

# ASTIR

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland



Have your say:  
Important ballots for teachers

In this issue: Advice and information for new teachers – getting employment, your contract, and tips from experienced colleagues



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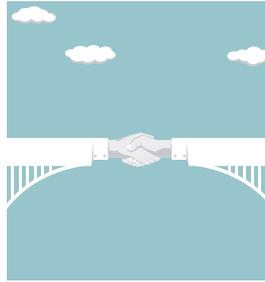
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## Focal ón Uachtarán

Ar an gcéad dul síos ba mhaith beannú do bhaill uile an ASTI agus buíochas a ghabháil libh as an tacaíocht ar fad i rith na bliana. Tá bliain eile an-ghnóthach romhainn ach tuigimid go rí-shoiléir, má sheasaimid le chéile, gur féidir linn gach constaic a shárú. Ba mhaith liom beannú, go háirithe, do mhuinteoirí nua-cháilithe agus nua-fhostaithe. Cuirim fáilte romhaibh agus gúim gach rath ar bhur gcuid oibre.

As we embark on the work of another academic year we do not underestimate the challenges ahead. We have come through some very difficult times but with our students in mind we have always stood up for standards in education. I wish all ASTI members every success with the invaluable work done on a daily basis in the interest of the young people in our care but which unfortunately often goes unnoticed. There is much evidence to demonstrate the high quality of Ireland's second-level education. Ireland is one of a small number of OECD countries which performs well on both equity and quality. Students can access a quality education regardless of their background and of what type of school they attend. This achievement is a tribute to our commitment as teachers to all of our students and our desire to offer them a balanced and rounded education experience.

### Important ballots

We face a very busy autumn with three ballots imminent. The ballot on Junior Cycle proposals, entitled *Junior Cycle Reform: Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation*, results from a decision taken at the CEC meeting of May 2015, pending further negotiations on the issues of time and resources. A further document, an *Appendix to the Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation*, has since been issued following intensive negotiations between the ASTI, TUI and the Department of Education, over the summer months. The Junior Cycle campaign demonstrates the power of a united and persistent teaching profession standing up for education. The ballot on issuing a directive to members regarding post of responsibility duties results from Motion 14 at Annual Convention 2015. We must protect vulnerable members who may be open to exploitation, due to the moratorium, by being imposed upon to perform duties on a voluntary basis. The third ballot is on the Lansdowne Road proposals. In June Standing Committee took a decision to put the proposals to CEC with a recommendation to reject. CEC will debate the issue in the autumn before going to ballot.

The voice of the classroom teacher is powerful and it is incumbent upon us to have it heard at every possible forum.

**Please use your vote in all three ballots to ensure a big turn out and a strong mandate.**

Go n-eirí linn le chéile!



**Máire G. Ní Chiarba**  
ASTI President

## Vital decisions for the future

At the time of writing, arrangements were being put in place for three separate ballots of ASTI members:

- Ballot on Junior Cycle
- Ballot on posts of responsibility
- Ballot on draft Lansdowne Road Agreement

I cannot stress enough the importance of these ballots, which will dictate the direction of teaching and second-level education in the years to come. In order to ensure that the results reflect teachers' views, your participation is vital. A strong turnout will ensure that the voice of teachers on the ground is heard, and that your union can continue its efforts to protect and defend teaching and education with confidence and credibility.

### Junior Cycle ballot

September is a busy time of year for all teachers. However, it is vital that you take the time to read the information on the latest Junior Cycle proposals prepared for you by the ASTI. Every member will receive a copy of *Junior Cycle Reform: Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation* and *Appendix to the Joint Statement*. Further information will be circulated in a *Nuacht*, and via the ASTI website. The latest Junior Cycle proposals follow a vigorous campaign in which 27,000 second-level teachers mobilised against educationally unsound proposals.

### Posts of responsibility

This ballot will ask you to authorise ASTI Standing Committee to direct members not to undertake post of responsibility duties that are not remunerated. Voting Yes will ensure that the ASTI can continue its campaign for the reinstatement of all posts of responsibility.

### Lansdowne Road proposals

The proposed Lansdowne Road Agreement is intended to begin the process of pay restoration to public sector employees. However, it is important to state that the Agreement does not address crucial issues for teachers such as the additional working hours that formed part of the Croke Park and Haddington Road agreements. Members are advised to read the special *Nuacht* on the Lansdowne Road Agreement, which will be sent to schools in late September, and which will be available on the ASTI website.

### Job security for teachers

Second-level teachers will now be able to qualify for permanency after just two years' teaching in a school, effective from this September. Comprehensive information, including the Department Circular that implements the new deal, is available on the ASTI website.



**Pat King**  
ASTI General Secretary

## Serious/critical illness prior to September 2014

The implementation of new sick leave arrangements for public sector workers (including teachers) in September 2014 included critical illness provisions such as access to extended sick leave in certain circumstances. The ASTI raised concerns with the Department of Education and Skills that teachers who experienced serious illness before September 2014 – prior to the introduction of critical illness provisions – could now find themselves with limited/no sick leave. Critical illness provisions such as extended sick leave can only be granted for absences that occur after September 2014.

As a result of representations made by the ASTI and the other teacher unions, the Department has issued an information note detailing how schools can give extended sick leave to teachers who experienced serious illness prior to September 2014, subject to certain criteria. The effect of this is to give teachers who had a serious illness between 2010 and 2014 a facility to have it declared as "critical" by their schools, and thereby these teachers could get more sick leave now on full pay or half pay. Teachers must meet certain criteria, including that their previous serious illness commenced prior to September 2014 and that it conforms to the definition of critical illness outlined in the Public Service Illness Protocol. For more information visit the sick leave section of the ASTI website.

## Leaving Cert exams are not predictable

Concerns about predictability in the Leaving Cert exams are not sustained by research, a new study has found.

*Predictability in the Irish Leaving Certificate* reports the findings of research carried out at the Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment and Queen's University, Belfast. The research was commissioned by the State Exams Commission (SEC) following a commitment by the Transition Reform Group to "address any problematic predictability identified in an analysis of predictability in the Leaving Certificate".

The report states that none of the exams was found to be very problematically predictable. The researchers noted that it is important for the currency of the Leaving Cert that it is a trusted assessment and they recommended that action be taken to address the portrayal of the exams in the public sphere, including consideration of how best to address "the media narrative about the predictability of the Leaving Certificate examinations, which has little basis in fact".

The report makes a number of recommendations for change, including further increasing the emphasis on the assessment of higher order thinking skills in Leaving Cert exams.

The research exercise forms part of a wider initiative to explore how best to improve the quality of the transition of young people from second level to higher education.

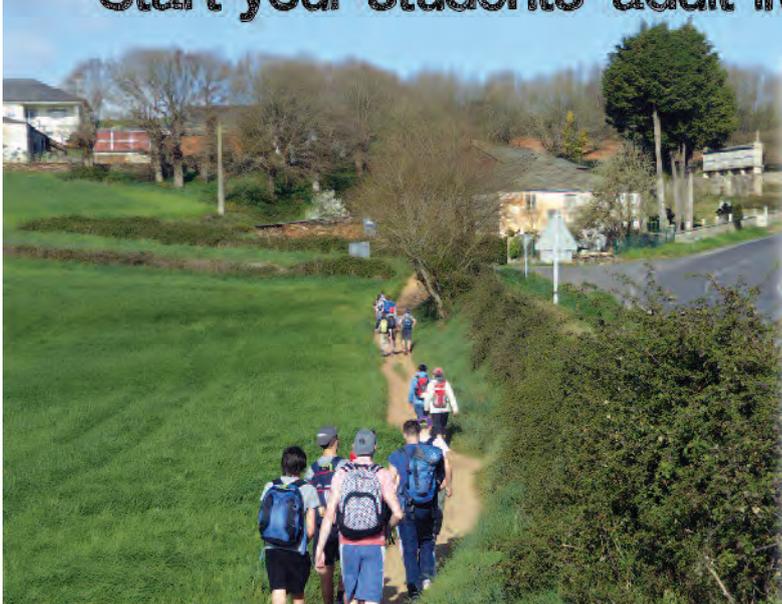
The full report, *Predictability in the Irish Leaving Cert*, is available at [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie).



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# Attention Teachers

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## Do we have your up-to-date contact details?

If you have changed postal address, email address or telephone number recently, please let ASTI Head Office know. Contact our membership department at 01-604 0162, or email [membership@asti.ie](mailto:membership@asti.ie).

### ASTI website is now mobile responsive

The ASTI website has been upgraded to a responsive design, making it easier for members to navigate using their smartphone or tablet. The new menu layout is specially designed for smartphones and tablets, and will mean that members can easily find the information they're looking for. The ASTI website has all the latest news, as well as detailed information about your pay and conditions, membership benefits and much more. Visit [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie) using a smartphone or tablet to see the new design.

## Inequality in the impact of guidance cuts

Research conducted by ASTI member Liam Harkin has found that the 2012 cuts, which meant that guidance counsellors were no longer 'ex-quota', have had a negative impact on schools in general, particularly schools in the free education scheme (FES). The research found that 69% of schools in the FES sector and 44% in the fee-charging sector had reduced their guidance counselling hours. The ASTI adopted a motion at Annual Convention this year requiring that the union prioritise student welfare and work for the restoration of the ex-quota guidance and counselling allocation in schools and colleges.

