASTI; Regina Moran, CEO, Fujitsu Ireland; Jerome Morrissey, Director, NCTE; and, Tony Donoghue, Director of Education Policy, IBEC.

No more than every other social institution, the second-level school is at the cusp of change. The intervention by Dr Craig Barrett, former CEO of Intel Ireland, in Farmleigh in Autumn 2009, was a 'game changing' moment. His observations on the quality of the educational system initiated a critical scrutiny of our second-level education system that is unrelenting. A new critique is emerging of the purposes of schools and education. This development is not unique to Ireland. Indeed, because of the open nature of our economy, our Government has always been particularly open to the international discourse on education – whether at European Union or OECD level. This openness has initiated some very positive policy developments in Irish education. Two particularly important parts of the international discourse right now, which are being addressed by the education sector in Ireland, are a focus on educational outcomes and a further focus on quality in the teaching profession. These are inextricably linked.

Improving educational outcomes

When governments and business leaders talk about educational outcomes, the focus is rightly on measurable outcomes and human capital formation. When teachers talk about educational outcomes, very often their focus is wider and more diffuse. Teachers talk about the 'formation' of the young person, of helping them to reach their potential. Sometimes these different approaches can be seen as being in conflict. Our own belief in the ASTI is that this is an unnecessary and false dichotomy. Education must serve economic, social, cultural and individual ends. Education is, above all, a social good in that its benefits are wide, enduring and important to both individuals and society. The 2010 OECD report 'Education at a Glance' provides a convincing case for the role education will and must play in securing

growth and social cohesion. It refers to the "compelling evidence of the economic and social benefits of education". No one disagrees with that conclusion. The problem is that the outcomes of education are frequently long term and governments frequently opt for short-term considerations when considering the current costs of investment in education.

"A vibrant economy sustained by quality education, a skilled workforce and innovation is a goal shared by countries around the world". Intel in Education

How, not what

Education must be responsive to society's needs – now and into the future. Asking what young people learn is increasingly the wrong question. How young people learn is the more pressing and more relevant question. The current review of the junior cycle curriculum provides an important opportunity to address some of the acknowledged deficiencies in our lower secondary model of education. We must also be realistic about the strengths in our system. It is clear that we have content overload at this level. The examination – as at Leaving Certificate – does tend to influence teaching and learning to the detriment of the development of key skills, deeper conceptual understanding and more active learning skills.



Serving society

Education is, above all, a social good in that its benefits are wide, enduring and important to both individuals and society.

Central role of teachers

The role of teachers in our education system is central to any discussion of transforming education in Ireland. Across the world, teachers are being challenged to transform educational outcomes. The role of transmitter of knowledge is no longer enough. Policy objectives such as lifelong learning, the knowledge economy and the smart economy comprehend very profound changes in thinking about education. Teachers have to absorb these objectives into their daily pedagogic practice.

They have to personalise learning to ensure that every student – able or disabled, native or migrant, majority or minority ethnic, etc. – has a chance to learn and to succeed in learning. They have to do this in a digitalised culture, the sociological and cultural impact of which is only beginning to be analysed.

Teachers are not only central to the task of improving educational experiences and outcomes; they are increasingly the focus of improvement efforts themselves. Internationally, these efforts have included initiatives such as the improvement of initial teacher education, improving retention in the profession, ongoing continuous professional development, school and teacher evaluation systems, and social dialogue structures in education. Invariably, these issues are coming to the fore in the Irish context.

Open to change

One of the features of discourse on education, and indeed other areas of public service delivery, is the tendentious suggestion that

teachers don't want to change. This suggestion is a disservice to teachers. Teachers have to be resilient, versatile and innovative to keep the attention of adolescents. At a collective professional level, there is a balance to be struck between the perceived benefits of change and the perceived costs of change. One of the core ingredients to achieving this balance is a respectful discourse about the contribution of teachers and schools to society.

The imperatives of improving educational outcomes and teacher quality present possibilities and challenges. It is the work of the ASTI to communicate these possibilities and challenges to the wider society. Social dialogue between teachers and society is vital. Without the full involvement of those charged with implementing education reform – the teachers – change initiatives will not deliver to their potential. We were privileged to hear An Taoiseach refer to our “unique, untouchable wealth as a people” – an eloquent statement of our richest resource. We were equally privileged to hear President Obama encourage us with “Is féidir linn”. ASTI would add to that: “Is féidir linn le chéile!”.



Moira Leydon

ASTI Assistant General Secretary:
Education and Research.

Take a look at a project that crosses the borders between north and south, curricular and extra-curricular, and academic and social.

Dissolving boundaries



Students in St Joseph's Secondary School, Rush, are happily giving up their lunchtimes to work on curriculum-based projects as part of the Dissolving Boundaries programme. Established in 2000, this cross-border initiative pairs schools from Northern Ireland and the Republic to facilitate students in getting to know one another while collaborating on online projects.

A new context

Patricia Franklin, who helms the programme in St Joseph's with the support of colleague Mary McElligott, says the programme allows for a new context for any curriculum subject, adding enjoyment for student and teacher alike.

There is an initial fascination, but once they get stuck into the project, it's barely a concern anymore. They become friends and a lot of the time those friendships endure.

