

Volume 30: Number 4: September 2012
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ASTI
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ASTIR

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland



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entitlements

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for you

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for Plan B



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

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Letters, comments and articles are welcome

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

Fighting for our profession

In his first message, new ASTI President GERRY BRESLIN pledges his support to members.

Gúim gach dea mhian ar mhuintir ASTI uilig don bhliain úr scoile agus ba mhaith liom go speisialta fáilte uí Cheallaigh a chur roimh achan muinteoir nua a bhfuil ag tosú linne ag an ám seo.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you back for the new school year and to extend best wishes to you all for the months ahead. I would especially like to welcome all newly qualified teachers who are starting out on their teaching careers this year.

For many of us, the new school year was always a time of great excitement and anticipation; we looked forward to meeting and greeting the new students to our schools and meeting our new classes. How times have changed! We now return to school full of trepidation as to what awaits us and our students.

Enough is enough

Budget cuts over the last four years have impacted greatly on our incomes and on our working conditions. Changes in the pupil-teacher ratio in 2009, and the inclusion of guidance counsellors in the classroom teacher quota, have led to serious consequences for all of our schools. Many teachers will have larger classes, higher and ordinary level classes may have to be amalgamated, subjects may have to be dropped and, most worryingly, many non-permanent teachers will have spent the summer in limbo – not knowing whether they still have a job or how many hours they will have this year.

As ASTI President, I will do my utmost to convince the Department of Education and Skills and the politicians that enough is enough; teachers can take no more and students can take no more. The students in our classrooms today have one opportunity to go through the second-level education system. Unfortunately, this is a system where austerity measures have been heaped on top of existing under-investment.

New entrants treated disgracefully

The treatment of new entrants to teaching over the past two years has been disgraceful. Those lucky enough to get a job this September are starting at a salary that is 30% lower than they would have earned three years ago. The vast majority of these young teachers will spend years in temporary, substitute and part-time positions. Almost one-third of second-level teachers are in this position.

Teachers are the most important resource in education. Next to

parenting, teaching is the most important job in the world. If the Government continues to downgrade new entrants to our profession, the long-term effects will be serious for everyone. Teaching has historically attracted the highest calibre of entrants. If the present policy continues, that will no longer be the case.

Improving our union

In 2011, ASTI Standing Committee commissioned an independent body to carry out a review of ASTI structures, rules and organisation. Extensive consultation was carried out among members. This review is being analysed by the officers – the President, Vice President, Honorary Treasurer, Immediate Past President and General Secretary – and we hope to bring proposals to a Special Convention within the next few months. It is hoped that any changes will make our union more accessible and relevant to all our members. I urge you to inform yourself about these proposals when they become available and to get involved in the debate.

As part of our efforts to communicate with our members, it is proposed to visit as many schools as possible in the near future. I look forward to meeting you in your schools and getting the opportunity to hear from you.

Finally, remember that our union is only as strong as the participation of its membership. The ASTI is here to serve you, the teacher. I encourage you to get involved in the ASTI at school and at branch level. I am honoured to be your President for the coming year, and I look forward to working with a united and committed profession to promote second-level education and to protect our most vulnerable.



Gerry Breslin
ASTI President

Standing together for teachers and education

PAT KING emphasises the importance of supporting our colleagues and students to defend the true purpose of education.

As this *ASTIR* goes to print we are still awaiting the outcome of the Government's review of allowances in the public sector. Following the announcement of this review late last year, the ASTI made clear its view that teachers' allowances are an integral part of their pay and that ASTI members would consider any cut in their pay to be a breach of the Croke Park Agreement.

The freezing of teachers' allowances for 'new beneficiaries' – which was implemented last February pending the outcome of the review of allowances – represented a third attack by the Government on the pay of new teachers. It followed a 14% reduction in pay for new teachers in January 2011, and the capping of qualification allowances in January 2012. A newly qualified second-level teacher who is lucky enough to secure full hours this September will be appointed at a starting salary of €27,814, which is €11,381 less than a teacher who started in 2010. This is compounded by the fact that the majority of this year's teacher graduates have not yet found work, and those who have are employed on a part-time and/or temporary basis.

Even in 2008, when teaching jobs were not as scarce as they are today, more than 50% of teachers under age 30 were on temporary contracts of one year or less. This figure is probably closer to 60% today. In this edition of *ASTIR* we summarise three recent cases involving ASTI members who were entitled to CIDs (contracts of indefinite duration), but whose employers had failed to award them. It is telling that the vast majority of the ASTI's casework involves young, temporary and part-time teachers who must pursue their employment rights through their union. We must stand behind our new colleagues, many of whom are struggling on part-time and temporary contracts. We must resist the development of a tiered system of teaching conditions. Such a system will damage the teaching profession and the spirit of harmony and collaboration that thrives in our schools today, and which is the cornerstone of Ireland's holistically focused education service.

Sick leave

All members should familiarise themselves with the new arrangements for sick leave, which are being implemented across the public sector (see page 16). While the ASTI opposed new arrangements for sick leave on the basis that they are unnecessary and have the potential to disadvantage teachers who experience serious illness, it is important to note that the original proposals from Government were subject to significant

modification by the Labour Court following strong representations from the teacher unions, including the ASTI.

Investing in human lives

The goal of second-level education, as set out in the Education Act, is the personal, intellectual and social development of young people. The work of teachers, therefore, is to help young people to develop awareness, knowledge and skills that will enable them to live good, productive lives. Investment in education is a worthy and vital investment in human lives.

The ASTI is continuing its campaign against the education cuts. Together with the other education unions, the ASTI has been working to get two key messages into the public domain: that schools have been damaged by the cutbacks, and that education is essential to economic recovery. It is important that everyone working in education continues to participate in the conversation about the importance of education and the impact of the cuts on young people, schools and communities.



Pat King
ASTI General Secretary



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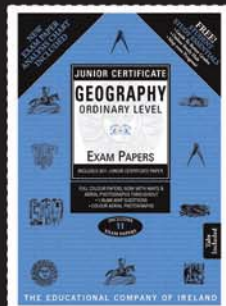
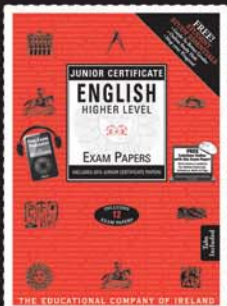


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ASTI addresses Oireachtas committee on child protection

The publication of the Children’s First Bill is an important legislative development in child protection, ASTI representatives told the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children in an address in June. However, the ASTI stated that in order to deliver the vision set out in ‘Children First’, the Bill must address a number of key issues, including: the capacity of schools and teachers to take on additional statutory requirements; the training needs of teachers; and, the need to protect the school’s Designated Officer and teachers as Mandated Professionals. “A core objective of the Children First legislation is to bring accountability into the area of child protection and welfare,” ASTI Assistant General Secretary Moira Leydon told the Committee. “An accountable organisation will not emerge because of fear of prosecution. An accountable organisational culture will only emerge when professionals/individuals working with young people have clear and shared understandings of children’s welfare; of child abuse – in particular, emotional and psychological abuse; and, of what constitutes the best interests of the child.”

Moira Leydon said that problems could arise due to the capacity of schools to take on additional statutory requirements and roles. “These statutory requirements will add greatly not just to the workload of principals, but also to the work of the board of management. The Department of Education and Skills must put in place a coherent ‘sectoral plan’ for schools, as well as policy templates and consistent training. Future legislation must ensure that the Designated Officer must be given the type of bona fide protection that is currently provided under the Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1996.”

View the full ASTI presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children at www.asti.ie.

Impact of cuts

In April 2012, the ASTI published results of a survey of principals, which examined the impact austerity has had on second-level schools and on young people’s education. The research found that education cutbacks have forced schools to drop subjects, amalgamate classes and lose teachers.

Read the full report at www.asti.ie/publications/other.

Celebrate 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.

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



ASTI members march with Pride



ASTI Vice President Sally Maguire (centre) pictured at this year’s Dublin Pride march along with ASTI members Liz Crummy and Leonard Woods. The ASTI is committed to promoting the rights of all members. The ASTI Gay and Lesbian Network meets regularly to identify what the ASTI can do to promote equal treatment for gay and lesbian teachers.

Find out more in the equality section of the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.

Have you registered for ASTI member discounts?

All ASTI members can avail of discounts from over 600 suppliers through the Membership Plus group scheme. Membership Plus cards were distributed to existing members with the May 2012



edition of *ASTIR* and new ASTI members will be issued with their Membership Plus cards on joining. Once registered, the Membership Plus card allows access to discounts of up to 50% from hundreds of suppliers, including high street names. Find out more at www.asti.ie.

International trade union news

A total of 76 trade unionists were murdered in 2011, according to an annual survey of trade union rights violations published by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

The ITUC survey also reveals how strikes are fiercely repressed in many countries, by means of mass dismissals, arrests and detention, including in Georgia, Kenya, South Africa and Botswana, where 2,800 workers were dismissed after a public sector strike.

Read the full survey at <http://survey.ituc-csi.org>.

Carlow Branch retirement event



Pictured at a recent ASTI Carlow Branch retirement function are (from left): Back row: Colm O'Toole, Standing Committee Region 10; Pat Sheehan; Dermot Breen; John McCauley; Dónal McLean; and, David Kenny. Middle row: Clare O'Farrell; Anna Mulvihill; Catherine Kavanagh; Denis O'Grady; Catherine Rooney; John O'Donovan; Miriam Carbery; Sheila Kenny; and, Gerard Cummins. Front row: Margaret Lynch; Bernadette Gleeson; Paddy Gilman; Áine Redmond; Brendan Broderick, ASTI Immediate Past President; Pat King, ASTI General Secretary; and, Aidan Farrell. Patrick Gilman, who is pictured, has been involved in the ASTI since the early 1940s when he was the fourth member to join the Carlow Branch. He served as President of the ASTI in 1961 and was instrumental in the development of the Carlow Branch, which was founded by Frank Mannion, as well as the founding of the Portlaoise and Wexford branches.

Dublin North West Branch retirement event



Dublin North West Branch retirees Malachi McHugh, Deirdre O'Sullivan, John McHugh, Mary McHugh, Joan Greene, Cepta Loughnane, Ann Martin, Michael Stacey, and Theresa Burke were recently honoured at a branch retirement function. Also pictured are: ASTI President Gerry Breslin; ASTI Vice President Sally Maguire; RSTA President Henry Collins; and, Dublin North West Branch officers Ger Curtin, Mary Ohle, Colm O'Gaora and Marcia McGee.

Pension scheme for new entrants passes through Oireachtas

New entrants to teaching will be subject to a new single public service pension scheme, which has now passed through the Oireachtas, but has yet to be implemented. The scheme will be compulsory for all new teachers and will mean pension benefit based on career average earnings, with increases linked to the Consumer Price Index rather than to increases in salaries. The ASTI has been opposed to the introduction of the new scheme since it was initially proposed in Budget 2010. An independent analysis commissioned by the ASTI and the other teacher unions pointed out serious flaws in the proposed pension scheme. The

teacher unions presented their concerns to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and sought advice on mounting a legal challenge to the scheme. The ICTU Public Service Committee, of which the ASTI is a member, presented its concerns about the scheme to the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform. The Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform has indicated that he intends to have the new pension scheme implemented this year.

Full details are available on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.

Teacher awarded for inspiring students in science

Retired teacher Jim Cooke was awarded a lifetime achievement award as part of the Euro Science Open Forum, which took place in July. Mr Cooke received the special recognition in light of his career-long contribution to the teaching of science, and his demonstration of excellence and dedication as a science teacher in Synge Street CBS, where he taught for 38 years until his retirement in 2009. Students from Synge Street CBS have won the BT Young Scientist Award a record three times, and school principal Michael Minnock says Mr Cooke's efforts to develop science in the school continue to impact: "The legacy of Jim Cooke lies in the many students that have experienced his warmth, his passion and his overwhelming generous spirit. He is also the glue that holds our efforts together in this regard, with previous pupils having such respect for him that any request for help is instantly answered. This is a lasting contribution to the fabric of this historic school's achievements. He is truly one of a kind". On receiving his award, Mr Cooke said: "Over the many years at Synge Street, we created a very ambitious science curriculum in which the students have had to develop their capacity for critical



Jim Cooke receiving his award from Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, European Commissioner for Research Innovation and Science.

thinking and creativity. Our success over the 30 years was immensely gratifying to all of us".