### ASTI donation for Nepal

The ASTI has contributed to an Irish teachers' support fund for Nepal. The fund was established to help schools recover from two major earthquakes earlier this year. Over €20,000 has been donated by the Irish teacher unions and Club na Múinteoirí. The ASTI donation came from the Development Aid Fund, which receives 1% of members' subscriptions and is used in promoting selected projects in the developing world.

## ASTI representative elected to ICTU Youth Committee



Ciara Kinsella, Central Executive Council Stillorgan, will represent the ASTI on the ICTU Youth Committee for the next two years. She has also been elected to serve as Secretary of the Committee. This will be Ciara's second term on the Committee where, along with ASTI Organisation and Development Officer Desmond O'Toole, she will work with representatives from other unions on identifying and addressing issues of concern to young workers.

The Committee advises Congress on these concerns and ensures that the voices of young people are heard by Congress. The Committee also works with the ICTU on their Youth Connect project, which promotes trade unions to secondary school students.

While Ciara welcomes the recent change that grants CIDs after two years, she says that key areas for improvement for young ASTI members include the restoration of qualifications allowances and the implementation of the redeployment panel. She hopes to engage with the ASTI Non-Permanent Teachers Committee in order to ensure that their views are raised at Congress level. Youth mobilisation is a major issue in trade unions, and Ciara also plans to complete a survey of young members in her branch to evaluate the reasons for a lack of youth engagement at branch level.

## FÉILTE 2015

On Saturday, October 3, teachers from across the education sector will showcase their work at FÉILTE 2015 in the RDS, Dublin. FÉILTE, the Festival of Education in Learning and Teaching Excellence, is a celebration of teaching where teachers showcase their work in leading innovative learning in schools. Now in its third year, the day provides a platform for teachers to share their stories of innovation with each other and the public. In this way, they are supporting each other and parents in enhancing their own professional practice for the benefit of their pupils and students.

Details on how to apply for a ticket to FÉILTE 2015 will be made available at [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie) and emailed to all registered teachers closer to the event.

## This issue in numbers...

€20,000

**AMOUNT DONATED TO**  
Nepal support fund by the Irish  
teacher unions.

(P.6)

121  
million

**NUMBER OF CHILDREN**  
worldwide who do not attend  
primary or secondary school.

(P.7)

## Irish Coalition for Global Campaign for Education



From left: Tom O'Connor (TUI), Pat King (ASTI), Sheila Nunan (INTO), Patrick Empey (Irish Aid), Alice Albright (GPE), Christy Burke (then Lord Mayor of Dublin), Nicolás Richards (EI), Mike Jennings (IFUT), Emma Dineen (INTO) and Philip Irwin (ASTI).

Alice Albright, CEO of the Global Partnership for Education Secretariat, delivered the keynote presentation at the National Conference on Sustainable Development Goals in Education in April. The conference was organised by the Irish Coalition for the Global Campaign for Education, an alliance of teacher unions, development NGOs and others that works to promote the Millennium Development Goals in education. Opening the event, ASTI Assistant General Secretary Moira Leydon said: "Despite the ambitious global targets in the 2000 Millennium Development Goals, progress towards achieving education for all has been unacceptably slow. 121 million children do not attend primary or secondary school". The cause of this slow progress has been the failure of the international community to invest in education. International donor aid dropped by 9.5% between 2010 and 2012, while total aid declined by 1.3%. The Irish Coalition is affiliated to the International Global Campaign for Education, and is currently engaged in advocacy around the sustainable development agenda, which will replace the Millennium Development Goals after 2015. The negotiations on these new Sustainable Development Goals are being led by Ireland (through its ambassador to the UN) and Kenya. The Goals will run from 2015 to 2030 and prioritise ending poverty and hunger, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, reducing inequalities and combating climate change.

## ASTI member helps students win international science competition



From left: Niamh Nyhan, Aoife Dolan, Claire Holland and Ellen Fitzgerald. (Photo by George Maguire.)

ASTI member Claire Holland has recently guided three of her students to success in the International Environment and Sustainability Project Olympiad (INESPO) 2015 in Amsterdam. Claire teaches in Sacred Heart Secondary School, Clonakilty, where she helped her students Ellen Fitzgerald, Aoife Dolan and Niamh Nyhan to work on their project on energy-efficient street lighting. Their design for an LED light that fits into existing street lamps in Ireland was awarded the SEAI prize for sustainable energy at the SciFest national final, SciFest@SFIDiscover, in 2014 before going on to win the gold medal at INESPO 2015. For the past six years, Claire has given her Transition Year students the option to enter science fairs such as SciFest and the BT Young Scientist competition. She offers them the support they need to do their best in the competition, including meeting them at lunchtime and after school to discuss their projects. This is not the first time that Claire's students have been successful at international science competitions; her students were prizewinners at the Intel ISEF competition in Los Angeles in 2011. Speaking about her students' success at INESPO this year she said: "I'm so proud of them; they've worked extremely hard and created a fantastic project".

**3**

**NUMBER OF ASTI BALLOTS**  
to be held this autumn

(P.8)

**96**

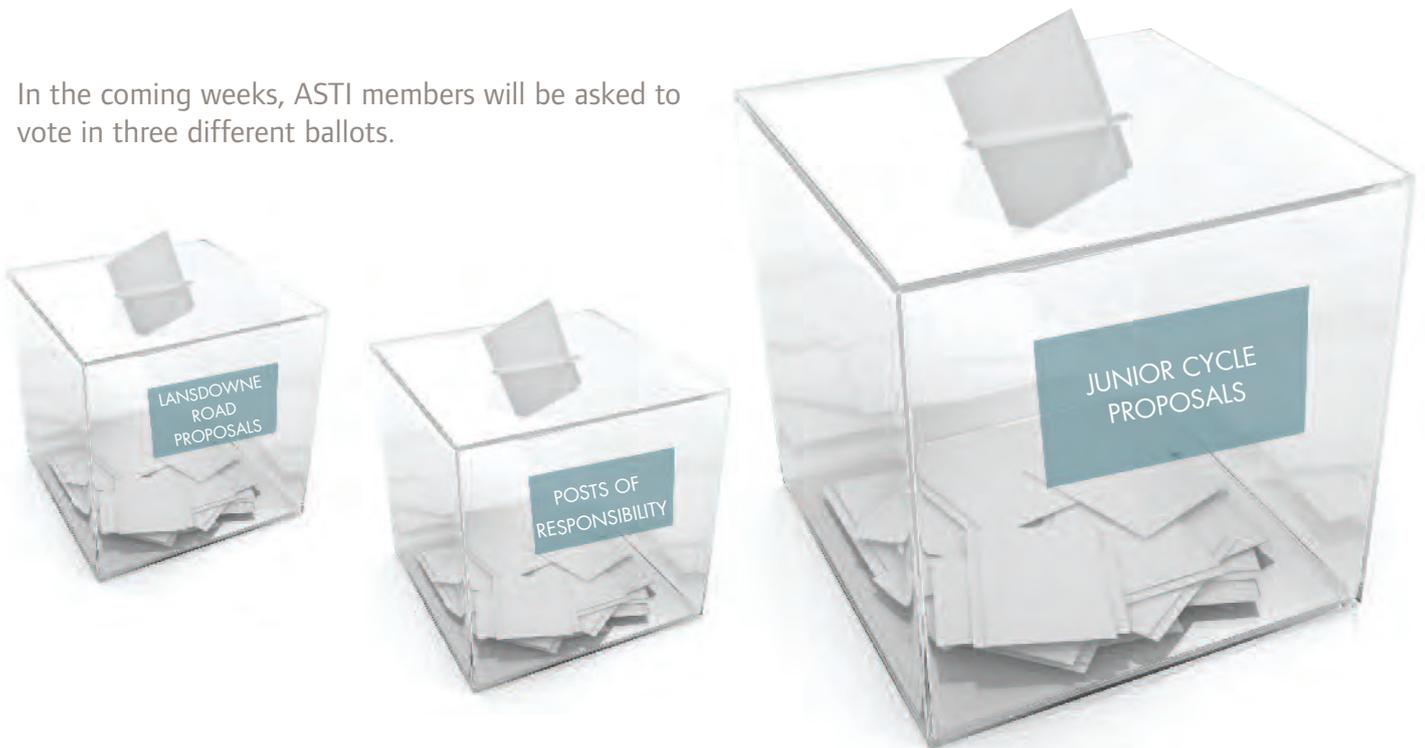
**NUMBER OF SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS**

taking part in the *Droichead* pilot programme for 2015/2016

(P.12)

# Important ballots on teaching and education

In the coming weeks, ASTI members will be asked to vote in three different ballots.



## Junior Cycle proposals

Following a lengthy campaign, the ASTI Central Executive Council and the TUI Executive Committee have decided that the latest Junior Cycle proposals form the basis of a ballot of their members. These proposals are contained in *Junior Cycle Reform: Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation*, and *Appendix to Junior Cycle Reform: Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation*.