Patricia and the students chosen to take part will usually spend one or two lunchtimes a week throughout the year working on the project, collaborating with their northern counterparts via email or video. There is never any grumbling from the students about giving up their free time, claims Patricia – in fact, they're queuing up to get involved!

Admittedly, the greatest incentive is probably the social, rather than the academic, aspect – particularly the yearly trip the school groups take to get to know one another face to face. But this social aspect makes the programme an excellent opportunity to engage in collaborative learning, explains Patricia: "Research tells us that all learning is inherently social and this programme allows students to get very involved in what they're learning. Working together to produce their project means collaborating closely, lots of discussion, resolving differences, making decisions, analysing each other's work. One of the things I love to see is the students helping each other out".

Getting to know you

In terms of cross-border relations, the aim is to have students recognise that there is no real difference between them, says Patricia:



The Dissolving Boundaries project has a strong social dimension – here students from St Joseph’s meet their Northern Irish counterparts from St Coleman’s College, Newry, at Greenhills Adventure Park in Newcastle, Co. Down.



“Research tells us that all learning is inherently social and this programme allows students to get very involved in what they’re learning. Working together to produce their project means collaborating closely, lots of discussion, resolving differences, making decisions, analysing each other’s work.”

“We start off each year with the students getting to know each other, and about each other’s lives and environment. There is an initial fascination, but once they get stuck into the project, it’s barely a concern anymore.

They become friends and a lot of the time those friendships endure. From my perspective, it’s interesting to see how they do things in their system and the northern teachers are always very free and open with their ideas. It promotes friendship between us too”.

At the start of each year partner teachers connect at a Dissolving Boundaries event to find common areas in the curriculum that they can explore with their students.

In the past, Patricia’s students have worked on projects about emigration, fair trade and deadly disasters. Once the topic is decided,

it’s back to the classroom to make sure all the relevant areas are covered with the class before they embark on further work on their project. Aside from topic-based learning, Patricia and Mary do a lot of work around good practice internet research, and the schools structure the project so that there has to be interaction between the two sides, honing students’ analytical and critical thinking skills. The project does take a significant commitment, Patricia says, but like her students she is happy to make it: “The better it works the more time it takes but I enjoy it so much and the kids get something great from it.

“I’m delighted to be involved and I will continue to be, not just for my subject but because it’s marvellous for the students, for their confidence – both academic and social”.

Unlocking the gifted child's potential



PETER LYDON ASTI member discusses how to identify and best support exceptionally able students in your classroom.

Approximately 26,000 students in the Irish education system are gifted. The myth that gifted pupils will perform well in school no matter what ignores the multitude of factors at play in the school and classroom environment. In a mixed ability class, there will be, on average, at least one student who is gifted. But this student isn't necessarily the high achiever in the class. In fact, it is more likely that the gifted student isn't achieving at all. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) research shows that mixed-ability classrooms lead to greater attainment for the majority of students. However, research shows that teachers in mixed-ability classrooms tend to teach to the middle ability, and while there are supports for students with learning difficulties, unless specifically considered in lesson planning, the gifted child may lose out.

Defining 'gifted'

The term 'gifted' is problematic and loaded with negative connotations. The suggestion that a child is gifted is often met with the response: "sure isn't every child gifted". Nearly every child has at least one thing they can master from which they can create a future for themselves, but not every child has an exceptional talent.

In Ireland, the term 'gifted' has been replaced with 'exceptionally able'. The NCCA, in 'Exceptionally Able Students: Draft Guidelines for Teachers', defines exceptionally able students as: "students who require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for the general cohort of students".

Identifying the gifted child in your class

It is important to identify gifted children: they have specific learning needs and require academic challenges that match their ability. If we had a student who was exceptional at sport, we would endeavour to see that they had the best playing and coaching opportunities. So why not students with exceptional academic ability?

While IQ tests can identify gifted students, these aren't systematically administered and, consequently, the gifted student may go

unidentified in the classroom. It makes more sense therefore to consider the characteristics of a gifted student and how they might present in the classroom. The NCCA recommends several approaches to identifying exceptionally able children. These include teacher observation, parent information and peer referral, as well as identification by educational psychologists, among others.

By identifying and being aware of gifted children in the classroom, teachers can direct good practice towards a more inclusive classroom.

Exceptionally able students:

- are found in every social, economic, ethnic and age group;
- may display unusual interests for a child of their age;
- usually have excellent memories;
- often have vivid and highly original imaginations;
- will sometimes 'dumb down' their efforts to avoid notice or bullying;
- may challenge school rules because they have a heightened sense of justice;
- are often highly sensitive; and,
- are often perfectionists who have an exaggerated fear of failure.

Where gifted children have been identified, there is an expectation that they should get 'straight As'. Even where this expectation has not been voiced, gifted children may internalise it themselves. The result can be procrastination or a refusal to work for fear of falling short of expectations. Gifted children also need to learn how to learn and this includes learning that it is ok to make mistakes. But who will teach them this if it is assumed that 'the cream will always rise to the top'?



www.SESS.ie

The Special Education Support Service (SESS) has run a pilot programme among 11 schools focusing on methodologies for including exceptionally able children in classroom provision.

Twice exceptional students

Some exceptionally able pupils have a learning difficulty such as ADD, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia or Asperger's syndrome, which can mask their ability. We say that these pupils are 'twice exceptional'. It can be difficult to reconcile the presence of a learning difficulty with such ability.