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Tullamore Branch retirement event



Pictured at a Tullamore Branch retirement function held in May are (from left): Back row: Frank Egan; John Osborne; Noel McManamly; Máire Adams; Mary Glennon; Murt Davoren; Marie Fleming; John O'Brien; Terry Fahy; and, Anne Ganly. Front row: Mary Fleming; Diarmaid de Paor, ASTI Deputy General Secretary; Brendan Broderick, ASTI Immediate Past President; Josephine Hickey; Sheila O'Meara; and, Bernie O'Neil.

Upskilling courses for maths teachers

This autumn, 400 teachers will commence a new Professional Diploma in Mathematics for Teaching aimed at 'out of field' teachers of maths. The two-year part-time course is free of charge and will be delivered at centres nationally and through online modules. The National Centre for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching and Learning (NCE-MSTL) based at the University of Limerick is responsible for all aspects of course design, delivery and administration. The application deadline for 2012 has now closed, but you can find out more about the course and how to apply for the next intake at www.nce-mstl.ie.

Donegal school wins first SmartClass competition

Loreto Community School in Milford, Co. Donegal, was awarded the first SmartClass competition prize in May. The school won the competition by creating an ebook depicting the 'Smart Class of the Future – 2025'. They won a package of computers, ebooks and ongoing technical support for an entire first-year class. The national competition is run by The Educational Company of Ireland, Intel and Steljes. Find out more at www.smartclass.ie.

Donegal Branch retirement function



At a recent Donegal Branch retirement function are: Back row: Gerry Breslin, ASTI President; Don Byrne; Patsy Joe McGee; Maire Mulcahy, ASTI Assistant General Secretary; Michael McGinley; Pat King, ASTI General Secretary; Gerry Doherty; and, Neil Curran, Standing Committee Region 1. Front row: Maud Walsh, Mary Byrne; Brendan Broderick, ASTI Immediate Past President; Helen Moran; and, Marie McMonagle

This issue in numbers...

14

Number of new secondary schools to be established by the Department of Education and Skills by 2015 (P11)

142

Number of appeals against CID refusals lodged with the Adjudicator in the 2011/2012 school year, many with ASTI support. (P15)

Patronage of new schools announced

The patronage of 14 new second-level schools to be established by 2015 was announced in July.

The new schools will be under the patronage of a number of VECs, Educate Together, The Church of Ireland, the Le Chéile Trust and An Foras Pátrúnachta.

Second-level schools under the patronage of Educate Together will be established for the first time in 2014. New Catholic and Church of Ireland voluntary secondary schools are to open for the first time in a generation in the same year, along with two second-level Gaelcholáistí under the patronage of An Foras Pátrúnachta.

A total of 16 new second-level schools will be established by 2015. A further seven schools are due to be established by 2017; patrons for these schools have yet to be decided.

In June 2011 the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn TD, announced new criteria and arrangements for the establishment of new schools and the appointment of school patrons. Patrons were asked to provide evidence of parental demand when making an application for a new school. In addition, the criteria used in deciding on patronage included how the proposed schools would provide for extending or strengthening diversity of provision in each area, having regard to the views of parents.

Schools opening September 2013

Area	Patron
Lusk, Co. Dublin	Co. Dublin VEC
Claregalway, Co. Galway	Co. Galway VEC
Naas, Co. Kildare	Co. Kildare VEC
Navan, Co. Meath	Co. Meath VEC
Doughiska, Co. Galway	Co. Galway VEC

Schools opening September 2014

Area	Patron
Cork City – South Suburbs/Carrigaline	Co. Cork VEC
Blanchardstown West, Dublin 15	Educate Together
Mulhuddart, Dublin 15	Le Chéile Schools Trust
Maynooth, Co. Kildare	Co. Kildare VEC
Drogheda, Co. Louth	Joint patronage of Co. Louth VEC and Educate Together
Dundalk, Co. Louth	Co. Louth VEC
Ashbourne, Co. Meath	Co. Meath VEC
Balbriggan, Co. Dublin	An Foras Pátrúnachta
Dundrum, Co. Dublin	An Foras Pátrúnachta
Greystones, Co. Wicklow	Church of Ireland
Lucan/Clonburris, Co. Dublin	Co. Dublin VEC in partnership with Educate Together

Concern debate winners



Pictured are members of the Bandon Grammar debate team with their teacher Ruth Chambers. The students – Georgie Tarr, Conor Barry, Colin Kingston and Josh O'Regan – won the Concern Debates competition 2012 and are pictured on a trip to Uganda to witness Concern's work there. Of the experience, Ruth says: "When I qualified as a teacher four years ago, I never dreamt I would be visiting Uganda as part of my teaching career. While the academic curriculum is at the heart of my work as a teacher, becoming involved in extra-curricular activities has nurtured and enriched my teaching experience".

33

Number of professional standards set out in the new Code of Conduct for teachers (P19)

816

ASTI mentions in the media
Visit our media centre at www.asti.ie (P20)

IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM THE DEPARTMENT

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

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

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

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

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

The Council may be contacted in relation to registration at:

primaryregistration@teachingcouncil.ie
for primary school teachers; and

postprimaryregistration@teachingcouncil.ie
for post-primary school teachers.



TEACHING COUNCIL UPDATE

Register now to protect your pay

The ASTI is urging members who are not currently registered with the Teaching Council, or who have let their registration lapse, to submit an application as soon as possible.

Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act is due to commence in the 2012/2013 school year. Its commencement will make it a legal requirement for teachers to be registered with the Teaching Council in order to be paid from Oireachtas funds.

Once commenced, Section 30 will impact on the salaries of teachers who are not registered with the Teaching Council. These teachers will no longer receive pay from the Department of Education and Skills or the Vocational Education Committees (VECs).

It is vital that ASTI members who are not registered should begin the Teaching Council registration process immediately.

Questions and answers on Section 30 can be found on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.

New induction requirement

Newly qualified teachers who complete their qualifications from 2012 onwards must complete a programme of induction workshops in order to achieve full Teaching Council registration.

The induction workshop programme will be co-ordinated by the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) and will consist of 12 evening workshops, taking place in education centres throughout the country. Teachers must complete all 12 workshops within three years of their initial registration date to meet the requirement.

New Code of Conduct

The Teaching Council has published a new Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers, setting out 33 standards of professional knowledge, skill, competence and conduct expected of registered teachers.

The Code covers areas such as communication and relationships, equality and inclusion, compliance with national and school policies, professional development, and pupil/student welfare.

The new Code of Conduct replaces the previous Code, which was published in 2007 and was developed following a process of consultation, in which the ASTI participated. Find out more on page 19.

Renew your Teaching Council registration on time

Teachers must renew their Teaching Council registration each year. It is vital that you renew your registration on time to avoid being removed from the register. The Teaching Council will inform you when your registration is due for renewal, by writing to you at the address you have provided. A final notice will issue if you do not renew by your registration expiry date. You will have 30 days from the date of the final notice to renew your registration before you are removed from the register.

Find out more at the Teaching Council website – www.teachingcouncil.ie.



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Improving services for you

A new member contact system has recently been introduced in ASTI Head Office. The new system is designed to provide a better and more efficient service for members.



ASTI Head Office staff are here to answer your queries, and to offer advice and support on a range of issues to do with your job, teaching, education, and ASTI services and policy.

We deal with hundreds of phone calls and emails from members each week. With our new computer system in place, we hope to offer members a better and more efficient service.

The new membership system will ensure that each step we take towards resolving your issue is recorded, and we can always offer you up-to-date information easily and quickly.

You can contact ASTI Head Office by:

LoCall: 1850-418 400

E: info@asti.ie.

P: ASTI, Thomas MacDonagh House, Winetavern Street, Dublin 8.
Head Office is open 9.00am-5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

You have 24-7 access to comprehensive information about teachers' conditions of employment, leave entitlements, contracts, the operation of schools, education developments and more at www.asti.ie.

- If you have a question or concern, or you would like ASTI support, you can contact ASTI Head Office by phone, email or letter.
- Have your membership number ready when you call, or include it in your email or letter, so we can find your details on our database quickly. If you don't have your number to hand when you contact us, that's no problem – just tell us your name, school and address and we'll find the correct details.
- Head Office receptionist Jane Hopkins will pass your call, email or letter to the most relevant member of staff. You can find a list of ASTI staff members and their areas of responsibility on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.
- Our new computer system ensures that once you contact us, your contact is logged and remains open until your query is resolved.
- Queries can often be solved straight away, but sometimes we'll need to do further research or we may need you to supply more information. Some situations will require ongoing contact, for example where a case or negotiations are being pursued.

Your ASTI membership number

You'll find your ASTI membership number printed on your new ASTI membership card. Membership cards are being posted to members this month. If you have your membership number ready when you call Head Office, or include it in your email or letter, we'll be able to find your details on our database quickly and we can make sure we are working from the correct record.



Update your details

Have you moved recently? Do you have a new phone number or email address? Let us know so we can be sure that we have the correct contact information for you. You can email membership@asti.ie or update online at www.asti.ie.



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Successful ASTI cases

Some recent cases taken on behalf of members show that the ASTI has the expertise to bring positive results for teachers.

Teacher reinstated following appeal to the Labour Court

An appeal of a Rights Commissioner decision to the Labour Court resulted in a Munster teacher's being reinstated and awarded a contract of indefinite duration (CID).

The teacher had completed four successive contracts with the school when she was informed that her contract would not be renewed in the following school year – the year in which her contract would become a CID by operation of law.

The school claimed that its allocation had been cut and the teacher's subjects were not compatible with the school's needs. On appeal to the Rights Commissioner, the decision of the school not to award a CID was upheld.

Supported by the ASTI, the teacher appealed to the Labour Court, contending that, in fact, the school's needs were compatible with the teacher's subjects, and that the non-renewal of her contract constituted an unfair dismissal.

Agreement was reached during the Labour Court hearing to allow the teacher to be awarded a CID dating from the year in which her fifth contract should have applied. She was also awarded €1,000 in financial compensation.

Adjudicator appeal achieves CID

A recent Adjudicator's decision found in favour of an Ulster teacher employed to cover for another teacher on secondment for four years, who was not given a CID, although the secondee had resigned.

The circumstances were that when the secondee retired in February 2012, the fixed-term teacher replacing her until that date was offered a further fixed-term contract with different objective grounds capable of compromising entitlement to a CID.

The teacher sought a CID from the Board, but was denied. Supported by the ASTI, the teacher pursued an appeal and succeeded in her claim for a CID on the basis that the objective grounds advanced by the school to deny her a CID did not feature in her fourth contract and could not now, in her fifth contract, be raised as a bar to the award of a CID.

Rights Commissioner finds non-permanent teacher treated less favourably

A claim taken to the Rights Commissioner by the ASTI resulted in the award of a CID to a member who had been denied one by her school because, although otherwise qualified, she did not possess a degree in the second subject she taught.

The decision also awarded the teacher €3,000 for less favourable treatment because permanent teachers who are not in possession of a degree in a second or third teaching subject do not forfeit progression up the incremental scale, in comparison with this fixed-term teacher, who did.



The ASTI members in these cases were represented by Maire Mulcahy, ASTI Assistant General Secretary, and Bernard Moynihan, ASTI Industrial Relations Official. Find out about your IR official at www.asti.ie.

While the impetus is towards the reasonable requirement to have a degree in all of your teaching subjects, the employer cannot treat a fixed-term teacher less favourably than a permanent teacher in salary terms.

The outcomes detailed reflect the particular circumstances of the teachers' employments but may assist members in similar circumstances.

Teachers who are refused a CID can appeal to the Adjudicator or to the Rights Commissioner. Rights Commissioner decisions can be appealed to the Labour Court.