### What am I voting on?

You are voting on a set of proposals for the implementation of reform of the Junior Cycle. In October 2012, the then Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairí Quinn TD, announced the *Framework for Junior Cycle*. These proposals did not emerge from teacher union/Department discussions. This led to a major campaign of opposition by the ASTI and the TUI. Another set of proposals from the current Minister for Education and Skills, Jan O'Sullivan TD, emerged in November 2014. These proposals were rejected by ASTI Standing Committee. Members of the ASTI and TUI took strike action on December 2, 2014, and January 22, 2015. In February 2015, a further set of proposals emerged from discussions chaired by Dr Pauric Travers. The ASTI and TUI stated that the 'Dr Travers Document' represented the basis for further intensive negotiations. A lunchtime protest and picketing of the English CPD venues highlighted the need to progress the issue. The latest Junior Cycle proposals emerged in May 2015 following further

lengthy discussions between the teacher unions, the Minister for Education and Skills, and the Department. **These are the proposals you are voting on.** These proposals differ significantly from the original proposals published in October 2012 (see Table).

### What do I need to do?

This is a very important ballot, the result of which will have a significant impact on second-level teaching and education. Your participation is crucial. It is also essential that you read the negotiated documents that you will be voting on:

- *Junior Cycle Reform: Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation* – this document sets out the key components of the latest Junior Cycle reform proposals, including the requirements of teachers
- *Appendix to Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation: Professional Time to Support Implementation* – this document follows discussions on teachers' time and workload issues between the teacher unions and the Department of Education and Skills.

### It is also important that you read:

- *Framework for Junior Cycle* – as a result of the *Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation* and the *Appendix* the *Framework for Junior Cycle* has been revised.

	October 2012 proposals on Junior Cycle (from then Minister Ruairí Quinn TD):	Latest proposals:
State Certification	No State Certificate at Junior Cycle level	State Certificate comprising grades awarded by the SEC. In a separate and distinct exercise, a school report on each student's development over the three years to be provided to parents and students before Christmas in the post Junior Cycle year.
School-based assessment	All Junior Cycle exam assessment (written exams, practicals) to be carried out in school by teachers.	Externally assessed State (SEC) terminal exams, along with external State (SEC) assessment of a third-year classroom-based task undertaken by students.
Teachers' time	No specific allowance for extra demands placed on teachers' time and workload.	From September 2017, class contact time for Junior Cycle teachers to be reduced so that the maximum class contact time each week will be 21 hours and 20 minutes (rather than the current 22 hours limit). Additional paid substitution hours will be allocated this year and next year in order to phase in changes for English, science and business teachers.
Maximum number of subjects for certification	10 (Minister Quinn first announced a maximum of eight; this was increased to 10 following ASTI pressure).	10 plus a new subject area "Wellbeing", incorporating PE, SPHE and CSPE.
Jobs for teachers	No specific commitment.	Reduction in class contact time will lead to creation of hundreds of teaching jobs.

## English

The ASTI has made a specific case for teachers of English who have been implementing the new English specification since September 2014. As a result, under the latest proposals English teachers will have the option to do the classroom-based assessment task in spring 2016 or defer it to the beginning of the following school year.

### Where can I get more information?

- On the ASTI website
- in ASTI information issued to schools and members
- at special regional/branch meetings on the ballot in September (visit [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie) for details).

### Posts of responsibility

The moratorium on post of responsibility appointments has resulted in the loss of thousands of posts of responsibility since 2009. The ASTI has campaigned for the reinstatement of these posts. A limited alleviation on the moratorium has been implemented but has not addressed the enormous gaps in internal school structures. The moratorium has resulted in increased workload for classroom teachers, principals and deputy principals. ASTI Convention 2015 decided that a ballot of members should be held in order to enable the union to direct members not to undertake any unpaid post of responsibility duties. Issuing this directive will support the ASTI in its demand for the reinstatement of all post of responsibility positions. It is unacceptable that teachers would be expected to undertake duties – which were previously part of a paid post of responsibility – on a voluntary

## Warning

The closing date for receipt of returned ballot papers on the Junior Cycle proposals and posts of responsibility is Wednesday, September 23. To ensure that your ballot papers reach us on time, please post them before Friday, September 18.

basis. Teachers are already undertaking extra work, including additional hours. While additional work, such as the Croke Park 33 hours, is part of a formal agreement that union members had an opportunity to vote on, there is no agreement that teachers should undertake unpaid post of responsibility work.

### Ballot on draft pay agreement

Talks between trade unions and the Government on public sector pay restoration took place in May. A draft agreement – the Lansdowne Road Agreement (Public Service Stability Agreement 2013-2018) – was issued. The ASTI Central Executive Council will consider the draft agreement on August 29 (as this *ASTIR* is being printed/distributed). It is expected that a ballot of ASTI members on the draft agreement will be conducted in early October.

The key elements of this deal are available on the ASTI website – [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

The outcome of the ASTI CEC meeting and further information on the draft agreement will be available on the ASTI website from early September. Information will also be issued to schools.

# ASTI active on the issues

ASTI representatives have commented on a range of issues in the media recently, from fighting discrimination against teachers and pupils, to defending our education system.



"I teach history, I teach CSPE, I teach SPHE and I teach RE. In SPHE I teach RSE, I teach about sexual orientation, I teach about the use of contraception, I teach about divorce and I teach about marriage equality. That goes on in my classroom as well as in many SPHE classes across the country. I don't understand why we have a piece of legislation in our law books, saying that religious institutions can discriminate based on someone's sexual orientation and yet in schools, in the classroom, we're teaching about this stuff and that isn't against the ethos...Having something like this hanging over teachers is not right."

**Eoin Houlihan, ASTI member from Dublin, speaking about Section 37 of the Employment Equality Act, *Newstalk Breakfast, Newstalk, June 16***

"Our schools are not able to provide the level of one-to-one counselling that's needed by our young people to spot problems inside in schools. Young people spend huge time with us in school; it's a great forum to spot mental health problems. We have such focus [on mental health] at the moment in society, on Pieta House, Console, Jigsaw, we have so many agencies that are here to help. If we cannot make the referrals because we have to put our guidance counsellors in teaching English classes or maths classes because the system is being so squeezed by the Government, we cannot identify and look after these young people and I think that's absolutely despicable."

**Noelle Moran, ASTI Standing Committee Representative for Galway, Tuam, East Galway, *The People's Debate with Vincent Browne, TV3, June 17***

Ireland's second-level education performs at a high level, and we should be careful that changes do not undermine it.

"It's difficult to start putting roots down in a school; it's difficult to try to put roots down in Ireland, to try and get a mortgage.

No bank is going to touch you until you have a CID.

Imagine at the start, waiting for four years to get a CID, in the fifth year you have a CID, and then you can start trying to get a mortgage...it's just ridiculous."

**Keith Howley, ASTI member, *Today with Sean O'Rourke, RTÉ Radio 1, May 26***

"Describing both the Leaving Cert and Junior Cert as 'educational milestones', Mr Irwin added: 'Ireland has a robust, fair, objective and transparent exams system, which provides every student with a valid statement of learning and effort midway through and at the end of their second-level education'."

**Philip Irwin, then ASTI President, *The Irish Times, June 3***

"Ireland's second-level education is clearly performing at a high level and we should be very careful that changes to our curriculum and assessment model do not undermine the evident strengths in our system."

**Philip Irwin, then ASTI President, speaking on a report ranking Ireland 15th in a league table for maths and science, *The Irish Times, May 13***

"The decision for teachers will be much clearer, but the important thing is that the teacher unions together have ensured that there is the retention of State certification and external assessment for students."

**Pat King, ASTI General Secretary, *Today FM News, Today FM, July 14***



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- Read Aloud:** Allows e-books with this functionality to be read aloud for the user.
- Assessment:** Links to an assessment website that allows students to test themselves and track their progress.
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# Mentoring for new teachers

Droichead is the Teaching Council's proposed model of induction and probation for newly qualified teachers.



The *Droichead* programme aims to further enhance the support that newly qualified teachers (NQTs) receive in their first year in the profession, working on the principle that the best people to assist and support NQTs are experienced teachers. A pilot programme in schools around the country is about to enter its third year, and numbers of participating schools have increased year on year. Eighteen second-level schools have become involved in the Programme for the first time for the 2015/2016 school year, bringing the total number of second-level schools in *Droichead* to 96. The pilot is overseen by a Steering Committee that is representative of all key stakeholders, including the ASTI.

In participating schools, NQTs work with a mentor to develop their teaching skills in a supportive environment. Professional support teams (PSTs) made up of mentors, principals and other participating teachers (known as experienced professionals) oversee the programme and liaise with the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) to ensure that both NQT and PST receive the support that they require in completing the process.

## Support

The NIPT provides a programme of professional learning for participating schools, and a number of supports are available, including:

- professional development for PST members in relation to all aspects of *Droichead*
- a Teaching Council research bursary of €1,000 for all schools participating in the pilot
- additional supports where an NQT in a pilot school is experiencing professional difficulties (e.g., difficulties in classroom management).

The *Droichead* pilot is overseen by a Steering Committee, which includes ASTI representation.

## Research and audit

The Teaching Council has commissioned The Economic and Social Research Institute to carry out research among schools participating in *Droichead*. During the last school year, questionnaires were issued to 324 schools – 123 *Droichead* schools and 201 non-*Droichead* schools. Twelve case study schools have also been identified to explore emerging themes in further detail. The Council has made a research bursary available to participating pilot schools to support their role in the research strand.

The Council has established a working group of NQTs, which has been very helpful in providing informal feedback in relation to NQTs' experience of the process.

A working group of *Droichead* principals has also been established for the purposes of providing feedback and supporting the Council in promoting the process among other schools.