It is also worth remembering that a learning difficulty can be masked by a child's exceptional ability. In this case, a child's performance will be average. It is useful to consider other characteristics so that such a child does not meander through school appearing unmotivated and seeming not to work hard enough.

Responding in the classroom

The typical response to the gifted child is often to give out extra work. Performing well is, therefore, rewarded with more of the same work and this can serve as an incentive to slow down. A better strategy is to identify enrichment opportunities that allow the gifted child to explore a subject more deeply or in a different way. Project work involving research is very useful. Collaborative learning opportunities can enable the gifted child to engage with other students.

The Jigsaw Method is particularly useful and allows students of all abilities to engage in learning at their ability level.

Acceleration, in which the student moves faster through the body of course work, has advantages and disadvantages. It can be more stimulating for the gifted student but can involve removing them from their peer group. It may be appropriate in some subjects; for example, if a student has mastered a method in mathematics, it makes little sense for them to continue 'practising' it with other students.

Differentiation is the ideal approach in a mixed ability setting. Differentiation involves planning classes with the particular needs of all the students in the class in mind. Teachers can differentiate lessons by outcome, resource, pace and content, among others. Perhaps the easiest form of this is to differentiate homework, allowing students to decide on their response to an exercise. For example, instead of summarising key points in the Home Rule movement on a page, students can be allowed the choice of presenting a poster, comic strip, PowerPoint presentation and so on.

It should be remembered that good teaching is good teaching regardless of ability. By identifying and being aware of gifted children in the classroom, teachers can direct good practice towards a more inclusive classroom.

School response

Parents of gifted children can find it very difficult to approach their child's teacher and school when they have learned that their child is exceptionally able. Schools can help parents to raise the subject by having specific provision in their special education needs (SEN) policy statement or, better still, by having a specific policy for exceptionally able children.

While this may seem somewhat daunting, many schools already have activities that help exceptionally able children. The policy does not have to commit a school to provide resources that simply aren't available. A huge amount can be achieved through thoughtful lesson planning.



The Institute of Child Education and Psychology (ICEPE) provides an online course on teaching gifted children – www.icepe.eu.

Helpful extra-curricular activities

Debating: www.concern.net/get-involved/schools/debates/about

Model United Nations: www.wcdmun.com

Young Scientist Exhibition: btyoungscientist.ie

Chess club: www.juniorchessclub.com/lasca/lasca.php

Music, art and drama clubs appeal to the creative streak in gifted children

The Centre for Talented Youth runs several enrichment programmes – www.dcu.ie/ctyi.

Useful websites

- www.giftedandtalented.ie
- www.dazzledandfrazzled.com
- www.dcu.ie/ctyi/why-identify.shtml
- www.hoagiesgifted.org
- www.riage.org
- www.nagc.org
- www.teachireland.org
- www.icepe.eu

Feedback

Send feedback to astirfeedback@asti.ie.

Did you know...

- On average, every mixed ability class will have at least one exceptionally able student.
- Exceptionally able students do not always present as 'the high achiever' in class.
- 'Twice exceptional' students are exceptionally able students who also have a learning disability.



Peter Lydon

Peter teaches in Wesley College Dublin. He taught exceptionally able children in the Centre for Talented Youth in DCU for 17 years. Together with Dr Catherine Riordan and Karen McCarthy, he founded National Gifted Education Awareness Day and EU Talent Day in Ireland. He can be contacted at peterlydon@iol.ie.

Project Maths – does it add up?



ASTIR examines the impact of Project Maths, and the success of its new model of curriculum development and implementation.

Project Maths was introduced to promote uptake, achievement and outcomes in maths. Beginning in 2008, and initially piloted in 24 schools, two strands of the new syllabus are now in operation in all schools. Three years after their initial experience, the ASTI asked

teachers in the 24 pilot schools for their views on the programme. The survey was circulated to each maths teacher in the 24 schools.

New model success

Project Maths is based on a new model of curriculum change in which four important processes take place simultaneously – curriculum content development, assessment development, examination change and implementation support. Asked about their views on the success of this model, teachers’ responses were mixed.

Seven out of ten teachers felt that the model was, on balance, effective; however, clarity proved a concern, with more than eight out of ten teachers reporting that the model was not always made clear to them. Teachers were unanimous in the view that the new methodologies required for Project Maths take more time in the classroom, while 97% believe that the new model requires significant additional work from teachers, and 74% believe that it requires smaller maths classes.

Support for teachers and schools

The survey indicates that schools are open to innovation, nine out of ten of the schools stating that they undertook the Project Maths pilot programme due to a culture of innovation in the school or due to maths teachers’ interest in the programme. Significantly, 92% of maths teachers saw participation as an opportunity to access supported curriculum development.

Support for the 24 pilot schools was provided in four ways – regional workshops, school visits, online support and the Project Maths website.





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Did you know

- Project Maths is now being implemented in all schools nationwide.
- More than 60% of teachers say their maths timetable allocation is not sufficient to implement the new syllabus.
- ICT equipment was considered inadequate in almost half the schools surveyed.