More than 140 appeals were lodged with the Adjudicator in the 2011/2012 school year: the majority of these by second-level teachers. Three-quarters of cases were resolved without the need for formal adjudication. In addition, hundreds of cases are resolved at local level.

Got a question? The ASTI has a team of industrial relations officials and other dedicated staff members available to give you expert advice.

Contact the ASTI for advice on your appeal

If you would like to appeal a decision made by your school or the Department, you can contact the ASTI. We will be happy to explore the merits of an appeal and discuss the process with you. If in doubt, get in touch with the ASTI. Find out more about contacting us on page 14.

New sick leave arrangements

Significant changes to teachers' sick leave entitlements were announced in July.



The revised sick leave arrangements follow a lengthy dispute between unions and the State as employer. The dispute progressed to the Labour Court, which issued binding recommendations in July.

The new arrangements apply to all categories of public servants. However, ASTI insistence that schools and teachers would be disproportionately affected by proposals was recognised by the Labour Court and provision was made for further talks with the Department of Education and Skills.

The new arrangements

- Teachers may take up to seven days' self-certified (uncertified) sick leave over a rolling two-year period;
- teachers will be entitled to take certified sick leave for non-critical illness for up to three months on full pay and three months on half pay in a four-year period;
- teachers who experience critical illness will be entitled to six months' leave on full pay and six months on half pay in a four-year period; and,

- in the case of both certified sick leave and critical illness leave, a further period on "temporary rehabilitation pay" will be available when paid leave has been exhausted.

What is temporary rehabilitation pay?

This is new for teachers. In the past, when a teacher's entitlement to paid sick leave was exhausted, no further salary was paid.

The new proposal is that where a teacher exhausts his/her paid leave, a temporary rehabilitation payment (TRP) will be made for a further period.

The amount of this payment will be based on the amount of service a teacher has, and will be equivalent to a teacher's accrued pension benefit at the time of illness. For example, a teacher with 24 years' service would get TRP of 24 eightieths of current salary.

The Labour Court accepted union proposals that a minimum payment equal to social protection rates for those who joined the public service before 1995 should apply.

	Department's original proposal	Labour Court recommendation
Self-certified sick leave	Up to three paid self-certified sick leave days in a rolling 12-month period	Up to seven paid self-certified sick leave days in a rolling 24-month period
Certified sick leave (non-critical illness)	Three months' full pay, followed by three months' half pay in a rolling four-year period. This may be followed by 18 months of leave with temporary rehabilitation pay	Three months' full pay, followed by three months' half pay in a rolling four-year period. This may be followed by 18 months of leave with temporary rehabilitation pay
Certified sick leave for critical illness	Six months' full pay, followed by three months' half pay in a rolling four-year period. This may be followed by 15 months' leave with temporary rehabilitation pay	Six months' full pay, followed by six months' half pay in a rolling four-year period. This may be followed by 12 months' leave with temporary rehabilitation pay
Repeat of critical illness	Department initially proposed a limit allowing only one instance of critical illness paid leave in a career	This once-in-career limit is removed
Implementation	Department proposed uniform implementation across all sectors	The Labour Court recognised that the application of the new arrangements for teachers and education workers should be the subject of further consultative meetings between the Department of Education and Skills and the education unions, including the ASTI

Implementation

Meetings between the education unions and the Department of Education and Skills on the application of the new arrangements for teachers are now taking place.

The Labour Court recommendation is that the new self-certified sick leave arrangements should come into effect as soon as practicable and that, subject to the necessary legislation being enacted, the proposals on certified sick leave and the other matters covered by the recommendation should take effect from January 1, 2014.

Union progress

The ASTI's priority, throughout discussions on sick leave and the Labour Court dispute, had been to protect teachers who experience critical illness to the greatest extent possible. The unions made progress in this regard and the final outcome represents a real advance on the original proposals.

You can read full information on the new sick leave arrangements on the leave section of the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.

Background to sick leave changes

An analysis of public sector sick leave entitlements was first announced by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Brendan Howlin TD, in December 2011. In May 2012 a meeting took place between the public sector unions and Government departments, during which Government proposals on sick leave emerged. These proposals were rejected by the unions. Meetings between the two sides were then held at the Labour Relations Commission and in July both sides presented their case to a hearing of the Labour Court, which issued binding recommendations on new sick leave arrangements for all public servants.



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Leave issues

The ASTI answers all your questions about sick leave entitlements on our website. Here are some common questions from members.



Other concerns

Section 30 ... see page 12

Sick leave ... see page 16

New teachers ... see page 22

If I have to take sick leave because of my pregnancy, does that count towards my sick leave allowance?

A pregnant teacher may qualify for pregnancy-related sick leave and this period will not be counted in determining their entitlement to paid sick leave. This only applies to pregnancy-related sick leave. An illness occurring during pregnancy is not necessarily pregnancy related, but if absence owing to illness during pregnancy is pregnancy related, the teacher should immediately notify their employer of this and the Occupational Health Service must be consulted. The implementation of revised sick leave arrangements is currently under discussion – see page 16.

What parental leave am I entitled to?

Teachers are entitled to unpaid parental leave for a period of up to 14 working weeks for each child. Parental leave can be taken until the child concerned reaches 13 years of age, or 16 in the case of a child with a disability. In the case of an adopted child, where the child is 11 years or more but less than 13, the parental leave must be taken within two years of the adoption order.

You can take up to 14 weeks' parental leave:

- as one continuous period of 14 weeks; or
- in two separate periods of seven weeks; or
- in a maximum of three separate periods as follows:
 - i. 1 x 2 weeks; 1 x 4 weeks; 1 x 8 weeks
 - ii. 1 x 2 weeks; 1 x 5 weeks; 1 x 7 weeks
 - iii. 1 x 2 weeks; 1 x 6 weeks; 1 x 6 weeks.

In exceptional circumstances, a teacher may avail of parental leave where a child has particular medical problems that require the attendance of a parent with a child at a hospital or clinic on a regular basis. In such cases certification from the hospital/clinic must be submitted to the managerial authority.

If you are entitled to parental leave for more than one child, you cannot take more than 14 weeks' leave in any 12-month period without the consent of management. This does not apply in the case of multiple births. You should apply to management for parental leave as soon as possible, and not later than six weeks prior to the proposed commencement date of the leave. Your application must specify the dates you intend to commence the leave, the duration of the leave and the manner in which you propose to take the leave.

Who is entitled to take carer's leave?

Carer's leave is temporary unpaid leave to allow a teacher to personally provide full-time care and attention for a person who is medically certified as being in need of such care. Except in exceptional circumstances, you must have worked for a period of one continuous year with the school/VEC before you can take carer's leave. The maximum period of carer's leave allowable is 104 weeks, which can be taken in one continuous period or in a number of periods, the total duration of which amounts to no more than 104 weeks. There must be a gap of at least six weeks between the periods taken. Only the first 13 weeks of carer's leave qualify for public holiday entitlements. Accordingly, if you take more than 13 weeks' leave, a deduction of six days' pay will be made during the summer period in respect of each 28 days of absence on carer's leave in excess of the initial 13-week period. You may be entitled to Carer's Benefit or Carer's Allowance from the Department of Social Protection while you are on carer's leave – check www.welfare.ie for more information.

Get in touch

ASTI Head Office receives hundreds of queries from members each week. Find out how we are working to improve our service on page 14.

Know the Code

ASTIR looks at the new Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers, published in June.



The Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers published by the Teaching Council in June is intended to guide teachers' professional judgement and practice. It sets out the professional values that are central to teaching and the professional standards expected of registered teachers. The new Code of Conduct replaces an earlier code, which was first published in 2007. It has been developed following a process of consultation with teachers and other stakeholders, beginning with a draft code, which was issued in 2011.

The revised Code takes account of the broader context in which teaching takes place and of factors beyond teachers' control, which have a bearing on their work, including: the emergence of new technologies and social media; the engagement of parents and the wider community; opportunities for teachers' professional development; and, the degree of educational change.

Purpose of the Code

The Code is intended to serve as a guiding compass to teachers, and to inform public understanding and expectations of the teaching profession. It also has a legal standing and will be used by the Teaching Council as a reference point when its investigative and disciplinary functions under Part 5 of the Teaching Council Act, dealing with fitness to teach, are given legal effect.

The Code of Conduct contains 33 standards of professional knowledge, skill, competence and conduct expected of registered teachers. Some of the key requirements are paraphrased below; however, we recommend that teachers familiarise themselves with the full text of the Code at www.teachingcouncil.ie:

Teachers should **develop good relationships** with students, colleagues, parents, school management and others in the school community.

Teachers should **act with honesty and integrity** and represent themselves honestly.

Teachers should **avoid conflict of interest** between their professional work and private interests that could impact negatively on students.

Teachers should **ensure appropriate communication** with students, colleagues, parents, or school management, including communication via email, texting or on social networking sites.

Teachers should **maintain high standards of practice**, and encourage active and lifelong learning skills among students.

Teachers should **sustain and improve professional practice** by actively maintaining their professional knowledge to ensure that it is current, reflecting on and evaluating their professional practice and availing of professional development opportunities.

Teachers should **work collaboratively** with colleagues, students, parents and management in the interests of sharing and developing good practice to effectively meet the needs of students.

Teachers should **engage in curriculum planning**, implementation and evaluation at classroom and school level.

As part of the registration process, each teacher is issued with a copy of the Code. The new Code will be sent to all teachers in the new school year.

The full text of the Code can be found on the Teaching Council website – www.teachingcouncil.ie.

Social media and digital communication – what the Code has to say

The Teaching Council notes that new technologies and social media play a central role in the way people communicate and learn today. The Code includes the following specific standard in relation to online communication:

“Teachers should ensure that any communication with pupils/students, colleagues, parents, school management and others is appropriate, including communication via electronic media, such as email, texting and social networking sites”.
See page 30 for more on teachers and social media.

Teachers' conditions under attack

The ASTI maintains a strong media presence to highlight issues relevant to teachers and education.



ASTI highlights teachers' contribution to recovery

"There have been a lot of efficiencies [in education] on top of very severe pay cuts for serving teachers and even more severe pay cuts for teachers coming in to the system. Teachers have delivered an awful lot under Croke Park ... but also it is absolutely clear that teachers do an awful lot more than the hours they are contracted to do ... Ireland is practically unique in terms of the amount of extra-curricular work done by teachers."

Diarmaid de Paor, ASTI Deputy General Secretary, on Newstalk Breakfast, July 30

"Our schools were under-funded even before any of the cutbacks of the past three-and-a-half years," Mr Breslin said. "As ASTI President I will work to convince the politicians of this country that the cutbacks approach is not working."

Gerry Breslin, ASTI President, quoted in *The Irish Times*, August 1

"[An ASTI spokesperson] said public servants, including teachers, had already made a substantial contribution in terms of €1.5bn in savings under the Croke Park Agreement to date, pay cuts and the public service pension levy.

"Teachers appointed after 2011 have seen pay drop by more than 30% since 2009," she said. "Thousands of teachers cannot find work or are underemployed."

Irish Examiner, July 31

ASTI defends teachers' conditions of employment

"The State exams system as it currently operates ensures that our students can participate in a highly organised, reliable, fair and efficient exams process," she said. "Examiners and other personnel apply for and

are specifically appointed to carry out this work based on subject expertise, experience and other criteria."

ASTI response to calls to have State exams work included in teaching contracts, as quoted in the *Irish Examiner* of July 31

ASTI responds to criticism of points system

"I'm very impressed that the university heads state that the Leaving Cert examination is utterly transparent, highly efficient, cost-effective and a reliable predictor of third-level performance ... The phrase 'If it ain't broken, why fix it?' comes to mind. Our view is that second-level education is about providing students with a holistic education. It's not about producing products for third level. It's about helping students to grow, to mature, to become decent citizens ready for work, ready for education, ready for life. It shouldn't be dominated by what's going to happen in third level."

Pat King, ASTI General Secretary, responds to an Irish Universities Association report on changes to the points system on Drivetime, RTÉ Radio One, August 21.

ASTI media centre

Find recent ASTI media coverage, press releases and key facts about education and the ASTI in the new media centre on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie/news/media-centre.