The feedback received to date points to high levels of satisfaction with *Droichead* among principals, mentors and other PST members, with many participants citing the benefits for NQTs and the way in which *Droichead* has contributed to a more collaborative culture within the school.

The NIPT is running a series of information sessions on *Droichead* in September, aimed at raising awareness of the pilot, and providing an overview of how the process works. The sessions will take place in all 21 full-time education centres nationwide. For full information on dates and venues, contact your local education centre, or log on to [www.teacherinduction.ie/en/droichead-principal-information-session](http://www.teacherinduction.ie/en/droichead-principal-information-session).

ASTIR spoke to two teachers who have experienced *Droichead*, one as a mentor and one as a mentee.

### Meantóireacht ó ghlúin go glúin – Ruairí Ó Céilleachair

Tús maith, leath na hoibre. No doubt we all remember our first day on the job. If we were lucky, some battle-hardened senior teacher took us aside and gave us a heads-up on the survival strategy in our particular school. Others fumbled on and tried to stay afloat. We all know people who sank. I teach physics at Gaelcholáiste Mhuire, an Mhainistir Thuaidh, in Cork City. Sa scoil againne tá an t-ádh linn go bhfuil ceathrar mheantóirí a thraenáilleadh ag an gClár Náisiúnta Ionduchtaithe do Mhúinteoirí. S'iad Ciara Ní Mhaolagáin, Clár Ní Cheannabhuidh, Colette Ní Mhurchú agus mé féin. Tá an fhoireann agus an Príomhoide, Dónal Ó Buachalla, agus an Leas Phríomhoide Marc McGabhann, go mór i bhfábhair na hoibre atá ar siúl agus tuigeann siad na buntáistí a bhaineann leis.

### Inspiring training

I trained as a mentor with the NIPT in 2011. I really enjoyed the initial mentor training (IMT) course. The quality of the course and the expertise of the course facilitator, Veronica Beehan, inspired me to train as an IMT facilitator and I have had the pleasure of delivering IMT training for the past three years. I love the work. It has re-energised my own teaching and been invaluable in helping me to improve my work as a mentor in our school. The NIPT motto is “to ask for support is a sign of strength” and I feel it says so much about the philosophy behind the programme.

### A whole school process

Because structured mentoring in second level is a relatively new phenomenon, there seems to be a degree of confusion, and indeed apprehension, about the role of the mentor. A mentor under the *Droichead* process is defined as a facilitator of the induction process in a school. One of the most important principles of mentor training is that induction is a whole school process and not the sole responsibility of the mentor. The mentor provides support for the NQT during this crucial stage of her/his teaching career by co-ordinating the induction plan and induction activities in collaboration with the principal, the NQT and the PST. Chomh maith leis na meantóirí eile sa Ghaelcholáiste, bíim i dteagmháil leis an bPríomhoide agus le daoine éagsúla ar an bhfoireann ó thaobh deiseanna a eagrú dos na múinteoirí nua-cháilithe go bhféadfaidís dul isteach i ranganna ag brathnóireacht nó ag obair le h-ais múinteoirí eile.

### A varied role

As a mentor I consult with the principal regarding the release time for the mentors and NQTs so that substitution arrangements can be made. Mentors enable and empower the NQT to find their own answers to their problems. From the very beginning clear boundaries for the mentor–NQT relationship must be established so that fruitful professional conversations can develop, which guide the NQT’s reflective practice.

Early in the year much of the mentor’s role involves practical induction activities such as familiarising the NQT with school policies and procedures, and helping them with general orientation. However, the role varies based on the NQT’s needs. We are often advocates for NQTs who may feel vulnerable and somewhat powerless at the beginning of their careers. A major aspect of mentoring is classroom observation. When I began mentoring I was very apprehensive about being in a fellow professional’s

classroom. The mentor training really prepared and reassured me and, as it turned out, I have benefitted so much as a teacher myself from my observation work. As a mentor I can also attend mentor professional development evenings where I can share expertise with other mentors. We have also found that mentoring provides opportunities for staff members to assume autonomy, leadership and responsibility in a fresh role within the school. The involvement of more teachers has contributed to the building of a shared staff vision for our school and has had a very positive influence on staff morale. Ní neart go chur le chéile.

### Mentee – Stephanie Mullane

When September 2013 arrived I was in a similar position to many of the other NQTs around the country: I was unemployed. I believed that I was destined to spend my first year as a fully qualified secondary school teacher moving from school to school filling substitute positions. Thankfully, I was one of the lucky ones and obtained a 22-hour maternity leave position. Over the initial days I adjusted to the daunting timetable I was facing, which consisted of English classes in each year group (including Higher Level Leaving Certificate), a Young Social Innovators project, a FETAC module (Child Health & Well Being) and two class tutor groups. Just when I felt I was able to tackle this a new discovery was made: I was now teaching in a *Droichead* pilot school. I had no idea what *Droichead* entailed; I recognised the word as it was located on my Teaching Council Registration as a condition, but this was my limited contact with the concept.

### A rocky start

My initial interactions with *Droichead* did not go smoothly. I was frustrated with the lack of structure and knowledge that was being provided in relation to what was expected of me. I was worried that it would be an added burden. I had worked extremely hard over the course of my Professional Diploma in Education and was proud to gain that qualification. Now I felt that I was being told I was not a professional until I completed this process. It was as if the goal posts had been moved on me once again. However, these initial reservations quickly disappeared. Once a clear explanation of what *Droichead* was came through it was evident that it was to be a supportive process and it was just that.

My weekly meetings with my mentor were invaluable. I was fortunate that she had common subjects with me and she understood the challenges I was facing. She was able to support me not only on behavioural and classroom management issues, but also with teaching particularly tricky aspects of the curriculum. Another vital part of *Droichead* was observation of other teachers. As an NQT I was particularly nervous about teaching Senior Cycle English. Through the funding from the pilot the school was able to allow me to go in and observe other teachers in action and then me. Through this I not only gained knowledge and ideas, but was also reassured about my own teaching ability through feedback I received.

### A protective structure

When I think back to the experiences and learning moments I participated in it can still be overwhelming. As one of the lucky NQTs who was teaching for the entirety of their first year qualified, being involved in *Droichead* is how I coped. The process is intended to be a support structure for NQTs transitioning from the protective structure of teaching practice to going it alone as a fully qualified teacher. For me, *Droichead* provided just that.

# ‘FEMPI must go’, ASTI tells ICTU conference

The ASTI was represented at the recent Irish Congress of Trade Unions Biennial Delegate Conference.

A motion proposed by the ASTI demanding that the Government repeal all aspects of the FEMPI legislation was passed at the recent Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) Biennial Delegate Conference. The motion also commits the trade union movement to vigorous opposition to any future attempt by governments to impose unilateral changes on the pay and working conditions of public sector workers.

Proposing the motion, ASTI Deputy General Secretary Diarmaid de Paor said that FEMPI was used to target ASTI members in a most specific and painful manner.

“The ASTI was the last union to sign up to the Haddington Road Agreement. When our members finally voted to accept the Agreement, it was in a context of threats from the Government to further cut pay and impose redundancies on teachers if we did not agree to the deal. The Government was able to make the threats because of this pernicious piece of legislation. Section 2B gave the Government the right to unilaterally cut core pay and adjust the working hours of ASTI members.”

Mr de Paor welcomed the fact that Section 2B is repealed in the recent Workplace Relations Act, which is to be commenced later this year. However, he said the entire FEMPI Act must go.

“This is an antidemocratic piece of legislation. It should never have been enacted. We are told the ‘emergency’ is over. FEMPI must go.”

Also at the conference, the ICTU called for the negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) to be halted. Speaking to a motion, ASTI Vice President Ed Byrne said that the TTIP represents a clear threat to public services in Ireland: “Recent problems in English language schools highlight the danger of private investment in what is best provided by public funding and proper regulation. Education and other vital public services are in serious danger of being

underfunded in any such market”.

The motion urged the trade union movement to make it clear that workers will never accept any trade agreement that does not promote decent jobs and growth, and safeguard labour, consumers, and environmental health and safety standards.

## New legislation will improve rights of workers

New draft legislation on collective bargaining is making its way through the houses of the Oireachtas. The ICTU, which has been campaigning for collective bargaining legislation for a number of years, has stated that while collective bargaining legislation is progressive, it does not achieve enough.

The legislation provides an avenue for workers, through their trade unions, to secure improvements in pay and conditions, when an employer refuses to engage in collective bargaining. It allows for the Labour Court to make a determination in a dispute, which can be enforced by way of Circuit Court order.

## What is FEMPI?

Financial Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI) legislation was first introduced in 2009 to cut the public services pay bill. FEMPI allows governments to unilaterally cut the pay and pensions of public servants (i.e., without having to exhaust normal industrial relations negotiations and procedures). FEMPI was used to impose cuts such as the public servants’ pension levy in 2009 and the pay cut for public servants in 2010. It was also used in 2013 to cut the pay of ASTI members when they voted not to accept the Haddington Road Agreement.

## ASTI wins seat on ICTU Executive Committee



ASTI Deputy General Secretary Diarmaid de Paor (far left) has secured a seat for the ASTI on the ICTU Executive.

ASTI Vice President Ed Byrne (left) spoke

on a motion calling for the negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) to be halted.