In general, teachers expressed a mixed level of satisfaction with each of these supports. ICT equipment and in-service were considered by teachers to be very important for successful participation in Project Maths. Response to in-service provision was mixed but those aspects teachers were most satisfied with included introduction to new methodologies, new resources and ideas, and the opportunity to learn from peers. Disappointingly, almost 40% reported a low level of satisfaction with online support and the Project Maths website. Time allocation was also seen as a significant factor in the programme's success, and more than 60% of teachers did not consider that their current maths timetable allocation was sufficient to implement the new syllabus. A significant number of teachers – 85% – saw participation in Project Maths as a chance to improve resources in their school. Unfortunately, at least in terms of ICT equipment, this did not prove to be the case. ICT equipment was considered by teachers to be inadequate in 46% of schools prior to the introduction of Project Maths, and equipment remained inadequate in the same proportion of schools after introduction. This appears to have had the knock-on effect that web-based materials were used regularly by only 20% of teachers and fewer than half used ICT in their teaching at all.

Know more
 Read the full survey on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.
 Let us know your views on Project Maths at curriculum@asti.ie.

Impact on students

The aim of Project Maths is to provide for an enhanced student learning experience and greater levels of achievement for all students. Towards this, a greater emphasis is placed on student understanding of mathematical concepts and their application to everyday experience. In general, the teachers surveyed were unsure about the success of these aims and the impact of the new syllabus on students. Only half felt that there was greater continuity between primary and secondary syllabuses, or enhanced student understanding of mathematical concepts. Nearly 60% did believe that the programme enhances students' ability to relate maths to everyday life, but only 21% reported an increase in students' interest in maths. Only 21% believed that it caused a decrease in the number of students dropping down to ordinary level. There is considerable uncertainty in relation to the impact of Project Maths on learning outcomes. Only 41% of teachers believe that Project Maths will lead to an improvement in students' levels of achievement; meanwhile, 47% were unsure if this would be the case. Half of teachers believe it will lead to a dumbing down of standards in maths; however, half of teachers believe that it will lead to students being more positive about maths, and 61% said that it will deepen students' problem-solving skills.

Enter Now to WIN
 A Complete Technology Package for your 1st Years



SmartClass is a collaborative national competition being run for the first time this year by Intel, The Educational Company of Ireland and Steljes.

The competition gives post-primary schools around the country the opportunity to win a complete technology package for their entire first year of students.

The competition will be open for entries from the end of August with the winner being announced in October.

www.smartclass.ie



The Prize

A complete technology package for an entire first year of students - the package includes:

- ◆ A Fizzbook laptop for every student in first year of the winning post-primary school
- ◆ Accompanying software optimised for education
- ◆ Full digital curriculum content for entire junior cycle
- ◆ Wireless LAN fit-out for the school environment
- ◆ Relevant teacher training facilitation
- ◆ Continual independent program assessment and evaluation

How to Enter

Competition entrants will be asked to create an e-book depicting 'Smart Class of the future – 2025'.

For full competition guidelines and details of how to enter online visit smartclass.ie



www.smartclass.ie

Starting as you mean to go on

Shirt ironed, notes organised, a pen in every colour and each with matching lid still attached: you're poised to start the new school year on a high. *ASTIR* finds out how you keep that momentum throughout the year.

Motivation is all about taking control and making things happen for yourself, says occupational psychologist Tina Kinirons: "It's important to set goals and objectives – goals that you want to achieve and goals that you can achieve. By doing that, you can take control of your focus, direction and behaviour". When you're feeling motivated, there can be a temptation to reach for the stars, but remember not to set the bar too high – reaching the final in your first year coaching probably only happens on TV! "Goals should be clear, precise and achievable," says Tina. "It's also important that they are specific and measurable so that you can review them, see what progress you have made and use what you have achieved as a motivation to keep going." For that reason, she says, long-term goals are best divided into shorter, achievable elements so that ticking each one off gives you a sense of achievement and the encouragement to keep going.

Reward yourself

Every goal needs a reward but that doesn't necessarily involve money or promotion. Even in a workplace setting, there are plenty of other categories of reward to consider and, says Tina, you don't even need outside recognition to feel rewarded: "A sense of personal achievement is a very important motivating factor; knowing that you have met a challenge and you feel professionally stretched is enough to keep many people motivated". Of course, different kinds of rewards work for different people. Some

are motivated by a sense of competition, for example. If that's you, consider getting involved in one of the multitude of student competitions out there. It may mean adding to an already stacked timetable, but sometimes being busy actually improves your motivation.

That said, there are few things more demotivating than the dread of an obligation, so consider carefully before you commit your time and energy to anything. Be realistic – you will only enjoy the project if you have the time and interest for it. If you're not sure you do, downscale your involvement or change your focus.

Fighting the slump

If you hit a slump during the year, Tina recommends referring straight back to your goals before the slump has a chance to take hold. If your list of goals seems insurmountable in the cold light of winter, cut it back: "Sometimes it is the satisfaction of achieving just one thing that works to spur you forward. From there it can snowball because you increase your self-esteem and suddenly success breeds more success," she advises. It's hard not to indulge in a moan from time to time, but you can all too easily get trapped in a cycle of complaint that will just leave you more demotivated. Try not to engage in too many negative conversations about work with colleagues or family. Instead, be proactive. If something bothers you, think about how you can take action and work to change it. If you're bored or not feeling challenged – take control and get right back to that list!