The ASTI has appeared in the media more than 800 times in the past year. ASTI representatives regularly contribute to media debate on education issues and promote teachers, the teaching profession and ASTI policy in national, regional and online media.

Teachers playing their part in recovery

Analysis of the Implementation Body's report on the Croke Park Agreement shows that teachers have taken more than their fair share of austerity.



Read the full Second Annual Report of The Implementation Body for the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014 at <http://implementationbody.gov.ie>.

Myth: The public service is not helping Ireland's economic recovery.

Fact: Last year public servants contributed over €1 billion in savings to the Irish Exchequer. The second year of the Croke Park Agreement achieved €650m in public pay bill savings, and administrative efficiency savings worth €370m, according to the second annual report of The Implementation Body for the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014.

The report found that public servants are making significant contributions to reducing Exchequer outgoings, both financially and through other efficiencies:

- pay bill savings of €650m were achieved across the public service between April 2011 and March 2012, driven by the reduction in staff numbers and in pay;
- the first two years of the Croke Park Agreement have yielded €810m in sustainable pay bill savings;
- the Exchequer pay bill is expected to make total savings of €3.3bn by 2015 – this figure takes account of expected increases in public service pension costs; and,
- administrative efficiency savings totalling €370m were reported for the review period, which means a total of €678m in non-pay savings in the first two years of the Agreement.

The Implementation Body is chaired independently and all aspects of its annual report were externally verified.

Myth: Teachers are not paying as much as other public servants.

Fact: While student numbers have risen by almost 5% at second level since 2009, the number of teachers in schools has been reduced. Teachers, like all public servants, are doing far more for far less. Significant savings in the education spend have come about because:

Teachers are giving more

Teachers continue to comply fully with the terms of the Croke Park Agreement, including providing 33 additional hours each per year. The first report of the Implementation Body put the aggregate value of these hours at €43 million annually.

Teachers are being paid less

The reduction of 6,000 posts of responsibility at primary and second level have a consequential saving in the pay bill of €36 million annually. Teachers have taken an average pay cut of 14% since 2009, while new entrants have had a further 15% cut.

Teachers are losing jobs

An increase in the pupil-teacher ratio, the withdrawal of support teacher roles, and the withdrawal of the separate guidance allocation means that well over 1,500 teaching jobs have been lost since 2009.

Teachers are being redeployed

New redeployment arrangements for second-level teachers implemented for the first time in 2011/2012 brought about full year savings of €10 million.

Teachers are accountable

The Implementation Body for the Public Service Agreement also reported that the number of whole school evaluations conducted in 2011 increased by 23%, while the number of incidental inspections increased by 8.5%.



New to teaching?

Here's what you need to know.

Teaching jobs

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. You will find that most of the teaching jobs on offer are temporary or part-time, covering for teachers on leave or covering concessionary hours. Most new teachers begin their careers in this way. The good news is that an expected rise in enrolment of 25,000 students by 2018, and the establishment of 23 new schools by 2017, means that more teaching jobs should soon open up.

Understanding your contract

You should make sure that you receive clear written information on the terms and conditions of your job, in the form of a letter of appointment,

a written contract, or a written statement. You are entitled to this information and it is 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.

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.

Looking for work?

If you are out of work at any point throughout the year, you can register with the ASTI Substitute Placement Service, which matches suitable substitute placements with available teachers – see www.asti.ie or call 01-604 0163.

Part-time and 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 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 where the Department has not sanctioned 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.

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

Check if 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.

If your contract does not meet these criteria, contact your ASTI Industrial Relations Official.



More information on non-permanent contracts and pay is available on the ASTI website.

Permanent contracts and contracts of indefinite duration

Permanent contracts

Permanent teachers are contracted to teach 22 hours a week. If you find a permanent job, you may receive a probationary contract initially, but once the probationary period has been served you should receive a permanent contract.

Contracts of indefinite duration

If you have been employed on four successive fixed-term contracts in the same school, you may be entitled to a contract of indefinite duration

(CID), subject to meeting other criteria. A CID affords the holder the same rights and entitlements as any other permanent teacher, except that their salary is based on the number of hours they teach per week. For more information, see the contracts section on the non-permanent teacher section of the ASTI website – www.asti.ie/pay-and-conditions/non-permanent-teachers.

Salary matters

How much you are paid 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. Two salary scales are now in operation for second-level teachers. Which scale you are on, and what point you start on, will depend on whether you were first appointed to a Department-paid teaching job prior to January 1, 2011. In addition to this basic salary, you may receive additional allowances for your qualifications and other aspects of your job.

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 (if applicable), 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 (inclusive of 56% holiday pay), determined based on a pro-rata fraction of the relevant point on the salary scale plus allowances (if applicable).

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.

Review of allowances

A review of teachers' allowances is currently underway. Updates will appear on the ASTI website when available.

Teaching Council registration

In order to be employed as a teacher in a State-funded school you will need to be registered with the Teaching Council. Later this year, it will become law that only registered teachers can be paid from State funds – see page 12.

The registration process involves submitting an application form, academic transcripts, proof of identity, Garda vetting details, and other documentary evidence to the Teaching Council. Initially, you may be registered with conditions. Conditional registration is sufficient to be employed as a teacher and paid from State funds.

In order to gain full registration with the Teaching Council, you must complete a period of 300 hours' post-qualification employment (PQE) in a recognised second-level school within three years. If you qualified in 2012, you will also have to complete a programme of 12 induction workshops in order to achieve full Teaching Council registration – see page 12.

Getting your bearings

It takes a while to find your feet in any new job. We try to speed the process.

What salary should you be on?

From January 2011, new entrants to teaching are paid according to a different salary scale to teachers who were working for the Department of Education prior to that date.

Any teacher who has given Department-paid service, even as a short-term substitute teacher, prior to January 1, 2011, is not classed as a "new entrant" for the purposes of salary. You will be classed as a "new entrant" if you had not, prior to January 2011, given Department-paid teaching service of any kind.

In addition to being subject to the new scale, "new entrants" start on the first point of the scale, where previously teachers would begin on the third point of the scale. However, teachers will be able to claim incremental credit for previous recognised teaching service, e.g., as a privately paid teacher or for teaching service in another EU state.

What's happening with the new pension scheme?

The proposed new pension scheme for new entrants to teaching has

not yet been implemented, but indications are that the new single public service pension scheme will be in operation from later this year. The scheme will mean pension benefit based on career average earnings, with increases linked to the Consumer Price Index rather than to increases in salaries. For more see page 8.

What do you do if you need time off during the school year?

There is no provision for a teacher to take leave other than what is set down during periods where schools are closed, so in general you should try to make sure you don't need to take leave during the school year. Unpaid leave, bereavement/compassionate leave, and other short-term leave may be taken in certain circumstances – you can find out more on the ASTI website.

How many parent-teacher meetings will you have outside of school time?

At least three formal parent-teacher meetings are held outside of normal school hours per year. These meetings commence at 4.15pm, after each school has closed 15 minutes before normal time. The meetings conclude at 6.45pm. Schools can also choose to allocate some of the 33 additional hours outside of school time required under the Croke Park Agreement to additional parent-teacher meetings. This will be agreed at the beginning of the school year.

Are staff meetings held outside school time?

Schools hold at least one formal staff meeting that includes time outside of the school day each term.



These meetings are arranged so that an equal amount of time is taken from the school day as from the time after the school day. So a staff meeting of two hours' duration will take place one hour preceding and one hour following normal school closing time. Schools can also choose to allocate some of the additional hours required under the Croke Park Agreement for staff meetings outside of school time. This will be agreed at the beginning of the school year.

What is involved in school inspections?

School inspections are carried out by the Inspectorate Division of the Department of Education and Skills, who perform subject inspections, whole school evaluations and incidental inspections. The school will be notified in advance of all inspections, apart from incidental inspections.

Is there any scope for promotion within the school?

Aside from principal and deputy principal posts, teachers can be promoted to hold special duties posts or assistant principal posts in the school. These are known as posts of responsibility.

Unfortunately, due to the current moratorium on posts of responsibility, all special duties posts and some assistant principal posts are not currently being filled. Teachers who do not hold a post of responsibility should not undertake any unpaid work that was previously undertaken by a post holder.

More on the web

You'll find hundreds of pages of information on the ASTI website, including dedicated sections for new teachers and non-permanent teachers.

If you have a problem

The ASTI is always here to support you in any issue you are experiencing in your job. We will advise on the best steps to take to resolve your concern and your query will be treated in strict confidence. 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.



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,
- FAQs for non-permanent teachers.

It's 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.



Get involved

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!

Join the ASTI for:

- answers to your questions by phone, email, Facebook or on our website;
- confidential advice: speak or meet with an industrial relations expert;
- access to our job placement service – register all year round (01-604 0163);
- access to legal advice and assistance;
- a support network at school, regional and national level;
- meetings, seminars and professional development courses;
- a regular magazine and yearly diary designed for second-level teachers;
- discounts from over 600 suppliers through Membership Plus;
- low cost car, house and travel insurance;
- discounted loans and medical schemes; and,
- the support of Ireland's only union working exclusively for second-level teachers.

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 following us on Facebook or Twitter. Find out more at www.asti.ie.

The case for Plan B

A new economic think tank, supported by a number of Irish trade unions including the ASTI, says that fiscal austerity has failed and Ireland urgently needs 'economic Plan B'. But what is Plan B and will it work? GEMMA TUFFY reports.



Public spending has been slashed through cuts to public services, social welfare and pay. Ireland has become the European poster child for fiscal austerity. But the austerity plan – or Plan A – isn't working. Individuals and communities are being hurt by cutbacks, reduced disposable income and growing unemployment. Youth unemployment is on the verge of becoming a social catastrophe. We are stuck in a vicious circle of depressed domestic demand and unemployment. It's time for Plan B. This was the message from Tom Healy, Director of Ireland's newest economic think tank, the Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI), when he addressed ASTI Standing Committee this summer. "If we stick with Plan A there will have to be huge cuts in non-pay current expenditure in the coming years. By 2017 we will be down towards the lower end of the EU comparison table for government expenditure – alongside Latvia, Romania, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Slovakia. Is that where we want to be? Or do we want to be nearer the middle of that table?" We must ask ourselves this question now because, says Tom, Ireland's fiscal austerity plan – Plan A – involves another €3.5 billion in Government savings in Budget 2013, the bulk of which will come from more cuts to public services. "We must ask ourselves: what will our public services look like in five or 10 years? What are our mental health services, our health services, and child and education services, going to look like?"

But what is Plan B and will it work?

Plan B is significantly different to Plan A, according to Tom. It involves bringing to a halt the process of cutting public spending. Instead, Government expenditure would be maintained at its current level (approximately 45% of GDP; this figure excludes bank re-capitalisation) and fiscal adjustment would be achieved through increased Government revenue. An initial investment stimulus would allow the Government to invest in "growth-enhancing areas" such as green energy, broadband infrastructure and early education. Plan B aims to stop the

haemorrhaging of domestic demand in Ireland and restore confidence among consumers and investors, which will in turn lead to employment growth. It is based on a long-term strategy of developing a strong export-oriented indigenous sector and lessening Ireland's reliance on foreign direct investment. But given the current state of Government finances and the Government's deal with the Troika, is Plan B possible? Earlier this year, the NERI published a set of proposals outlining funding sources for an initial stimulus package to kick start recovery. These sources include the National Pension Reserve Fund and the European Investment Bank. However, in order to increase Government revenue over the long term, there would have to be changes to taxation. "People find this very difficult to take and say: 'we pay an awful lot in taxes here'. But in terms of revenue in Europe, Ireland's intake is consistently low – about 35-36% of GDP compared to the EU average of about 44%." There are options for increasing tax intake, says Tom Healy. He mentions changes to corporate taxation arrangements and increasing employer social contributions, which are currently much lower than the European average. But ultimately, Plan B involves the introduction, gradually over time, of a more progressive income tax system: one where those with higher incomes or wealth pay comparatively more taxes than others. "You would have to start with the very top earners," he says, adding that those earning below the average should be protected until economic recovery is well embedded. "The era of low taxes and widespread and inequitable tax reliefs must come to an end."