## Campaign to highlight precarious work

Precarious employment in the Irish labour market is one of the biggest challenges facing the trade union movement, the Conference heard. A motion on casualisation in the education sector, proposed by the TUI and supported by the ASTI, highlighted the growing number of teachers in fixed-term, casual and part-time jobs. Many of these contracts are unnecessary given that student numbers at second level continue to increase. The motion commits the ICTU to prioritising the issue of precarious work.

Another motion, proposed by Mandate and a number of other unions, called for a campaign to highlight the issue of short hours contracts and underemployment, and the misuse of zero hour contracts.

# At the forefront of education policy

A key goal of the ASTI Education Committee is to be proactive in monitoring and analysing developments in education policy.



*The ASTI Education Committee. Back row (from left): Ray Silke, Joe Moran, Gerard Hanlon and Jim Ahern. Front row (from left): Mary Lyndon, Christina Henehan, Margaret Kent (Chairperson), Moira Leydon (Assistant General Secretary: Education and Research) and Jimmy Staunton. Not pictured: Anne Loughnane.*

By anticipating proposed education reforms, the Education Committee aims to ensure that policy decisions are influenced by teachers' views and are educationally sound.

The Committee is elected every two years by Annual Convention and has up to seven meetings per year. Its role is: to provide an overview of current and developing education policy; to serve as a nucleus for debate and discussion on education within the ASTI; and, to provide advice to Standing Committee on topical education issues as required.

Typically, the Education Committee is made up of teachers from around the country who teach a variety of subjects, which means that there is a diversity of opinions represented on the Committee.

Moira Leydon, ASTI Assistant General Secretary: Education and Research, provides the professional support for the work of the Committee, including preparation of materials, and drafting of reports and policy documents. Reports of the Committee's work are forwarded to Standing Committee after each meeting, and a report is also made to Annual Convention each year.

The Committee draws up a programme of work for each year, focusing on issues that have been referred to them by Annual Convention or Standing Committee, and on new policy developments that may come about as a result of legislative change or the introduction of new initiatives. The Education Committee acts as a watchdog for new education policy, advising on what structures, resources, etc., need to be in place in order to implement new or proposed education policy. When required, the Education Committee reviews draft documents and proposals from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

(NCCA). The Committee also works closely with the ASTI subject representatives, who are part of NCCA subject development groups, providing them with support and feedback while also taking a broader picture of developments within subject areas. As developments in one syllabus are indicative of trends across the curriculum, the broad-based Education Committee has an overseeing role, monitoring developments across subject areas.

## Working on the current issues

At the moment, one of the main areas that the Committee is working on is proactively developing ASTI policy on Senior Cycle education, as a result of a motion passed at Convention 2014. The Education Committee has commissioned a leading academic to write a scoping paper on the main issues that any Senior Cycle reform will have to address, as well as conducting research on the topic among various education partners and bodies. In the next few months, they will be using this information to publish a comprehensive policy statement on Senior Cycle education.

Another key area for the Committee at the moment is their analysis of the draft framework from the Teaching Council on teachers' professional learning. The Education Committee is currently subjecting the Framework to a critical analysis with a view to presenting a pro-teacher set of responses to the framework on behalf of the ASTI.

**For more information on the work of the Education Committee see [www.asti.ie/education/](http://www.asti.ie/education/).**

# THE GLOBAL



**GOAL 1**  
No poverty



**GOAL 2**  
No hunger



**GOAL 3**  
Good health



**GOAL 7**  
Renewable energy



**GOAL 8**  
Good jobs & economic growth



**GOAL 9**  
Innovation & infrastructure



**GOAL 13**  
Protect the planet



**GOAL 14**  
Life below water



**GOAL 15**  
Life on land

# GOALS

unicef   
IRELAND



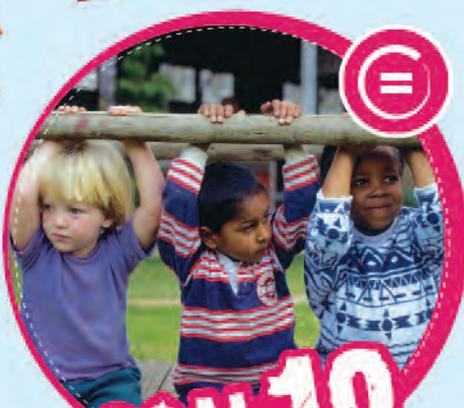
**GOAL 4**  
Quality education



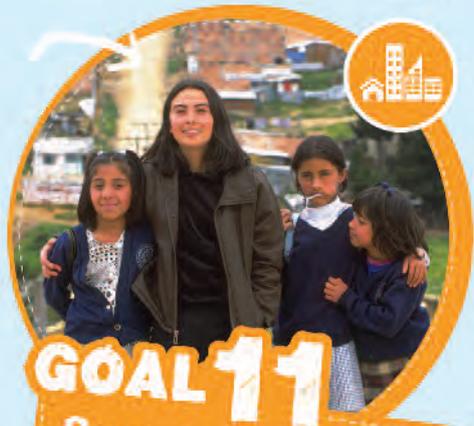
**GOAL 5**  
Gender equality



**GOAL 6**  
Clean water & sanitation



**GOAL 10**  
Reduced inequalities



**GOAL 11**  
Sustainable cities & communities



**GOAL 12**  
Responsible consumption



**GOAL 16**  
Peace & justice



**GOAL 17**  
Partnerships for the goals



## THE GLOBAL GOALS

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HOW WE CAN ACHIEVE  
A BETTER WORLD  
TOGETHER

[unicef.ie/worldslargestlesson](http://unicef.ie/worldslargestlesson)  
[globalgoals.org](http://globalgoals.org)



From left: Philip Irwin, then ASTI President, with Honorary Life Membership recipients Jeremiah McCarthy, Matt Bermingham, Lily Cronin, Michael Moriarty, Tony McKernan and ASTI General Secretary Pat King.

# Teachers’ achievements honoured

ASTI member’s achievements as teachers and union activists were recently honoured at the ASTI Awards.

The ASTI Achievement Awards honour teachers who have made an exceptional contribution in the public or professional sphere.

### Shirley Higgins – Outstanding Teacher Achievement Award

Shirley Higgins was presented with an ASTI Achievement Award for her outstanding work as conductor of the signing choir in St Mary’s School for Deaf Girls in Cabra, Dublin. Through her work with the choir, she has brought this creative form of artistic expression to a whole new level and, together with her students, has greatly increased awareness of deaf culture and communication.

Shirley’s passion and commitment has helped the choir to grow from strength to strength. Since Shirley founded the choir four years ago, they have gone from performing at school celebrations to performing at events as diverse as the 50th International Eucharistic Congress (2012), the Saturday Night Show (2013), and the International Mental Health and Deafness Conference (2014). In 2014, members travelled to Bonn to perform with other signing choirs at a European event called ‘Feel the Music’, where they were accompanied by the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and the pianist Leif Ove Andsnes.

Shirley dedicates many hours to bringing music to life for her students through the medium of Irish Sign Language (ISL). Since ISL is a visual language, students learn songs from DVDs. This means that Shirley must translate songs into ISL before videoing them. The enthusiasm and dedication to music shown by Shirley has had a huge impact on the members of the choir, who practice five mornings a week before school begins.

For the students in St Mary’s, the benefits of learning and performing these songs go far beyond mere enjoyment of music, and include improved confidence, self-esteem, co-ordination, rhythm and literacy skills.

Shirley has also worked to promote sign language both internationally and locally. She provided help and guidance to schools for the deaf in Prague, Italy and Germany, who have been inspired to set up their own signing

choirs. The four schools met in September 2014 to exchange ideas and perform together in the native sign languages of their own countries. In her own community, Shirley has developed a Transition Year Module in ISL, where she and her class teach ISL to transition year students in a neighbouring school. The ‘4 Schools 1 Language’ initiative emerged from this module. Under this initiative, transition year students from St Mary’s, St Joseph’s School for Deaf Boys and neighbouring mainstream schools learn and record contemporary songs together in ISL.

Principal Eimear O’Rourke said: “Shirley is an exceptionally dedicated teacher and a hugely valued member of both our school community and the wider deaf community.”

Shirley is a worthy recipient of this award, who is highly regarded by colleagues and students alike.

### James McGovern – Outstanding Individual Achievement Award

Religion and history teacher James McGovern was awarded a 2015 ASTI Achievement Award for his exceptional contributions both in his school and his local community. His accomplishments are in areas as diverse as Gaelic games, public speaking and debating, labour relations and authorship. In his 33 years of teaching in St Mary’s CBS, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, James has had a significant positive impact on the physical, sporting, mental, religious and academic development of his students.

James is greatly respected by his students due to his GAA achievements. As a player, he represented Wexford on the Senior county football team from 1983 to 1988. He also has numerous achievements at club level. As a trainer, James has worked with many teams, including the Wexford Minor, Under-21 and Ladies’ teams.

As a passionate advocate for the GAA, he has organised tours to European GAA teams since 1998 with a view to strengthening fledgling clubs on the continent. James has also trained the Gaelic football team in St Mary’s for many years, during which time they won their first Leinster Senior Football Colleges title and the Wexford Colleges Football Championship. Such is his



ASTI Achievement Award winner Shirley Higgins with then ASTI President Philip Irwin and ASTI General Secretary Pat King.