Motivation suggestions

- Sit down at the beginning of each term and write a list of goals you want to achieve by the end of the term.
- Consider taking up a course – you'll not only expand your knowledge, but get to meet new people too.
- Get your class involved in a competition – you get a new focus and your class benefits too.
- Draw inspiration from things that made you happy in your job in the past.
- Fight that part of your brain that tells you to procrastinate – how many times have you realised too late that it's never as bad once you get started?
- Has a pile of marking built up on the kitchen table? Set yourself achievable goals – 20 essays marked, have yourself a KitKat!
- Organise files, resources, notes, etc., when you have the time, so the pile never gets shoved in a drawer out of sight.
- Ask your students for feedback at the end of each term, or when you have completed a unit of study. This can give you a boost and help you to plan ahead.
- Colleagues may need a motivational boost too, so remember to recognise achievement in others.

Frequently asked questions

We run through some questions you've been asking in recent months.



What new arrangements are in place for making up time lost through school closures?

A circular governing the standardised school years 2011-2014 was issued in May. This circular also sets out how schools should endeavour to make up for time lost due to unforeseen school closures. In the first instance, schools should try to make up any shortfall within the standardised school year. Schools should identify what shortfalls have occurred as a result of school closure, and the principal and staff should consult on ways to ensure that the curriculum can be completed by all years by the year's end. Any changes that can be put in place to facilitate this should be agreed, subject to consensus. For example, schools can prioritise tuition over non-tuition activities, or shorten the duration of in-house exams. If necessary, schools should consider the possibility of opening on discretionary days when the school was supposed to close. In cases where the school has been affected by extensive closures and the measures above will not adequately address the shortfall, the circular sets out contingency measures in relation to the standardised school year. In such cases, the February mid-term and Easter breaks can be reduced by up to three days.

See circular 0034/2011 on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie – for full details of how these contingency measures may be applied.

How do I sign on for unemployment social welfare, and can I stay signed on if I get substitute work?

To sign on for unemployment social welfare for the first time, you should visit your local social welfare office, bringing with you identification, evidence of address and your P45, if available. There are two types of social welfare available to unemployed persons: Jobseekers Allowance and Jobseekers Benefit. Eligibility for Jobseekers Benefit is based on the PRSI contributions you have made in the past. Jobseekers Allowance is available to those who have not paid enough PRSI contributions and who satisfy a means test.

Find out more

Find more information and contact details for your industrial relations official at www.asti.ie.

In order to qualify for either Jobseekers Allowance or Jobseekers Benefit, you must be unemployed for three out of six consecutive days and you must be available for, capable of, and seeking full-time employment. You may work for three out of six consecutive days and continue to claim social welfare. However, the amount you are entitled to in social welfare will be reduced in relation to the amount you earn/number of days you work.

For more information, see www.welfare.ie.

If you retire after February 2012 your pension benefit and lump sum will be calculated on the basis of post-cut salary – your actual salary at retirement.

What benefit do I get from retiring before February 29, 2012?

Under the terms of the Croke Park Agreement, if you retire on or before February 29, 2012 you will have your pension benefit and lump sum calculated based on the salary you were on before the public service pay cut of January 2010. Your pension benefit will then be subject to the 4% (average) cut imposed on all public service pensions in Budget 2011. Your lump sum remains intact.

If you retire after February 2012 your pension benefit and lump sum will be calculated on the basis of post-cut salary – your actual salary at retirement. In this case, your pension benefit will not be subject to the 4% cut. The greatest benefit to you is that your lump sum could be significantly more if you retire on or before February 29, 2012.

See page 7 for more details.

Divided we fall

Not only is the ASTI vital to the wellbeing of its members, a revitalised association could be a great asset to a reforming Department of Education, says JOE COY of the Tuam Branch.

At the last meeting of the Tuam Branch I listened in horror to the numerous changes facing the teaching profession in terms of pay and conditions of work. (I was one of a half dozen people there who had not been at Convention.) If all these changes go ahead they will radically transform the role and status of the teacher in Ireland, and not for the better. I believe in the need for regular reassessment and reform. If things are to remain the same they must change. What I would question is the motivation and methodology of the current reformers. Instead of waiting to have radical changes foisted upon us, we need to be part of the reform process.

Repairing a flawed system

Democracy is an inefficient way of running any organisation due to the indifference of some people. One consequence is a low participation rate. However, democracy, for all its faults, is the best form of human organisation. Two flaws that develop in many organisations are: (1) the belief that develops among activists that the organisation is more important than the people it serves; and, (2) the belief that develops among non-participants that 'we are paying them' to look after our interests. Both flaws need to be remedied in the ASTI, as elsewhere. Unions need to be of, for and by their members if they are to succeed.

Reforms will come much quicker if they come from the bottom upwards.

The challenge facing any organisation is to bring in the outsiders rather than to expect them to go to the organisation. For years the Tuam Branch campaigned to make the school the basic unit of the ASTI, but without success. Perhaps now that the traditional branch structure, organised on a regional basis, is no longer effective, another look might be taken at this issue. Changing times call for changing arrangements. Making the school the fundamental unit could have many beneficial results. What better place to meet people face to face than in their workplace? If a strong steward system could be recreated in the schools, supported by regional and national input, teachers might re-engage. They need to hear what I heard at that branch meeting. They need to realise that it is their working conditions that are at stake. They need to take responsibility for their lives and the lives of those they teach. This won't happen until they see that the ASTI is vital to their futures. Instead of having to entice teachers to join at present, they should be queuing up!