Tom Healy's paper, 'Why We Need an Economic Plan B', is available at www.neriinstitute.net.

The NERI runs regular seminars on economic and related issues, which may be of interest to teachers of economics, business studies, CPSE and other subjects. For further information, visit www.neriinstitute.net.

Healy speaks:

On youth unemployment

Youth unemployment is at 50% in Greece and Spain. "I would describe this as a social catastrophe," says Tom Healy. "You cannot continue with 50% youth unemployment and sustain a peaceful, cohesive, democratic society." In Ireland the rate is over 30%, which is greater than it was in the 1980s, but without the public outcry. "There is an assumption that 'emigration will take care of it,'" adds Tom. "The scale and growth in youth unemployment testifies to the lack of realism in the current debates about which direction economic policy needs to take across Europe."

On the Troika

Tom dismisses the argument that Ireland must pursue Plan A because it is what we have agreed with the Troika: "The Troika was given a four-year adjustment plan in November 2010 and, broadly, the parameters outlined in the plan were transposed into the memorandum of agreement. I raised this issue myself with the Troika and the answer given was that the composition of the fiscal adjustment is entirely a matter for the national authorities and that it is not its [the Troika's] concern what level of revenue and expenditure is chosen. Rather it is a function of domestic political choice."

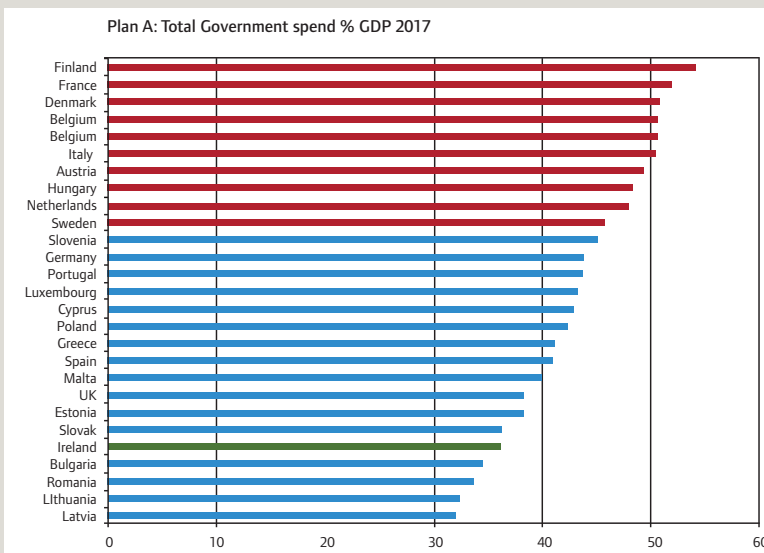
On education funding

"There is something wrong with our national accounts when only those things that are tangible and physical – schools, bridges, roads, airports – are counted as investment and everything else is regarded as consumption. We have got to think of investing in education as investing in skills and knowledge with a return over time. Part of that return is economic, and part is social, personal and cultural. The most important investment we make is in people, and in educating people in particular."

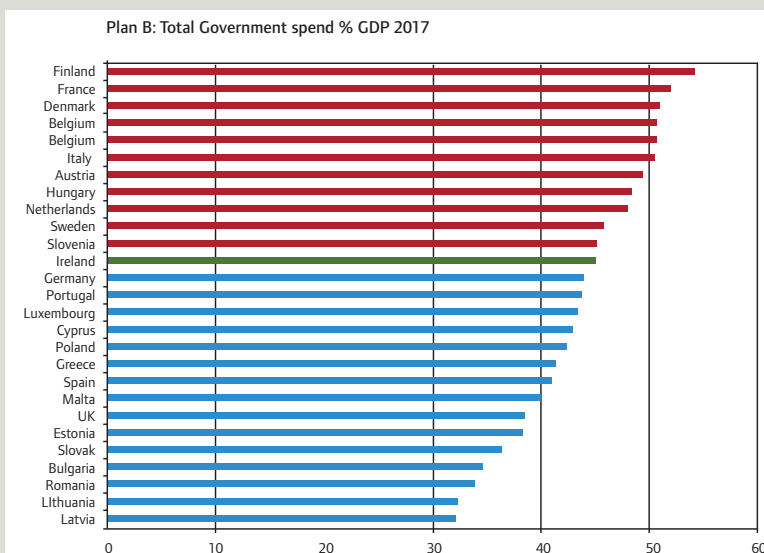
Spending on education remains at about 4-5% of GDP, which, Tom points out, is not excessive by OECD standards. However, he is certain that education will come under severe pressure in the coming years. Ireland's ageing population will result in increased strain on health and social welfare services. "There will be increased political pressure on health and social welfare and there is a real danger that education will lose out." Making the case for investment in human capital is crucial, he says.

On public spending

"There is a myth that Ireland's public spending was out of control in the 2000s. As a percentage of GDP, public expenditure actually changed rather little in the course of the 2000s." Actual expenditure grew only because GDP grew, explains Tom Healy.



Graph: Plan A – Total Government spend as a % of GDP 2017.



Graph: Plan B – Total Government spend as a % of GDP 2017.

What is the NERI?

The Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI) is headed by Tom Healy (right). The NERI is a research organisation with a vision to achieve a better, fairer society. Through the provision of research and analysis, it aims to contribute towards the construction of alternative perspectives and possibilities that will lead to the creation of an economy that works for society. It is supported by a number of unions including the ASTI.



Gemma Tuffy

Gemma Tuffy is ASTI Media and Communications Officer.



Anne Dunphy pictured with her choir after their All Island win.



Anne Dunphy receives her award from ASTI Immediate Past President Brendan Broderick and ASTI General Secretary Pat King.

Teachers' achievements honoured

The ASTI honoured teachers from Cork and Galway for their outstanding contribution to their schools and communities at an event in May.

Anne Dunphy – Outstanding Teacher Achievement Award

Anne Dunphy received an ASTI Achievement Award for her outstanding contribution to her school and commitment to students, which culminated in her school's All Island Choir victory in 2010.

Anne is a music and Irish teacher at Presentation Secondary School, Ballyphehane, Cork City. In November 2010, under her direction, the school choir was named the overall winner of the All Island Choir Competition, organised by Co-operation Ireland and RTÉ.

After many lunchtime and after-school rehearsals, a recording of the Choir secured their place at one of four televised regional heats. From there they went on to claim victory in the grand final held in the Waterfront Hall in Belfast.

The whole school community was involved in the choir's victory and in its celebration. The choir members and their supporters filled two buses that

left Cork at 6.30am bound for Belfast in November 2010. The choir arrived home victorious to huge excitement in the school and community, with cards, flowers and good wishes coming from far and wide.

Anne's hard work and that of the students was rewarded a second time when the choir was invited to perform for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II during her historic visit to Ireland last year.

The students were given the privilege of opening the concert organised in the Convention Centre in Dublin to display Ireland's talents, sharing a stage with acts including Westlife, The Chieftains and Riverdance.

The students have not rested on their laurels this year; they recently won the National Competition for Schools at the Cork International Choral Festival.

They also took home a trophy for their performance of a song commissioned especially for them, composed and written by Marian Ingoldsby.



Eamon Madden (centre) accepts the ASTI Achievement Award on behalf of the Galway Techno Teachers.



The Galway teachers meet once a week to collaborate in developing their subject knowledge. The Committee of the Galway Techno Teachers' Association is Eamon Madden, Seamus Cahalan, Donal Quinn, Brendan Joyce, Eugene Flynn, Tony Bloomer, Martin Costello, and Michael O'Gríofa.

Anne's principal Sr Sheila Kelleher told the ASTI: "As principal of the school I am exceedingly proud of our choir and its very able and committed director Anne Dunphy. Anne epitomises the dedication and hard work of teachers today and is a wonderful example to our students".

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

The Galway Techno Teachers' Association – Outstanding Teacher Team Award

A group of design and communication graphics teachers from Galway work together each week to advance their skills and improve their teaching.

The Galway Techno Teachers' Association meets once a week to collaborate in developing their subject knowledge, particularly in computers, design and drawing. The group initiative began in 2007 when design and communication graphics was introduced in place of technical drawing. The new subject brought huge changes to the curriculum and how it was to be examined, including the preparation by students of an analysis and design project, new topics and a much greater emphasis on computer-aided design (CAD).

The challenge of adjusting to the new technologies and getting up to speed on the revised subject pulled the then dormant Galway Techno Teachers out of hibernation. The Galway teachers saw the new subject's potential to meet modern students' educational needs. However, they knew that in order to get full benefit to their students, they would have to thoroughly develop their skills and abilities, particularly in relation to use of technology.

The teachers committed to working together each week to get up to speed and to provide subject support to new and existing teachers. They have since spent hundreds of hours of their free time developing professionally to provide a higher level of teaching to their students. The sessions were initially led by Brendan Joyce from St Paul's Secondary School in Oughterard, who shared his expert knowledge on computers. The teachers continue to meet once a week; during each session one member will lead a presentation and the teachers will then collaborate on practical projects. At the moment the group are making their way through a set of online resources that will see them learn to design each of the component parts of a motorcycle.

The Committee of the Galway Techno Teachers' Association comprises: Eamon Madden, St Mary's College, Ballygar; Seamus Cahalan, St Joseph's Patrician College, Galway City; Donal Quinn, St Mary's College, Galway City; Brendan Joyce, St Paul's Secondary School, Oughterard; Eugene Flynn, St Jarlath's College, Tuam; Tony Bloomer, St Ignatius College, Galway City; Martin Costello, Athenry Vocational School; and, Michael O'Gríofa, Scoil Phobail Mhic Dara, Carna.

The ASTI Outstanding Teacher Team Achievement Award recognises the contribution made to schools and education by groups of teachers.

The ASTI Achievement Awards honour teachers who not only play an important professional role in their schools, but whose talent, commitment and determination enables them and their students to excel in areas such as sport, literature and music. Find out more about the ASTI Achievement Awards at www.asti.ie.



Teachers and social media

Use of social media can be challenging for teachers as education professionals. *ASTIR* looks at the issues.

In June the Teaching Council issued a revised Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers, which makes explicit reference to social networking for the first time. The Code states that: "Teachers should ensure that any communication with pupils/students, colleagues, parents, school management and others is appropriate, including communication via electronic media, such as email, texting and social networking sites". Teachers have expressed concern about the lack of definition of what is "appropriate" and what constitutes "communication". Carmel Kearns, Communications and Education Officer with the Teaching Council, says that the Teaching Council may give further guidance on this issue in time. For now, she says, teachers must use their professional judgment when considering what is appropriate. Her advice is never to post anything online that you would not say in public.

Fred Boss, CPD Project Officer with the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE), now part of the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), says that there is no need for fear as long as you act professionally online. The Codes are a catch all and cover all, he says; specific guidance is a matter for school policies, which will differ depending

on school ethos. "You won't know really until it's tested, but I don't think there should be any fear, once you can show that you were being professional and following policy. It's probably best to play it safe and have separate accounts for professional and private use, and I would recommend that teachers start slowly – dip a foot in the water until they feel comfortable. Lock access to your accounts at first so that you can control who can see them. Once you feel comfortable, you can try it in your teaching. Always get the consent of the principal for any initiative in your teaching, and if you encounter a problem report it as early as possible."

Your online reputation

Research has found that most people don't actively think about the long-term consequences of their activities on their online reputation. Maintaining a good reputation is important in any profession, of course, but teaching is a highly accountable profession and the Teaching Council's Code of Conduct was developed in that context, to support teaching's important role and trust in society.

Donal O'Mahony, a teacher at Portmarnock Community School, uses social



media both in his teaching and outside work. He says: “The crossover between personal and professional is the difficult one to manage. The debate is about what is appropriate, and it’s only by doing that you can learn this. Ninety-five percent of my tweets would be education related; some of the time people will disagree with what I tweet or retweet but that’s ok within the education context. But sometimes I tweet about issues unrelated to education and I have to think about this being on a public timeline, and consider what I am saying or have said. Nothing is private anymore – you have a digital footprint, perhaps better described as a digital tattoo, really, because it’s permanent. So every three or four months I look at my online presence and see how I can improve on how I present myself. This might be as simple as updating my biography or profile photograph”. Donal’s advice is to treat your online presence like your whiteboard: “Use good grammar, good spelling and represent yourself in the best possible light. If someone walked into your classroom and saw a poorly organised whiteboard with poor spelling, it wouldn’t reflect well on you and you wouldn’t want that”.