ASTI Achievement Award winner James McGovern with then ASTI President Philip Irwin and ASTI General Secretary Pat King.  
For a full selection of photos visit the photo gallery at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

commitment to GAA that James divided the €22,000 profits from his first book *Coming of Age in Wexford GAA, 1983-2004* between the St Mary's CBS astroturf project and his local GAA club's development.

James is a long-time supporter of teaching students about mental health, and spearheaded his school's involvement in the Mental Health Ireland public speaking competition. Fourteen teams from St Mary's have won the Co. Wexford finals of the competition in 28 years. With James as coach, his teams have also reached several All-Ireland finals in the competition, including a win in 1989.

As James saw the positive effects of public speaking on students' self-confidence, he also coached teams in many other public speaking and debating competitions. He has always tried to give opportunities to those with mental health difficulties, thereby helping to raise their self-esteem. He has coached students to success in competitions run by a variety of organisations including Young Fine Gael, the Knights of St Columbanus, UCD L&H/TCD 'Hist' societies, Trinity College Philosophical Society, Maynooth University, Enniscorthy Tidy Towns and Carlow IT. At a civic reception given in his honour by Enniscorthy Urban Council in 2014, James was described as being one of the most successful and longest-serving public speaking and debating tutors in the country.

A dedicated ASTI member, James has served as school steward many times. He has been extremely involved in the ASTI at branch level, serving as Chairman or Honorary Secretary for the Enniscorthy Branch for much of the last 33 years, as well as attending Convention almost every year since the early 1980s.

#### Awards to ASTI members

Teachers from all over the country were honoured by the ASTI in May for their outstanding contributions both inside and outside the classroom. The annual ASTI awards ceremony, held in the Gresham Hotel, Dublin, honoured those who have provided invaluable service to the teaching profession and the union.

**Honorary life membership** is awarded in recognition of teachers who have given singular and exceptional service to their profession, as well as to the ASTI. Matt Bermingham (Fermoy Branch), Lily Cronin (Kerry Branch), Jeremiah McCarthy (Carbery Branch), Tony McKernan (Limerick South Branch) and Michael Moriarty (Athlone Branch) received honorary life membership this year.

The **Thomas MacDonagh award** is presented to those who have given distinguished service to the ASTI. The 2015 recipients of this award are: Edward Byrne (Fingal Branch), Ger Curtin (Dublin North West Branch), Martha Goggin (Dublin South Central Branch), Agnes Keane (Dublin South 1 Branch), Jeremiah McCarthy (Carbery Branch), Sean O'Neill (Dublin South County Branch) and Tony Waldron (Longford Branch).

The **PJ Kennedy Award** is awarded to members who have given valuable service to the branch and/or branch members. Recipients of the award are Conor O'Leary (Carbery Branch), Pat O'Looney (East Galway Branch), Michael O'Shea (Roscrea Branch) and Jody Spooner (Roscrea Branch).

#### ASTI Centenary Scholarship

Beth Cooney, a teacher at St Mary's Secondary School Nenagh, was this year's recipient of the ASTI Centenary scholarship. The ASTI offers an annual scholarship to assist members in undertaking further third-level studies. The annual scholarship of €4,000 is awarded to one ASTI member, with preference given to members who do not hold any other scholarships or financial awards for study. Beth is a PhD student in her third year at the University of Limerick, whose research focuses on the professional learning experiences of second-level teachers in Ireland. Beth hopes to determine to what extent we have understood the change from traditional rote learning to transformative learning practices. She is also exploring what aspects of professional learning influence teaching, classroom practice and student learning, as well as barriers to professional learning that teachers may experience. Her aim is to identify useful models of professional learning to inform a future national strategy for professional development for teachers. The ASTI Centenary Scholarship is determined by a Scholarship Selection Committee whose selection criteria include: relevance of the proposed course of study to the professional lives of teachers and second level; and, the potential for the study to inform the ongoing policy agenda and work of the ASTI. It was believed that Beth's studies best matched the criteria, making her the preferred candidate for the scholarship.

*The ASTI makes a number of annual awards to members, including the ASTI Achievement Awards, the Thomas MacDonagh Award, the PJ Kennedy Award and Honorary Life Membership. Information on how to nominate members for these awards will be distributed to branches shortly and is available on the ASTI website – [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).*

# New to teaching



The ASTI has a wealth of information and support for new teachers.

## Teaching jobs

The number of teacher appointments in a 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 (in fee-charging schools the ratio is 23:1). 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, which are granted depending on a school's individual needs. Some schools may also pay for teaching hours directly from their own funds. Most second-level teachers begin their careers in part-time and temporary positions.

## Contracts

The type of contract you hold depends on the reason for the position being vacant and the hours you cover. Regardless of the type of contract you have, you should make sure you receive clear written information on the terms and conditions of your job, either in the form of a letter of appointment, a written contract or a written statement. You are entitled to this information and it is important that you have it so that you fully understand the nature of your employment. Remember to keep a copy of all documents as they may be important in the future. Don't sign a contract until you know exactly what you are signing, and if you are unsure of anything, ask your ASTI school steward or ASTI Head Office for clarification or advice.

Before you agree to a contract, make sure that it includes the following information:

- the nature and duration of your employment
- the type of contract under which you are employed: fixed term or permanent, part time or whole time
- the number of hours per week you are contracted to teach
- the subjects and levels you will be teaching
- the reason for the vacancy you are filling

Before you agree to a contract, make sure it contains all the required information.

- whether you will be paid by the Department of Education and Skills, the school or the ETB.

## Non-permanent contracts

Many newly qualified teachers (NQTs) will begin their teaching careers in temporary positions covering for teachers on leave or covering 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. 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 one year. For example, you would have a *pro-rata* contract where you are covering concessionary hours or for a career break.

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

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

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

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

## Permanent contracts and contracts of indefinite duration

### Permanent contract

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

### Contracts of indefinite duration (CIDs)

If you have been employed on two successive fixed-term contracts\* in the same school, you may be entitled to a 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.

The hours of a CID will be the same as those held in the contract immediately prior to receiving a CID. To be eligible for a CID, a teacher must satisfy the following conditions:

- the teacher must be a qualified second-level teacher currently registered with the Teaching Council
- the teacher must have in excess of two years' continuous teaching service in the same school in a Department-paid position
- there must be no objective grounds in writing that exclude the teacher from being awarded a CID. An objective ground is a valid and genuine reason why a teaching position is temporary rather than permanent.

Objective grounds can include: maternity leave or long-term sick leave.\*\*

Where there is a valid and genuine reason for employing a teacher on a fixed-term/temporary contract, e.g., the teacher is covering maternity leave for a specified period, then there is an objective ground for not awarding a permanent contract or CID. Fixed-term contracts should include a statement as to what the objective ground/s is/are.

\*Prior to September 2015, teachers had to have three years' continuous teaching service to obtain a CID, but the ASTI, along with other teacher unions, successfully negotiated this down to two years.

\*\*From September 2015, career breaks and secondments can no longer be used as objective grounds for not awarding a CID after more than two years.

### Salary

Your pay depends on:

- when you first started teaching
- your contract
- your hours
- your teaching experience.

Teachers are paid based on an incremental salary scale or according to annual rates. Which scale or what rate you are on depends on when you first began teaching in a Department-paid position. Different scales and rates operate for teachers who started:

- before January 1, 2011
- after January 1, 2011
- after February 1, 2012.

Permanent teachers/full-time CID teachers are paid over 12 months and their salary is based on the relevant point on the appropriate scale plus allowances.

Regular part-time teachers, part-time CID 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 any allowances, depending on how many hours they teach.

The ASTI continues its campaign for equality of pay for all teachers. To read more about our campaign, visit [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

## What do you wish you had known when you first started teaching?



When I started teaching in 1977 I was afraid to ask more senior colleagues for help on teaching methods and curriculum in case they felt I was inferior. Over the years I have learned that most teachers are very willing to give advice and help to their newer colleagues. Their willingness to share resources reduces the workload on the new teacher. Your fellow teachers are a great resource – use them!

**Neil Curran, St Columba's College, Co. Donegal**



Make sure you enjoy it! Starting a career in teaching is such an exciting time and the first few years fly by. Stop worrying about making mistakes; it's how we all learn. Listen to your body. Teaching can be extremely physically and also mentally challenging. Make sure you give yourself some R&R time: get some fresh air, go

for a walk or do some type of sport to clear your mind at the end of a stressful day. Finally, be yourself. Go to the staffroom at breaks (they don't bite). You may be the only person that smiles at the students that day, so smile and smile frequently.

**Yvonne Rossiter, Presentation College Bray, Co. Wicklow**



When I first started my career I wish I had known that teaching is a 'team sport' not an 'individual' one. At times I felt isolated when I closed my classroom door, afraid I would not live up to expectations. There are so many questions to be answered and it can be difficult to know where to find information. I wish I had known that asking

questions is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength – a willingness to take charge of one's own professional development. My advice is to ask questions, be open to feedback and accept that it takes time and experience to transition from student teachers to teachers of students.

**Laura Fox Fitzgerald, Salesian College, Celbridge, Co. Kildare, and Droichead mentor**



As an NQT, I wish I had known how important it is to ask for help and advice. When you first start teaching there's a lot you don't know and the only way to find out is to ask. Finding a colleague or mentor you get on with and trust is very important; these people help to shape your identity as a teacher. It's ok not to know everything and to have questions or concerns starting out. Apart from subject-specific queries, many teachers have simple questions arising from being in an unfamiliar school environment, such as the everyday running of the school.