Changing perceptions of unions

In his speech at Convention, our General Secretary spoke about the public perception of unions. He said that unions are perceived "to get in the way". Let's be honest in that regard: some trade union representatives feed this image by coming across as being reactionary and indifferent to the common good.

However, Pat King was spot on when he said that "trade unionism is about working people standing side by side, defending their working conditions ... looking at the workplace – not from a self-interest perspective but rather for the good of their working community". Only we, as a union, can show that, far from being indifferent to what happens in our schools or being a reactionary organisation, we have the power to deliver the changes that all sides think are necessary. Instead of defending the indefensible, let us be seen as the agents of change. United we will stand. United we can control the pace and scope of change. We need to show that unions are not just organisations to get the maximum pay for the least amount of work, but professional associations with a much wider remit. We need to convince the public that teachers care for their students in the same way that doctors care for their patients. We want the best for students because the best for them is the best for us. It will be bad enough to have our salaries, pensions and prospects diminished without having to teach meaningless courses using a methodology we know won't work.

Use Croke Park to our advantage

The Croke Park Agreement means that teachers have to meet outside school hours. Part of this time has to be given to professional development. What better opportunity could teachers have to re-engage, in a positive way, with the evolving process? By all means let us have reform of the Junior Cert, but let us, the workers at the coalface, have a major say in how this is done. School-based assessment and project work may be fine in theory, but the public needs to know the consequences of these proposed changes. Let us talk about these things in our schools, let us inform ourselves, let us develop common strategies: then we might have some impact. In that respect we need a framework from Head Office so that the same discussion is taking place in all our schools, and so that the outcome of these discussions is used to effect positive reform, which genuinely benefits teaching and learning in our schools. By creating the agenda and finding consensus among ourselves as to what is realistic and achievable, we can regain the initiative instead of being swept along by the winds of change. Individually, teachers are powerless, but now we have a great opportunity to unite. We are obliged to be in school outside class contact hours. What better opportunity to get together with our colleagues (including TUI members in some cases) to discuss matters of mutual interest? There will be no need to travel to branch meetings or subject associations. It's a win-win situation. Reforms will come much quicker, and be implemented more efficiently, if they come from the bottom upwards rather than being imposed. It won't be easy or painless but at least we will be heard. We will have some say in our futures.

Above all, this proposal might help our younger teachers to engage. The current set-up of the association is unduly influenced by people who are in the final years of their careers. It is the young teachers who will have to implement these changes and bear the burden. They need to set the agenda. The rest of us should support them.



Solving your problems, step by step

Is a work-related issue bothering you? Perhaps you need confidential advice or guidance. We take you through how the ASTI can help you, step by step.

1. You may wish to talk to the ASTI school steward, or an ASTI colleague you are friends with. Alternatively contact ASTI Head Office (info@asti.ie or 1850 418 400). You can speak to a professional industrial relations official or assistant who will listen, answer and advise.
2. Most queries can be answered or cleared up at this early stage. However, more complex queries may require additional information or research. You may also wish to arrange a face-to-face meeting to run through everything, which we can accommodate in Head Office or at a venue that suits you.
3. Your industrial relations official will consider the circumstances of your situation and advise you on the best course of action to take. This may involve:

Direct contact: The first step in most cases will involve the industrial relations official making contact with your school or the Department of Education and Skills on your behalf. They will explain the situation, make representations on your behalf, and discuss measures that might be taken. Often this will be sufficient to achieve a successful outcome for you.

IR procedures: If necessary, and in consultation with you, agreed procedures may come into play. Procedures in place include disciplinary procedures, grievance procedures, and complaints procedures. These involve agreed specific stages and steps that must be taken to advance towards a solution.

Legal route: Occasionally, a situation may require a formal industrial relations route. This can involve arbitration and conciliation, a rights

Your industrial relations official will represent you when necessary and will research and prepare your case, in consultation with you.

commissioner hearing or an employment appeals or equality tribunal. Your industrial relations official will represent you when necessary and will research and prepare your case, in consultation with you. Your industrial relations official will provide support and keep you informed throughout these processes.

Teachers contact ASTI Head Office every day with queries relating to:

- entitlement to jobs;
- salary;
- CIDs;
- retirement and pension;
- health and safety;
- redeployment; and,
- hours;
- contracts;
- leave entitlements;
- registration;
- posts of responsibility;
- much more.

Need information in a hurry?

Try our website – www.asti.ie – which is updated daily. Like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter. For specific queries, email us at info@asti.ie or call 1850 418 400

The ASTI industrial relations team pursues cases on a whole range of issues. Take a look at just some of the many recent cases.

A CID was awarded to a teacher whose employment was largely based on covering for a colleague absent on maternity leave.

A claim taken by a member under the Employment Equality Act 1998 alleging pregnancy-related dismissal was resolved to the satisfaction of the member at mediation.

A member who complained that under health and safety legislation she was penalised by her school for enquiring about an anti-bullying procedure had her complaint upheld by a rights commissioner who found that her complaint was well founded and awarded her €2,500.

All of these decisions emerged from the particulars of the members' employment. If you have an issue or concern, discuss your situation with an ASTI industrial relations adviser.

New RSTA President elected

News from RSTA branches around the country.