Huge benefits

Is using social media in uncharted territory worth the risk? Yes, says Donal. “We don’t have any option but to embrace social media, I think. The benefits are there and we have to leverage these against the fear of the new. We’re all learning and it’s going to take time, but that goes with any new development; this is just a new kind of literacy.”

As well as the potential social media has to enrich learning and engage students, the potential for professional development is huge, says Fred Boss: “Social media is a huge help to me; I have never found out as much as easily and as quickly. I often say being on Twitter is like being in a huge staffroom full of ideas and knowledge”.

A number of Irish teachers are active on Twitter, and Fred brings many of

them together through edchatie, a weekly discussion group where teachers and those with an interest in Irish education discuss issues and share information. There is a core bunch of 20 or so contributors but plenty more lurkers tune in to discussions on everything from education reform and useful resources to job-hunting tips. edchatie discussions run every Monday from 8.30pm – search #edchatie on Twitter to keep up and join in. Donal O’Mahony blogs at www.elearningisland.ie and tweets at @domaho.

Tips to consider when online

- Make sure you adhere to your school’s internet policy.
- Think before you post – consider the suitability of everything you say or post online for all audiences.
- If you are communicating with students, maintain professional standards and use a teacher’s voice.
- If you are using social media in class, maintain a separate personal account for private use. Make sure your principal is aware that you are using social media in class and why.
- Avoid chatting or instant messaging with students as content can’t be saved.
- Avoid ‘friending’ or ‘following’ students’ personal accounts.
- Edit your privacy settings regularly and check how your pages appear to others.
- Make sure that only those you know and permit can access your information.
- Don’t permit images of yourself to be taken and posted on any site without appropriate privacy safeguards.
- Edit your settings to restrict what can be posted on your pages or on other pages about you.
- Don’t post criticism of colleagues or students anywhere.
- Don’t share confidential information about students or colleagues on social networking sites.
- Don’t post confidential images or information about yourself on social networking sites.
- If inappropriate content is posted about you by somebody else, ask them to remove it. You can also contact the owner/administrator of the website to ask that it be removed. Each site has its own guidelines as to what content it deems unacceptable.
- Consider whether you should access personal social media, e.g., Facebook, during the school day. Even if you are using your own internet connection, the time you make a posting will appear on your timeline.

What are social media?

Social media allow the creation and exchange of content online and via mobile devices. Examples include:

- social networking sites like Facebook;
- video and photo sharing sites like Flickr or Youtube;
- blogs and microblogs like Twitter;
- comment features on websites;
- wikis and online collaborations;
- forums, discussion boards and groups;
- online gaming; and,
- instant messaging.

Union must show united front for temporary teachers

ASTI member EVELYN O'CONNOR writes about her experience as a non-permanent teacher.

It's been a strange summer. A summer of Youtube, emails, interviews and despair. It began in June (as all summers do) when my joy that nobody was being redeployed into our school transformed into barely concealed panic. My hours were still at risk. In fact that last sentence says it all – thanks to cutbacks and quotas and redeployment I've somehow regressed to my teenage years, have become a casual employee who works 'hours' rather than a respected and highly qualified professional.

Except I'm not a teenager; I'm a 33-year-old teacher, wife and mother. When I moved home in 2009 I was extremely cautious in applying only for jobs with a viable future; after all, the move also meant my husband quitting his job and leaving behind our heavily mortgaged home. But we both knew that more than anything we wanted our daughter to grow up with her grandparents and cousins nearby, so I took what I considered to be a brave step, accepted a new job and we moved.

Now, that bravery feels like foolishness. Now, three years later it's the summer holidays and I've spent weeks and weeks becoming an unwilling expert on employment law; harassing the ASTI looking for reassurances they cannot provide; ranting to anyone who will listen (sorry Mum and Dad) about the injustice of the system and obsessively checking educationposts.ie in the desperate hope that a permanent job will materialise within a commutable distance.

Award and aftermath

Then irony of ironies I receive a phone call to say I've won an award for Secondary School Teacher of the Year 2012 and it suddenly hits me like a sharp slap on the face that in teaching it doesn't matter how good you are. Being good at your job of course matters to you, it matters to your students and to their parents, and hopefully it matters to your school, but it doesn't matter to those in power. If you belong to the 27% of teachers on non-permanent contracts or are one of the 3,248 secondary school teachers with CIDs, some for part-time teaching hours, this government's only priority is to reduce you to a statistic, to transform you into one of the 25,000 public sector jobs they have promised to cut. After that phone call I decided to turn my rage and despair into something worthwhile. The day I was presented with the title Teacher of the Year, I delivered a no holds barred critique of the system and, mostly thanks to thejournal.ie, within 24 hours my speech had gone viral on Youtube. I did interviews with Midwest Radio, *The Mayo News*, *The Western People*, *The Roscommon Herald*, *The Clare Champion* and *The*



Evelyn pictured with her husband John Nolan and daughter Hazel. (Photo by Conor McKeown.)

Clare People; I was discussed on politics.ie and on *The Galway Advertiser's* Facebook page; I received countless emails and tweets of support via my website – www.leavingcertenglish.net; extracts from my speech were published in *The Star* and I spoke to Fergus Finlay on Newstalk. The editor of the 'Education Matters' yearbook in NUIG asked for permission to publish my speech. Teachers from America, the UK, Australia and New Zealand got in touch to empathise with my plight, and several bloggers picked up on my speech internationally because it turns out attacks on the teaching profession are actually a global epidemic (just google GERM and read all about it!) A week later I was interviewed by Nora Owen on TV3's *Midweek* programme and eventually I ended up in the RTÉ studios discussing my situation with Myles Dungan on Radio 1. Like I said, it's been a strange summer.

Making a difference?

I cannot honestly say if I've achieved anything but it feels good to publicly denounce the bizarre three-tier system that is now so deeply entrenched in the teaching profession. Perhaps due to my personal circumstances I appreciate more than most that the category you belong to is little more than an accident of timing. I used to be one of the lucky ones, those with a permanent job or a full CID. Now I've dropped a rung and I truly appreciate the misery and frustration of those who are non-permanent or who have a partial CID. Thanks to cuts, quotas and redeployment, non-permanent teachers are now permanently vulnerable and may end up working sporadically as migrant workers for the rest of their careers. Finally, this summer I met Yvonne Rossiter, a newly qualified teacher who falls into category three. She has led a fantastic campaign to secure equal pay for equal work and there is no doubt in my mind that she is correct when she identifies the pay cuts heaped upon new entrants as nothing short of rampant discrimination. Newly qualified or not, if you're unlucky enough to be an unemployed or under-employed teacher, you've probably already packed your bags and emigrated. Most importantly, let's ask how all of this affects students. A revolving door of ever-changing faces at the front of the class aggravates problems with classroom management – in simple English, students won't take you seriously if they think you're only there temporarily. Constantly having to

readjust to a different teacher for the same subject year on year has a negative impact on students. Good teachers make a real and lasting difference to their students, but a chronic lack of job security in any profession leads to diminished productivity and increased rates of depression. The three-tier system whereby teachers are treated differently despite doing the same job poisons staff morale yet all of the international research supports the fact that "when teachers have positive perceptions about their work environment this translates to better outcomes for students". The key factors in creating a happy and healthy school community are "collaboration, shared responsibility, mutual trust and support" (Sahlberg, 2011), but none of these conditions come about when teachers are competing with each other for concessionary hours and subbing work, eying each other with suspicion, wondering who will be nominated for redeployment if the school goes over quota. Let me finish by saying this. I love my job. I only wish it was still a viable career choice in this country.

Evelyn O'Connor

Evelyn O'Connor teaches at Mount Saint Michael Secondary School, Mayo.



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"The content of the course was relevant and very practical. I feel much more confident and more up to date on not only the Irish education system but also on best practice internationally. I never felt isolated and compared to face-to-face courses I have undertaken, the online environment provided more opportunities to communicate and connect with my peers. I think the most beneficial aspect of the course has been the forming of friendships with teachers from every corner of Ireland" - Fionnuala Murphy, MATL student.



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Live. Learn.

Meet your reps

ASTI Standing Committee is elected by ASTI members to make decisions about ASTI policy and strategy. Find out more about who represents you in this and the next issue of *ASTIR*.



Neil Curran
Represents: Region 1: Donegal, Iar Thuaisceart, Sligo
Branch: Donegal
School: St Columba's College, Stranorlar, Co. Donegal

I got involved because ... there was a group of senior teachers in the staffroom who were interested in trade unionism and encouraged new teachers like myself to attend branch meetings. As a result, I got interested in trade union issues and was elected as school steward. Because of my involvement at branch level I then got elected to CEC.

The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are ... are to try to restore all teachers to one common basic scale so that young teachers are not undervalued. We must also ensure that the burden of work previously done by post holders is not pushed onto the backs of new teachers. Knowing it will be difficult to get pay increases in the future, we must concentrate on stopping the erosion of our working conditions in schools.

People may not know ... To escape from the stress of teaching I like to go sea angling along the Donegal coast. The peace and quiet is a great contrast to the hustle and bustle of the classroom. Happiness is also sitting in Stamford Bridge cheering on the Blues on a Saturday afternoon.



Sarah Withero
Represents: Region 3: Galway, Tuam, East Galway
Branch: Galway
School: Presentation College, Headford, Co. Galway

I got involved because ... I started going to meetings in Galway where I met people who became very good friends and I got involved in the local branch.

The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are ... dealing with the difficulties facing newly qualified teachers, who have suffered a 30% pay cut and face huge problems securing permanent positions. The deterioration of working conditions for teachers and the absence of any promotion opportunities in the profession are also big issues.

People may not know ... I was a non-permanent teacher for many years after moving from a permanent job.



Lily Cronin
Represents: Region 5: Desmond, Kerry, West Limerick
Branch: Kerry
School: Mercy School, Mounthawk, Tralee, Co. Kerry

I got involved because ... of a pay dispute in my early career where I felt new entrants to teaching were unfairly treated. The Kerry Branch's involvement in organising Convention was a major factor in my union activity.

The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are ... to focus on the pay and conditions of teachers, and the impact that pay cuts have and will have on the profession. Also, to encourage more participation by members at school, branch and national level.

People may not know ... I am a trustee of Muckcross House in Killarney, chair of the board of management of a local national school, and I have a huge interest in Celtic folklore.



Michael Barry
Represents: Region 7: Fermoy, Cork North, Cork East, West Waterford, Dungarvan
Branch: Cork North
School: St Patrick's College, Gardiners Hill, Cork

I got involved because ... I was first involved as a school steward. In 1985 the three teacher unions mounted a joint campaign, including strike action, after the Government failed to honour an arbitration award. This included a rally in Croke Park, which was an inspiring event for me; I live in hope that we can live up to the unity of those days.

The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are ... We have to work towards the restoration of pay and pensions for new entrants to teaching; their wages have been massively reduced in the last few years and I personally feel very bad sitting in a classroom knowing someone is doing the same work for less. Working to stop spending cuts, and the effect they have on what may become a lost generation, is also important.

People may not know ... I'm a long-suffering Cork hurling supporter (long suffering by Cork standards at least!)



Peter Keaney

Represents: Region 11: Longford, Tullamore, Navan, Athlone, Mullingar
Branch: Mullingar
School: Wilson's Hospital School, Multyfarnham, Co. Westmeath

I got involved because ... there was a strong ASTI presence in the school I work in and many work colleagues were involved at branch level. I also had a background in the student union in Thomond College Limerick. The early 1990s were interesting because of the PCW pay agreement talks and that fostered an interest. I am a firm believer in safety in numbers and being part of the ASTI helps to secure pay and conditions for all. The union carries out a lot of unrecognised work for many vulnerable teachers, which often goes unaccounted for.