**Sinéad Furlong, NQT, Good Counsel College, New Ross, Co. Wexford, and Droichead mentee**



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•1941 - 2016•



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DEB Exams Management Team

CELEBRATING  
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## **75 years ago** Dublin Examining Board (DEB Exams)

was set up to offer standardised examinations for second-level students throughout Ireland. In 1971, the Kelly family took over the running of the business and the current management team of Senan and Ciaran Kelly have been in charge since 1995.

In the past 20 years, we have flourished and expanded, relocating to our current premises in west Dublin, widening our range of examination materials and developing our online presence. With our permanent team of 26 dedicated staff members, we provide examination papers and marking schemes of the highest quality.

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

# ...Thank You

# A worthwhile education experience

The ASTI is supporting the Global Schoolroom programme once again this year.



Global Schoolroom gives experienced teachers from Ireland and the UK the opportunity to contribute to teacher education in North East India. The ASTI has pledged to donate €5,000 a year to the organisation until 2017. Global Schoolroom was founded in 2005 by two ASTI members, Gwen Brennan and Garret Campbell, after they visited North East India and found that there was a great need for improved teacher education in the region, with many teachers having no formal teacher training at all. They thought that Irish teachers would be willing to share their knowledge with their Indian colleagues.

Upon returning to Ireland, Gwen and Garret set up Global Schoolroom with Robert Power, then Deputy Managing Director of Cornmarket Group. The organisation sent their first group of Irish teachers to North East India in 2007.

By focusing on training local teachers, Global Schoolroom is able to contribute a huge amount to education in the region without asking for a large time commitment from its volunteers. The programme now sends around 30 teachers to India for one month every summer, where they act as tutors to local teachers. Before leaving Ireland, they take part in several training sessions with input from UCD staff in order to ensure that they will be confident in facilitating seminars and workshops on teaching techniques and methodologies for the Indian teachers.

## Developing sustainable skills

When the volunteers arrive in India they are based in one of 10 local 'hubs', which teachers from the region travel to in order to take part in the lectures, seminars and workshops with the Irish teachers. After two weeks, the tutors travel to the Indian teachers' own schools to help them to put

Global Schoolroom sends 30 teachers from Ireland to India for one month every summer.

the skills they have learnt into action with their students.

For the Indian teachers, these sessions in July make up part of their credits for Global Schoolroom's UCD-accredited three-year Diploma in Teacher Education, alongside ongoing assessments throughout the year. Graduates of the Diploma can apply to become tutors to other local teachers through Global Schoolroom, ensuring the sustainability of the project.

Former ASTI President Gerry Breslin travelled to India this year to take part in the Global Schoolroom programme. Gerry stayed in the Shillong area along with two other teachers from Ireland. They were hosted by the Khasi Jaintia Deficit School Teachers Association, which has worked hard to improve conditions for teachers in the area, who often work in very difficult circumstances.

He said: "The trip was a great experience and very worthwhile; anyone who has taken part in the programme really feels that they've achieved something and I don't think that anyone would ever regret going". Siobhan Connolly, a teacher in St Dominic's School in Ballyfermot, Dublin, was a Global Schoolroom volunteer in 2014. She said: "The experience I had as a Global Schoolroom volunteer rejuvenated my passion for teaching. It has helped me to incorporate new methodologies and strategies in my teaching here in Ireland. It was fantastic to see what a difference Global Schoolroom makes to teachers and students in the region".

If you are interested in taking part in the Global Schoolroom programme next year, you can attend one of the information meetings being held nationwide in October 2015.

**The deadline to apply to Global Schoolroom for July 2016 is November 20. For more information see [www.globalschoolroom.net](http://www.globalschoolroom.net).**

Sharing Educational Experience Worldwide



Global Schoolroom

# next summer... make it count!

Next summer, join Global Schoolroom and spend the month of July in remote Northeast India sharing your educational experience with your Indian teacher counterparts. Help improve teaching standards and enjoy a truly fascinating and rewarding professional, personal and cultural experience while using your teaching skills to make a real difference.

If you would like to apply to become a teacher educator in India next summer please log onto [www.globalschoolroom.net](http://www.globalschoolroom.net) and download an application form, email us at: [info@globalschoolroom.net](mailto:info@globalschoolroom.net), write to us at The Volunteering Department, Global Schoolroom, 10 Lissadel Crescent, Malahide, Co. Dublin, Ireland or call us at +353 1 845 6901.

Places are limited to 30 volunteers and selection of candidates will be based on your application form and an interview. Successful applicants must be prepared to attend six weekend training days during the spring and must also agree to raise a minimum of €3,000 towards the cost of the trip.

You can find out more about volunteering for Global Schoolroom at one of our information sessions at the following Teacher Education Centres

Limerick	Tues, Oct. 13th	5pm -7pm
Sligo	Tues, Oct. 13th	5pm -7pm
Dublin West	Tues, Oct. 13th	7pm -9pm
Drumcondra	Wed, Oct.14th	5pm -7pm,
Wexford	Wed, Oct.14th	5pm -7pm
Kildare	Thurs. Oct.15th	7pm - 9pm
Kilkenny	Thurs. Oct.15th	7pm - 9pm
Carrick on Shannon	Tues Oct.20th	7pm - 9pm
Galway	Tues Oct.20th	7pm - 9pm
Donegal	Tues Oct.20th	7pm - 9pm
Navan	Tues Oct.20th	5.30pm - 7.30pm
Blackrock	Wed Oct. 21st	7.30pm - 9.30pm
Cork	Wed Oct. 21st	7pm - 9pm

## WIN €1,000 IRISH LIFE BURSARY

Volunteers will entered into a draw for 3 Irish Life Bursaries each worth €1,000.



## €1,000 SPORTS KIT FOR YOUR SCHOOL THANKS TO CORNMARKET!

All schools from which volunteers apply will be in with a chance to win €1,000 worth of sports kit kindly sponsored by



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# Speaking out for teachers

ASTIR met with new ASTI President, Máire G. Ní Chiarba.

## Where do you teach?

I am Assistant Principal and Senior Modern Language Teacher at Coláiste an Phiarsaigh, Gleann Maghair, Co. Chorcaí. Coláiste an Phiarsaigh is an all-Irish school so both students and staff are immersed in the language.

## What subjects do you teach?

I teach French, Spanish and German. I have to say I am very passionate about my languages. I see them as a way of life not just subjects I teach.

## Where did you go to second-level school?

I went to both first and second-level school at F.C.J. Convent, Laurel Hill, Limerick. The junior school at the time was called St. Philomena's and the second-level was known as Laurel Hill 'A' School. It has since changed its name to Laurel Hill Coláiste. I was educated at second level through the medium of Irish so I suppose it's not surprising that I teach in an all-Irish school.

## Who was your most inspiring teacher?

My most inspiring teacher was my Mum although she never taught me in a formal school setting. My Mum was a primary teacher whose career as a young teacher was very short lived due to the marriage bar on women national teachers. It really is hard to believe that such a bar ever existed not to mention in relatively recent times. We have come a long way. My Mum imparted knowledge with great ease and inspired me to choose the same profession albeit at second level.

## What sparked your interest in languages?

One language just led to another! I loved Irish in school but the first time I heard it spoken in the Gaeltacht was memorable. My favourite subject was French. Everything about it appealed to me. When I got the opportunity to learn Spanish in school I grasped it and also loved everything about that language and the culture of the country. I started learning German while a student at University College Galway. German reminded me a lot of Latin, which I had also studied at school.

## How do you maintain your fluency in your many languages?

Maintaining fluency is a great excuse to travel. I was lucky to have the opportunity to study abroad and have done language courses in France,

Spain and Germany. Nowadays I prefer to relax when I travel but I still have the excuse that I need to keep in touch with my languages!

## How did you become involved in the ASTI?

I became involved in the ASTI during my first year teaching as members in my school were served by an excellent school steward at the time. I became school steward myself shortly afterwards, a position I held for many years.

## What positions have you held within the ASTI prior to becoming President?

Over the years I have held almost every officership in Cork North Branch. I served the Branch as CEC Representative and served Region 7 as Standing Committee Representative. I was a member of many subcommittees and committees within the ASTI and am a former Chairperson of the ASTI Education Committee. Last year I held the position of Vice President of the ASTI.

## What would you say to teachers wondering if they should join the ASTI?

If I were you I would join without hesitation. The ASTI is there to help, represent and protect its members. Through the ASTI you can make a difference and contribute to shaping second-level education policy.

## What are your priorities?

My main priority this year is to be the voice of the classroom teacher. That is what I am, a teacher. I am not an economist, a statistician, a professional trade unionist or any other professional you care to name. I am a passionate teacher and care deeply about my profession. I want the voice of the classroom teacher to be acknowledged for its expertise.

## What are your interests outside of teaching?

I have a keen interest in theatre. Swimming is a form of exercise I really enjoy. My golfing career is currently on hold but I am looking forward to playing regularly when I have more time.

## What is something that members may not know about you?

I once had a golf lesson from Hank Haney. He was Tiger Woods' coach as number one in the world. He obviously saw the potential in me!