At our AGM in May, Henry Collins of the Waterford Branch was elected President of the RSTA, succeeding Marie Doyle, who has served us so well for the last three years. Henry has previously served as President of the ASTI, and has been very involved in establishing the Waterford Branch of the RSTA. We wish him well in his new role, and we wish Marie Doyle all the very best in her 'retirement' from office. We look forward to working with both of them on the National Committee in the coming year.

RSTA out and about

March: A group of RSTA members visited Belfast for dinner and a performance of *Calamity Jane* in the Belfast Opera House in the company of our friends from the NASUWT Retired (the Northern Ireland retired teachers association).

April: A group from the NASUWT Retired joined Dublin RSTA Branch members for a very informative day trip to Powerscourt House and the Glencree Visitor Centre in the Dublin/Wicklow area. The Mayo Branch travelled to Belfast and the Giant's Causeway, and were welcomed and joined by members of the NASUWT.

May: The Mayo Branch trip north was reciprocated when a group from the NASUWT Retired visited Mayo, where they had a very enjoyable experience of western hospitality. The North-East Branch organised a very enjoyable lunch and visit to the Enniskillen Castle Museum. A boat trip on Lough Erne, which was cancelled due to stormy weather, may take place in September. The Wexford Branch visited the Woodstock Gardens, Inistoige, Co. Kilkenny, and this proved to be a very enjoyable day out for all concerned.

June: An enjoyable and interesting trip to Belfast, organised by members of the National Committee, included a visit to the newly refurbished Ulster Museum. By all accounts this museum is well worth a visit.

Free travel in Northern Ireland

Did you know that those who are eligible for free travel in the Republic can fill in a form at the railway/bus station that enables them to avail of free travel in Northern Ireland too? While this facility is not available to those booking online, you can claim a refund for online payment costs if you ask within a certain timeframe. Please contact Iarnród Éireann/Bus Éireann for details before you book. This facility may make a Branch trip north of the border more attractive to members.

Membership application form

If any of your teaching colleagues retired in the last few years, you might



New President of the RSTA Henry Collins of the Waterford Branch.

like to tell them about the RSTA. We have over 1,100 members in 16 branches. While independent of the ASTI, we support the ASTI's efforts to protect teachers' pensions. Branches organise outings and undertake leisure activities like those mentioned above or on our website. Membership costs only €24 per year, most of which is returned to branches to help fund activities. The RSTA membership application form is available on our website at www.rsta-ireland.com or by post from Muriel McNicholas, Cordarragh, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo.

RSTA 50th anniversary

2012 marks the 50th anniversary of the RSTA. Founded in 1962, one of its main objectives was to secure pension parity for members and, in due course, thanks to a lot of hard work by RSTA members and the ASTI, this was achieved. If any reader has any documents or pictures directly related to the activities of the RSTA, particularly in the early years, we'd love to have them for consideration for a commemorative booklet on the first 50 years of the RSTA. If you have any other information or stories about the activities of the RSTA or its members over the years, please let us know about them.

Please send anything you have to Seán Fallon, Secretary, 2 Killakee Walk, Firhouse, Dublin 24, or Email: fallonsfamily@eircom.net.

Send us your photos!

If your branch is organising an event or going on an outing, please ask members to bring along digital cameras and take some pictures. These can be sent by email to the Secretary for inclusion either in subsequent newsletters or in the photo gallery on our website – www.rsta-ireland.com.

Join Goal's Jersey Day

Irish charity GOAL is encouraging schools all over Ireland to take part in the GOAL Jersey Day on Friday October 7, and help support GOAL's programmes for the poor in the developing world.

The concept is simple: wear the jersey of your favourite team and donate €2 to GOAL. To register for GOAL Jersey Day and receive your start-up pack, Tel: 01-280 9779, Email: jerseyday@goal.ie, or visit www.goal.ie.

Irish rugby star Jamie Heaslip is encouraging schools to get involved in Goal Jersey Day.



Guide for school leavers

The Citizens Information Board has produced a booklet for school leavers providing information and practical advice about education and employment. For more information, see www.citizensinformation.ie.

Irish Heart Month

This month is Irish Heart Month and the focus this year is on men's health. More men die from heart attack and stroke than any other cause of death. If you would like to order free Irish Heart Month promotional materials, or for further information on promoting Heart Month, contact Mairead O'Callaghan, Tel: 01-668 5001, or Email: heartmonth@irishheart.ie.

Inclusive education course

Queen's University Belfast and the Institute of Child Education and Psychology Europe (ICEP Europe) offer an online Advanced Diploma in Professional Development (AdvDipPD) Inclusive Education. The next intake is in January.

For application forms or further information, Tel: 01-651 0618, Email: info@icepe.eu, or log on to www.icepe.eu.

Senior cycle consultation

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment consultation on the senior cycle is continuing until Friday, October 28, 2011.

The areas currently being consulted on are: the science subjects – biology, chemistry and physics; physical education, syllabus and curriculum framework; and, two sample short courses – enterprise and psychology. The syllabuses and other materials are available on the website www.ncai.ie/consultations. Online questionnaires are available for you to provide feedback on the developments.

Leading lights in road safety

The Road Safety Authority's 'Leading Lights in Road Safety' Awards honour the contribution made by people nationwide to keeping Irish roads free from death and serious injury. The awards include an education category to recognise a teacher and/or students' commitment to road safety, through campaigns or other activities that highlight the importance of road safety. The closing date for entries is Friday September 16. For further details, see www.rsa.ie/leadinglights.