The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are ... Pay and conditions for all teachers, but especially new entrants; maintaining the standard of education at second level; and, working strongly with other unions and educational bodies to ensure adequate funding for education.

People may not know ... I am a member of the NCCA board of studies, Agricultural Science, and have an interest in sports, especially GAA and rugby



Sean O'Neill

Represents: Region 13: Dublin South 2, Dublin South County
Branch: Dublin South County
School: St Laurence College, Loughlinstown, Dublin 18

I got involved because ... I witnessed many examples of unfairness in how teachers were and are treated. I met some excellent active ASTI members in my present school and in other schools I worked in, who argued that if you want to change things you must get involved, so I did.

The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are ... to protect pay and conditions for all teachers. The cuts in teachers' pay, particularly for newly qualified teachers who are expected to finance the extra years of training for a lot less pay, is unacceptable. Teachers who bought homes during the boom years are living in negative equity, having

amassed huge debt to get on the housing ladder, and cannot take any more cuts without increasing their level of debt. And the cuts in schools have made the teaching of students, particularly those who need extra support and have had it withdrawn, a far more difficult and demanding job.

People may not know ... that I had a number of jobs before I became a teacher. I was a driver for the Royal Mail for seven years before I trained to become a teacher in Lancaster in the UK. They gave me a career break and allowed me to return to work for them for the summer months. I wouldn't have got through university without it.



Aidan O'Leary

Represents: Region 9: Tipperary, Kilkenny, Roscrea
Branch: Tipperary
School: Presentation Secondary School, Ballingarry, Thurles, Co. Tipperary

I got involved because ... my parents were trade union activists in industry and construction. They were involved in sit-ins, walk-outs and protests. I grew up in a union house. I joined the ASTI when I was a student on teaching practice in Naas CBS. When I got my first job in Ballingarry, there was a strong union presence and I was lucky to meet many honourable, committed trade unionists when I joined the Tipperary branch. It's a privilege to represent the Tipperary, Kilkenny and Roscrea branches. It's essential to actively participate in our union. Trade unionism has been a tremendous force for good in Irish society. The employment rights and conditions we take for granted were hard fought for and earned.

The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are ... We must campaign aggressively to reverse the cuts to pay and conditions, especially those to newly qualified teachers, and to our sick leave entitlements. We must develop a much stronger policy platform on educational and professional development issues. We must re-energise our union structure and strengthen our presence in our schools. Members must believe that they are part of an organisation that is effective at local and national level. We must develop a stronger culture of lobbying politicians at local and national level in order to drive home our anger at the damage that the education cuts have done in our communities. We should be the organisation that decides on codes of conduct, and whose professional judgement is prioritised in any attempts at educational reform. As the representative of a rural region, I am committed to campaigning for extracurricular activities to be included in the infamous 'Croke Park' hours.

People may not know ... I coach hurling in my spare time and am married to the lovely Noreen, a teacher.

Ger Curtin

Represents: Region 15: Dublin South West, Dublin North West

Branch: Dublin North West

School: Beneavin College, Finglas, Dublin 11

I got involved because ... I first got involved as a school steward, then I started to go to branch meetings. I went to Convention in 1995, when the PCW partnership agreement was a big issue, then I became a branch officer and the rest, as they say, is history.

The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are ... Teaching jobs and the security of jobs is the number one issue, as well as the changes coming down the line with the reform of the Junior Cert.

People may not know ... I'm a voluntary steward in Croke Park. I'm originally from the Silvermines in Tipperary and I have a huge interest in hurling and hillwalking.



Edward Byrne

Represents: Region 17: Dublin North East, Fingal

Branch: Fingal

School: Colaiste Choilm, Swords, Co. Dublin

I got involved because ... I understood from a very early age that there was more power in a collective rather than as an individual. The power I talk of is not power for power's sake, but rather that which can be used for the common good. The ASTI, with its democratic structures, was always an attraction once I entered teaching. Come for the fight; stay because it's right.

The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are ... We in the ASTI must have a number of priorities. First we must battle harder for the new entrants. The current politicians have done everything in their power to destroy the professionalism of the new entrants with attacks on their starting salaries, the terms and conditions of their contracts and their future pensions. This battle must be won if teaching is to retain its professional standing. Our next priority must be to win back for serving members that which was hard won over generations and so easily lost during the current political and economic crisis.

People may not know ... Like many other teachers in Ireland my main hobby is Gaelic games. I played football all my life for a small club in Crumlin, Naomh Eanna (now defunct). Once playing gave me up, I began refereeing and continue to be an active referee for Coiste na Reiteoiri Atha Cliath. Also, like many teachers, I bring my love of games to school and have coached and managed teams at all ages. In my current school, I look after the senior Gaelic football team.

Find out about more Standing Committee representatives in the next issue of *ASTIR*.

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

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Gerry Breslin



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Youth Connect is back



A programme to inform students about their rights as students and workers returns for another term. FIONA DUNNE tells us more.

With visits to over 155 schools under our belts, the Youth Connect team is looking forward to giving those who missed out last year the chance to bring the employment rights programme to their school this year. The programme gives students an opportunity to get those important questions about work answered, while giving teachers a free resource to use throughout the year.

The Youth Connect team can't wait to meet some new teachers and students this year as well as catching up with those we met on our travels last year. We were given a fantastic welcome last year and teachers told us they found the programme not only informative, but crucial for students to make the transition into the world of work, either now or later in their lives.

The programme materials are suitable for all students because obviously we hope they will all get the opportunity to participate in the labour force. Being aware of their rights is the first step in ensuring that they get those rights.

Knowing their rights

In times of economic uncertainty and a growing 'take what you can' attitude towards work, we find that students in general have little knowledge of their rights as young workers. Basic facts regarding minimum wage and break entitlements are often overlooked, as many young people accept their present working conditions, good or bad, as 'the norm'. A lack of knowledge with regard to workers' rights means that students can be exploited in the workplace to varying degrees. Some will earn less than a statutory minimum wage, while others will not receive a contract or payslip as proof of legal employment. In more extreme cases, we have talked to students as young as 15 who were working in bars until 1.00am and others who were treated with a complete lack of respect in the workplace.

Unpleasant experiences, especially at such a young age, can lead to disillusionment with the working world in general. We want to make sure that young people have sufficient knowledge to empower themselves and be able to recognise when they are exploited and how they can

address it. This is where we talk about the support and advice they can get from a trade union, introducing issues such as solidarity, democracy, shared responsibility and the power of collective action. Students should have the necessary information to make informed choices as workers.

We want to make sure that young people have the knowledge to empower themselves and be able to recognise when they are exploited.

Class time

Our classroom visits are kept as interesting and interactive as possible through the use of videos, case studies and discussions based on students' own experiences. Following our visit, we update our website – www.youth-connect.ie – with key information from the day's lesson, including questions students may have asked during it. Using social media, we also attempt to reach a broader cohort of students and young people to ensure that they know where and how to get further information, or indeed to make contact with us if they experience difficulties when working.

If you are interested in having the Youth Connect team visit your school and deliver some lessons and talks, you can book online at www.youth-connect.ie, or Email: info@youth-connect.ie.

Fiona Dunne

Fiona Dunne is the Youth Connect Programme Manager. Youth Connect is an initiative to educate young people about their employment rights, supported by trade unions, including the ASTI.

RSTA at 50

The formation of the RSTA half a century ago had a significant impact on improving teachers' pensions, writes LOUIS O'FLAHERTY.

Two events occurred in 1909 that were to have some significance in the future lives of secondary school teachers in Ireland. The first and most important was the founding of the ASTI and the second was the introduction of the universal old age pension.

Two of the principal founding aims of the ASTI were to secure an adequate salary and a pension scheme for teachers. At the beginning of the twentieth century, secondary teachers in Ireland were employed not by the State but by private employers. They had no security of tenure, could be let go at short notice and, unlike their colleagues in the national and vocational schools, they had no pension entitlements.

A first pension scheme

The nascent ASTI fought the cause of the secondary teachers through the ensuing troubled times of lock-outs, rebellion, civil war, partition and economic ruin. It was inevitable in those times that getting a decent salary scale, a Registration Council and security of tenure would get priority in negotiations with the authorities.

A salary scale was achieved in 1924 but it was not until August 1929 that a pension scheme for secondary school teachers was introduced in the Irish Free State. The scheme was voluntary, with contributions from teachers, managers and the State. Benefits were calculated on the basis of retiring salary and there was no arrangement to increase pension in line with inflation or decline in currency value after it was granted. Despite some amendments over the following years, the scheme did not become over generous and, as many teachers were very poorly paid, they frequently opted not to join the scheme.

RSTA foundation and influence

It may be enlightening to consider the lot of one retired secondary teacher in the 1950s. Alice Burnett wrote to the ASTI shortly after her retirement in 1951, stating that her pension for 20 years of voluntary contributions was £150 per year, payable quarterly.

Even allowing for the fact that Miss Burnett had a varied career pattern, her pension was less than adequate and she instanced the fact that a medical officer would receive £500 per annum after 30 years' service, and a bank officer £200 after 20 years. The ASTI raised her case with the Minister but nothing could be done.

It was in response to cases such as this that the Retired Secondary Teachers' Association was formed in 1962.

The RSTA's initiative had come in the first instance from the Pensions Sub-Committee of the ASTI. A committee was formed with George Lodge as President and Eva Quirke, a former General Secretary of the ASTI, as Honorary Secretary. The newly formed RSTA lost no time in getting down to business and addressing the principal concern of members: the inadequacy of their pensions.

The RSTA did not have negotiating rights, but they liaised with the Pensions Sub-Committee of the ASTI and a common strategy was agreed between the ASTI, INTO and the Vocational Teachers' Association.

Seeking improvements

The principal objectives involved the granting of added years and an early voluntary retirement scheme in the case of disability. A demand for parity was also made so that the pensions could be equated to the salaries of those still teaching, as over time the cash value of pensions had been eroded due to inflation and the decline in the value of money.

At that time the RSTA was never much larger than a dozen dedicated members, but they tirelessly lobbied their parent body and exerted considerable influence through their association with the powerful Joint Consultative Council of Retired State Servants.

All through the 1960s the disparity between pensions and salary persisted. George Lodge continued to make the case for retired secondary teachers in every forum available. He participated in the preparation of a substantial submission by the Joint Consultative Council of Retired State Servants to the Committee on Post Retirement Adjustments in Public Service Pensions and challenged the report of that body in 1965. He sought a meeting with the Minister for Education to press the case for pensioners but was refused. He did everything possible to try to increase the membership of the RSTA but the numbers remained small.

Slow growth to eventual success

Speaking at the RSTA's AGM in March 1967, Mr Logue bemoaned the fact that so many retired teachers were still outside the ranks of the RSTA and attributed this to an attitude of 'I'm alright Jack'.

Despite his plea for new members the RSTA remained small and the following year, in his last report to Convention before his death in September 1968, Mr Logue reported that the RSTA had not been represented at an important meeting of the Joint Consultative Council of Retired State Servants because he was in hospital and another member of the committee was ill. He regretted that some retired teachers were quite prepared to sit back and draw whatever benefits accrued from the hard and unselfish work of the small RSTA group.

In 1969 the new president of the RSTA, Mr TJ Boylan, noted the passing of George Logue and Eva Quirke, saying: "In the last conversation I had with him he expressed the hope that the Association should flourish and that our work should be crowned with success. Let us all join together to ensure that the last wish of our founder and president be fulfilled".

The improvements in pension that have been achieved since and the growth in membership to almost 1,500 today, is evidence that his wish has been fulfilled.

Find out more about the RSTA at www.rsta-ireland.com.

Louis O'Flaherty

Louis O'Flaherty is a former ASTI President and former President of the RSTA.

GOAL Jersey Day



GOAL Jersey Day takes place this year on Friday, October 5. Students and teachers are invited to don their favourite jersey or team colours for the day, in exchange for a small donation. Find out more by emailing schools@goal.ie or visiting www.goal.ie.