A day in the life of Dublin

Law firm Walkers is sponsoring an art competition, which is open to second-level students in Dublin city and county. The competition calls on students to submit their impressions of what Dublin means to them before the closing date on October 12. For more information, contact Nicola Connolly, Tel: 01-470 6623, or Email: nicola.connolly@walkersglobal.com.

Children's Books Festival

The Children's Books Festival 2011 will offer a programme of Irish and international authors and illustrators during October. Look out for activities in your local library or arts centre and see www.childrensbooksireland.ie for more information.

Home Economics World Conference

The Irish branch of the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) is currently seeking home economics teachers who may be interested in joining a study trip in July 2012 to attend the IFHE World Congress taking place in Melbourne Australia from July 16 to 21. For more information contact Helen Maguire, Email: hmaguire@stangelas.nuigalway.ie or log on to www.ifhe.org.

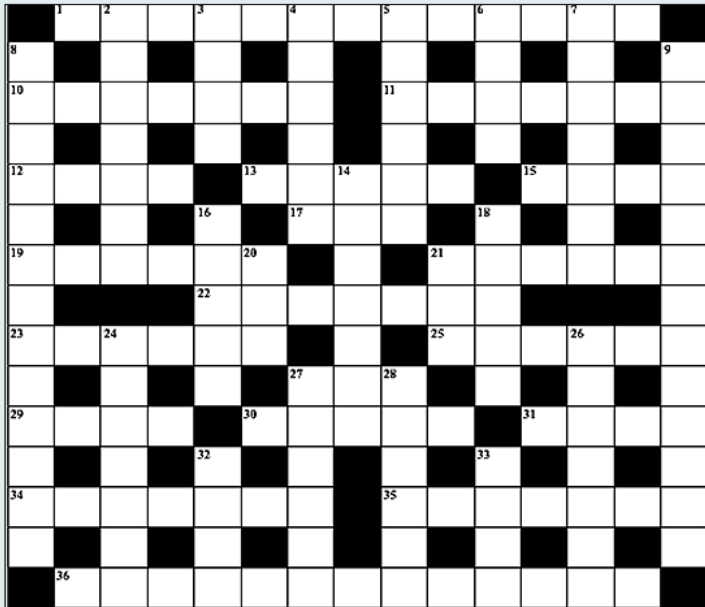


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Name

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Entries to: Astir Crossword No. 1104, Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, October 7, 2011

CLUES ACROSS:

- 1 These guidelines were updated in July 2011 (8,5)
- 10 Chianti is a famous ... wine (7)
- 11 GAA rain could turn into a waterfall (7)
- 12 "It takes twenty years to build a reputation and five minutes to ... it" (Warren Buffett) (4)
- 13 Wised up to getting no scores (5)
- 15 Let's carve him as a ... fit for the gods, Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds" (Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*) (4)
- 17 The Department, in short! (3)
- 19 Not the main route (6)
- 21 The school dishwasher could be around for a relatively long time! (6)
- 22 *Lusitania* fell victim to this attack (7)
- 23 Combine or shun the torrent (6)
- 25 He may be nicknamed this but he's no casual or mediocre player! (6)
- 27 Applying for a job you may need to send one of those! (1.1.1.)
- 29 Long deep cut (4)
- 30 Informal attire (5)
- 31 "Once more the storm is howling, and ... hid Under this cradle-hood and coverlid My child sleeps on" (WB Yeats) (4)
- 34 Kenyan capital (7)
- 35 "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge", this Hebrew prophet wrote (7)
- 36 Edward VII's mistress and won the Coronation Stakes at Ascot in 2010 (6,7)

CLUES DOWN:

- 2 Her idea to become more exhilarating (7)
- 3 A liar in the den (4)
- 4 Can be offensive in a card (6)
- 5 NT Sean could be located on the Loire (6)
- 6 A leader of prayer in a mosque (4)
- 7 Official language of Kenya and Tanzania (7)
- 8 Posting frequent brief messages, e.g., tweeting (5,8)
- 9 What you might have after the next Budget! (4,9)
- 14 Composer of music for films such as *The King's Speech* and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (7)
- 16 Spy at the fall guy (5)
- 18 This kind of computing delivers hosted services over the internet (5)
- 20 Homer's catchphrase! (5)
- 21 Not even bizarre (3)
- 24 *The Barber of Seville*, his most famous opera, perhaps (7)
- 26 Kelsey Grammer was the eponymous doctor in this American sitcom (7)
- 27 See nil if doddering (6)
- 28 I have found it! (6)
- 32 Pull this over someone's eyes to deceive or delude (4)
- 33 Wee Irish! (4)

Solution to ASTIR Crossword No. 1103

Across	Down
1. Reverence	2. Entrap
9. Casein	3. Esther
10. Statutory	4. Either
11. Sirius	5. Cartier
12. Daredevil	6. Marijuana
13. Ruairi	7. Decilitre
17. Bra	8. And skills
19. Domingo	14. Education
20. Funeral	15. Amaryllis
21. Alt	16. Interpret
23. Cartel	17. Boa
27. Collinear	18. Aft
28. Tulips	22. Lookout
29. Footprint	24. Clothe
30. Oliver	25. Inbred
31. Attendant	26. Cannon



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