Immersion courses in France and Spain

Second-level teachers can apply to Léargas for funding to attend immersion courses in Lyon and Malaga during Easter 2013. Successful applicants receive support from the European Union Comenius/Grundtvig Lifelong Learning Programme of up to €2,500 to cover course fee, subsistence, accommodation and travel expenses. For more information, contact ros@lfee.net or visit www.lfee.net.

Inspirational resource

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) in Ireland has launched a new learning resource, which draws on the charity's real life dramatic sea rescues and volunteer ethos to inspire students to learn life skills and personal safety. The resource is available free of charge. To find out more, or to request a pack, visit rnli.org.uk, or Email: education@rnli.org.uk.



ASTI member's Spartan challenge

ASTI member Anne Gilleran, who teaches in Scoil Mhuire, Stroketstown, Co. Roscommon, will compete in this year's Dublin City Marathon, representing Roscommon as part of the Spar Spartan Challenge. She is running the race for Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland and suicide prevention charity the 3Ts. You can sponsor Anne by searching for her sponsorship pages on Mycharity.ie or iDonate.ie.

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LGBT Helpline

The LGBT Helpline is a confidential service providing listening, support and information to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, their family and friends, and to those who are questioning if they might be LGBT. The helpline number is 1890 929 539 and more information is available on www.lgbt.ie.

Environmental education competition

ECO-UNESCO is calling on students and teachers to register for the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards 2013. Participants complete an environmental action project on a theme of their choice, which can be linked with the formal school curriculum and used as a recognised CSPE action project or as part of the Gaisce Awards. ECO-UNESCO has also developed a formal transition year module. Find out more at www.ecounesco.ie.



CBS connections?

A special event to recognise the 250th anniversary of the birth of Edmund Rice will be held at 7.00pm on October 20, 2012. Former President of Ireland, Professor Mary McAleese, will speak at the event to celebrate the Irishman who founded the Christian Brothers. For further information on the event, or to apply for tickets, visit www.erbeyond250.org/tickets, contact Vanessa Moss, Tel: 01-819 6782, or Email: vanessa@edmundricedevlopment.org.



Holocaust Education programmes



The Crocus Project is a perennial activity organised by the Holocaust Education Trust, Ireland (HETI) through which schools are provided with yellow crocus bulbs to plant in memory of the children who died during the Holocaust.

The HETI has also introduced a Certificate in Holocaust Education in association with Trinity College Dublin, and will organise a study visit to Krakow during the October mid-term break. For more information, Tel: 01-669 0593, or Email: info@hetireland.org.

Obituary

Sheila Crimmins



Una gran vida no se basa en una proeza sino en la acumulación de muchas cosas sencillas.

It was with deep sadness that we, her colleagues and friends, received news of the sudden brief illness and recent death of Sheila Crimmins. A graduate of University College Cork in French and Spanish, Sheila began her teaching career in Presentation Convent, Mitchelstown, before taking up a post at her alma mater, St Aloysius School, St Maries of the Isle, Cork, where she taught until deciding on early retirement in 2005.

An enthusiastic and inspiring language teacher, and active member of both subject associations, Sheila served on the committees of both at various times. She regularly visited France and Spain for the pleasure of re-engaging with their cultures and participated in a teacher exchange programme during which she taught in Dieppe. Fluent in both languages, Sheila acted as a Spanish oral examiner in the Leaving Certificate Examination up to 2011 – indeed, she had been due to do so this year as well, but sadly that was not to be. Sheila was a much-loved colleague and friend, esteemed by her students, fellow staff members and colleagues in language teaching.

She was ever gracious, generous with her time and talents, professional and, above all, positive in her attitude to all aspects of life. Her interests were varied – she sailed with Glénans, the Franco-Irish Sailing Association, and the Royal Cork Yacht Club, was a member of the Cork Masters Swimming Club, played bridge and studied art history. In her retirement, golf was a new pursuit played with enthusiasm and no little ability at the East Cork Golf Club.

*Ce que tu as donné
En d'autres fleurira.*

Sheila will be greatly missed by her large circle of colleagues and friends. Our deepest sympathy goes to her family, notably to her sister Moira, herself a teacher, now retired.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam uasal.

Written by Sheila's friends and colleagues.



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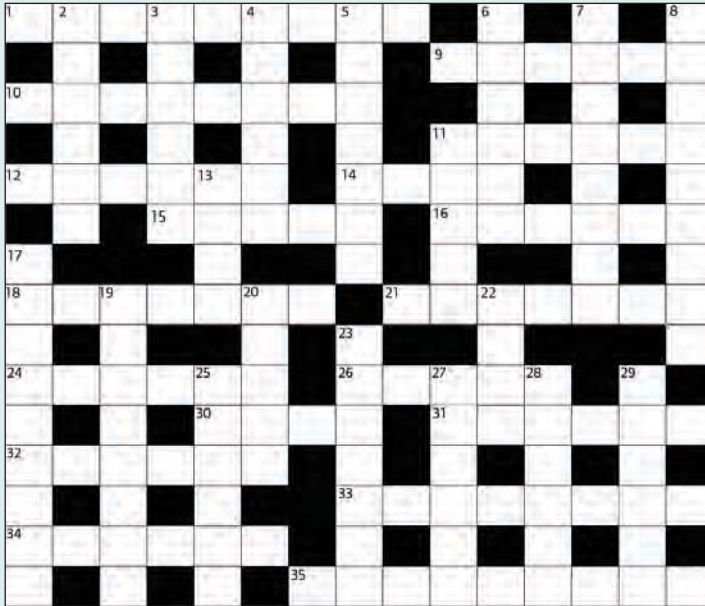


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If you wish to keep your copy of *ASTIR* intact you may send a photocopy of the crossword. One entry only per member.



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School

Address

ASTI Branch

Entries to: Astir Crossword No. 1204, Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, October 12, 2012

CLUES ACROSS:

- 1 Conductor in double comeback after Puccini opera (9)
- 9 Weight of money (6)
- 10 Slipped a disc – it's cruel (8)
- 11 Is Ma in a monkey mode? (6)
- 12 Assert in a challenge (6)
- 14 I conceal the image (4)
- 15 Femme fatale in Greek mythology (5)
- 16 Is Ben ignorant of having a kindly disposition? (6)
- 18 More than irate (7)
- 21 A soccer armoury (7)
- 24 Rend us apart (6)
- 26 Birds sit on this fish (5)
- 30 The poem " ... and the Swan " by W.B. Yeats (4)
- 31 Thomas More's ideal state (6)
- 32 Things go down in this or up in that (6)
- 33 Interbreed with the caribou (8)
- 34 It used to contain obligations (6)
- 35 Jammed cylinder (5,4)

CLUES DOWN:

- 2 Try here for a clear prophecy (6)
- 3 "The raven blackness." (*Troilus & Cressida*) (6)
- 4 Talk incessantly in a pattern (6)
- 5 Stealing, arresting (7)
- 6 Stolid or dull in animal fashion (6)
- 7 "Imagination is not only the uniquely human capacity to that which is not "(8) (JK Rowling)
- 8 Is inane foolish fashion (9)
- 11 Arranged robes like a judge (5)
- 13 GI double by Lerner and Loewe (4)
- 17 Physical or mental weariness is saluted (9)
- 19 A teenager could create, evolve, originate (8)
- 20 Greet the white heron (5)
- 22 Could be a united group in a caste (4)
- 23 "There is special providence in the fall of a ..." (*Hamlet*) (7)
- 25 Ale made Ted euphoric (6)
- 27 Buries the precious gems (6)
- 28 Could be linked with bond, mortgage, ticket, card, etc., to possess (6)
- 29 Nell & I in a straight line (6)

Solution to ASTIR Crossword No. 1202

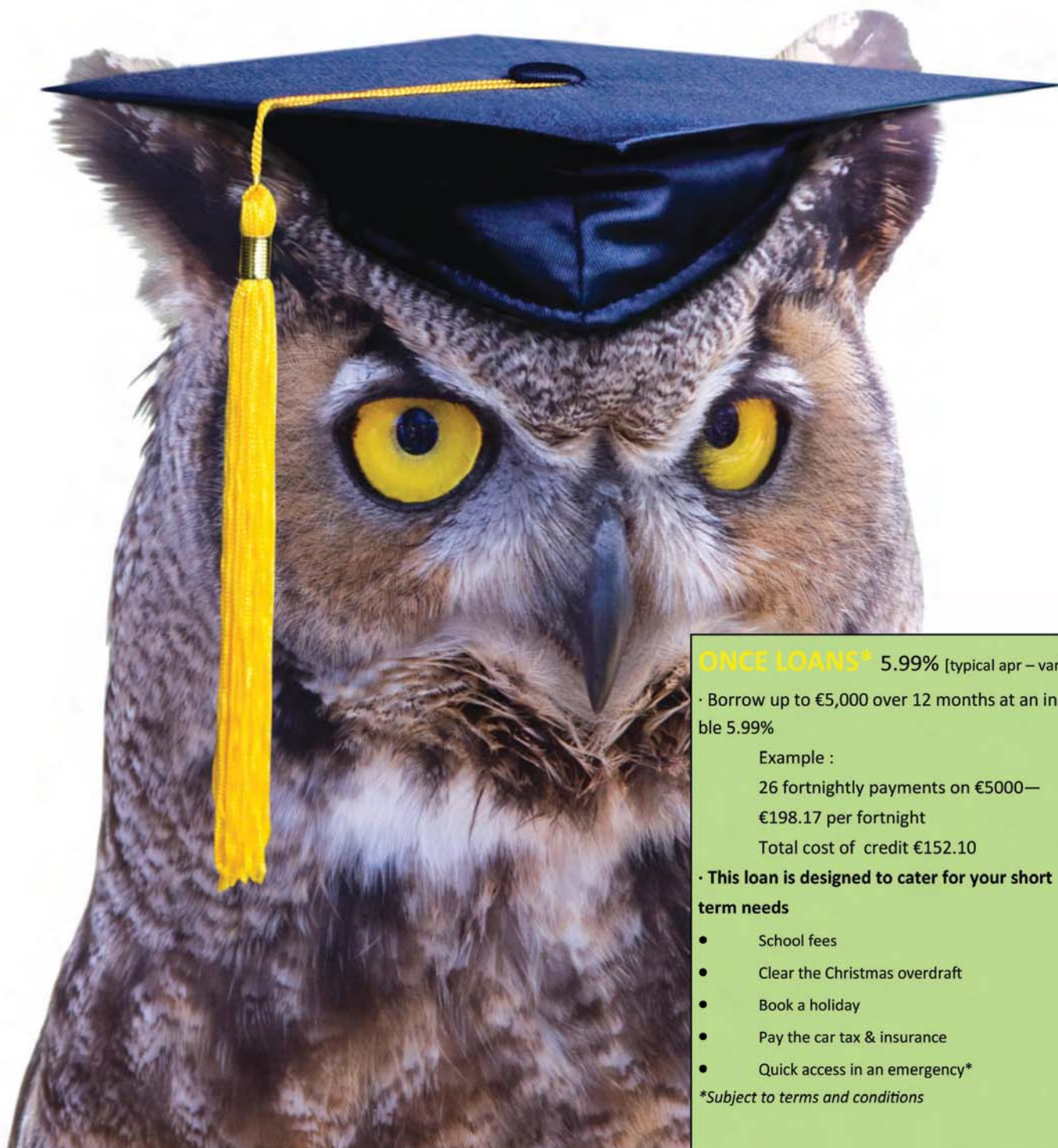
Across	Down
1. Danube	1. Departed
4. Closures	2. Nobility
9. Pebble	3. Balaclava
10. Approval	5. Leper
12. Relic	6. Serve
13. Vertebrae	7. Rovers
15. Leo	8. Salted
16. Extra	11. Avoids
17. Isobar	14. Tub
22. Basset	18. Outcry
24. Heard	19. Abhorrent
27. CAO	20. Taciturn
28. Commander	21. Adjoined
31. Rhine	23. Sin
32. Discrete	25. Acidic
33. Return	26. Amuses
34. Cashmere	29. Aurum
35. Stones	30. Deter

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