# Meet your Standing Committee Reps



Mary Ohle

**Position:** Honorary National Organiser  
**School:** St Mary's School for Deaf Girls, Cabra, Dublin 7

**I got involved because...** I had been an active member of the students union in college and was encouraged to join the ASTI in my first year teaching in St Mary's by the school steward, who is a former ASTI President. I soon became involved in my Branch – Dublin North West – which has two past Presidents, Louis O'Flaherty and Bernadine O'Sullivan, and many active members. Having achieved permanency after ten years I got more involved, acting as school steward, branch officer and as a member of CEC. Serving on the Equal Opportunities Committee, which I chaired for four years, was a very valuable learning experience. Equality issues are central to many of the ASTI's current issues and this is an area in which I have always been deeply interested.

#### The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are...

- to restore equality of pay and conditions for all our members by re-establishing the Common Basic Salary Scale, and qualification allowances for post-2012 entrants, reinstating post structures, and continuing to tackle the casualisation of our profession
- ensuring that the Junior Cert reforms are educationally sound and that the ASTI's strongly held policy on assessment is maintained
- to protect teachers' rights to a manageable workload and a safe and healthy working environment and
- supporting school stewards, who promote and organise the ASTI in their schools.

**People may not know ...** I teach through sign language in class every day. Some weekends I dabble in a bit of sheep farming and water divining in Co. Wicklow!



Mark Walshe

**Position:** Standing Committee representative for Region 17: Dublin North East, Fingal  
**School:** St Finian's Community College, Swords, Dublin

#### I got involved because...

As a new entrant in 2004 it quickly became apparent to me that casualisation was a real problem in the teaching profession and I felt that the union was not taking the issue seriously. I got more heavily involved because I was unhappy with the decision to ballot members on the Croke Park Agreement a second time.

#### The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are...

1. To break with social 'partnership'. National agreements have emasculated the union, severely limiting the possibility of taking action to protect and improve teachers' pay and conditions. Lansdowne Road is just the latest proposed 'deal', which does nothing to address any of the issues of concern to teachers – such as the slashing of new entrant salary scales and allowances. Instead, Lansdowne seeks to further entrench the unsustainable Croke Park hours and the extended S&S scheme.
2. To resist the neoliberal turn in post-primary education. School self-evaluation, the Literacy & Numeracy Strategy and the Junior Cycle are an integrated set of policy initiatives designed to start the process of devolving responsibility for the 'performance' of the education system from the State to individual schools. Based on the experience in other countries such as England and Scotland, this process is likely to lead to the bureaucratisation of teaching and learning, standardised testing, increasing levels of monitoring and surveillance, and ultimately school league tables. This will have a hugely damaging effect on students, teachers and the overall system.

**People may not know...** I have been one of the most outspoken members of the ASTI for over a decade and am delighted my views are appearing in this magazine.

# Government proposals on pension restoration

Retired secondary teachers can access Minister Howlin’s statement on the phased pension restoration for retired public servants on the RSTA website ([www.rsta.ie](http://www.rsta.ie)).

These proposals are a step in the right direction but there is some distance to travel. This is a phased restoration of pension over three years, not an increase in pension, and as new taxes and charges are applied more demands will be made on pensioner income. The officers of the RSTA greatly appreciate the considered hearing they received from the officers of the ASTI regarding this issue, as the RSTA needs the support of the union for representation.

Once again, the RSTA appeals to retired secondary teachers to join the Association and to encourage their retired colleagues to join, in order to help to further the cause. All retired teachers must play their part in this campaign. The more members join the Association the stronger its voice, and the more effective its representation will be in the Alliance of Retired Public Servants.

## RSTA Membership Application/Renewal

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

Annual Subscription €24. Payment options:

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

**PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO:**

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

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS using black or blue pen.

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*(Name of Member’s Bank)*

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I hereby authorise and request you to DEBIT my account.

Bank Account No:  National Sort Code (NSC):

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

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

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

Member’s Name & RSTA Branch:

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

Member’s Signature:  Date:

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

## World's Largest Lesson

Education International and UNICEF are inviting all teachers in Ireland to participate in teaching 'The World's Largest Lesson' during the week of September 27, 2015.

All around the world, teachers will be taking part in this initiative to communicate the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations to their students. These new SDGs will replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of targets to focus international development efforts around eight key issues for the years 2000-2015. The primary aim of these goals was to halve extreme poverty by 2015. This target was met in 2010. The MDGs led to unprecedented global action, and have resulted in extraordinary progress in areas like primary education, infant mortality, access to clean drinking water, and the battle against HIV/AIDS and malaria.

The SDGs will be launched on September 25, and are based on eight key themes: poverty; health and well-being; education; skills and jobs; a just world; sustainability; the environment; and, global consciousness.

As the people most affected by them, it is critical that young people are aware of the SDGs and are part of the process to achieve them. Education International and UNICEF are asking teachers from around the world to teach a lesson about the new SDGs during the week of September 27, and to ensure that your students are aware of the goals and can begin to contribute to their achievement.

Visit [www.tes.co.uk/worldslargestlesson/](http://www.tes.co.uk/worldslargestlesson/) to find out more about how you can teach your students about the SDGs, and to access lesson plans on them shared by teachers from all over the world.

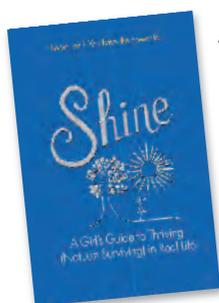
## Historical poster on Munster history

A new poster, which gives a detailed history of the Munster region between 1155 and 1607, has been published by Gerald O'Carroll, a former history teacher in Limerick VEC. Gerald was inspired by research for his book on the Earls of Desmond. Each dated entry combines local history with Irish, English and European history at the same time period. The poster deliberately includes non-military/non-political entries: poetry and manuscripts, marriage settlements which marked treaties between rival septes, and evidence of women's lives appear to telling effect. It also uses native Irish sources, as well as Norman and English sources. The poster is available from bookshops in Limerick and by contacting Gerald O'Carroll at [geraldocarroll@eircom.net](mailto:geraldocarroll@eircom.net) or on 086-351 9635.

## ASTI members' new book to help girls thrive

ASTI members Mary Doherty and Siobhan Hackett have written a book aimed at helping girls to navigate their teenage years. Using their experience as teachers and counsellors, and with feedback from past and present students, they have written *Shine: A Girl's Guide to Thriving (Not Just Surviving) in Real Life*. Aimed at

future 'movers and shakers', it gives girls tips on everything from bullying and self-esteem to relationships and body confidence, and helps them to be strong, confident and independent. Published by Hachette, *Shine* is available in bookshops now.



## Former ASTI member publishes new poetry

Former ASTI member James Lawless, who taught in St Vincent's Secondary School in Dublin, has published his latest book of poetry, *Noise and Sound Reflections*, prompted by living most of his life in an urban environment. James' poetry and prose have won many awards, including the Scintilla Welsh Open Poetry Competition, the WOW award, a Biscuit International Prize for short stories, the Cecil Day Lewis Award and a Hennessey award nomination for emerging fiction. Two of his stories were also shortlisted for the Willesden (2007) and Bridport prizes (2014). He is the author of five novels, a book of children's stories, a poetry collection, *Rus in Urbe*, and a study of modern poetry, *Clearing the Tangled Wood: Poetry as a Way of Seeing the World*. *Noise and Sound Reflections* is available on [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) for €5 and on kindle for €2.99.

## GOAL Jersey Day 2015

GOAL's biggest fundraiser for schools, GOAL Jersey Day, is taking place on October 9, 2015. Goal Jersey Day is an annual event that involves people from across Ireland wearing their favourite sports jersey for the day, and making a contribution to GOAL's work in the developing world. Working in 18 countries globally, GOAL is helping some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people. Last year, funds raised from GOAL Jersey Day were crucial to GOAL's response to the Ebola crisis in West Africa. To find out more about Goal Jersey Day visit [www.goalglobal.org](http://www.goalglobal.org).

WHAT JERSEY WILL YOU BE WEARING?

GOAL

All proceeds will go directly to GOAL's work in the developing world

Sign up to be part of this year's fun :  
[jerseyday@goal.ie](mailto:jerseyday@goal.ie) / 01 280 9779

9th October

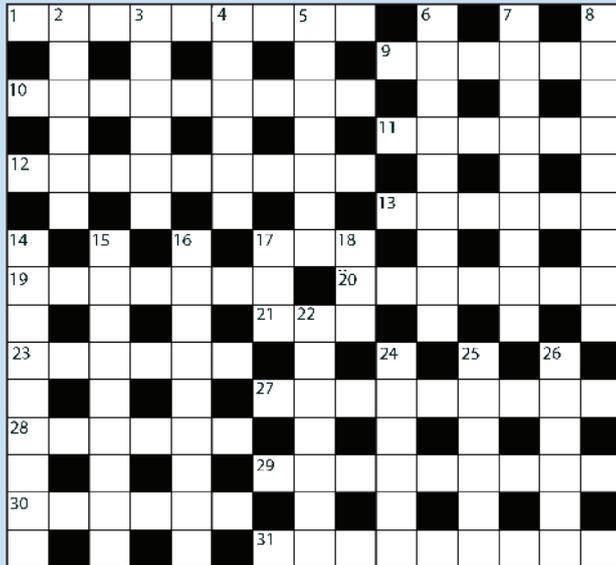


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ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 1504

The winner will receive €200

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



Name

School

Address

ASTI Branch

Entries to: ASTIR Crossword No. 1504, Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, October 16, 2015

CLUES ACROSS:

- 1 Máire is the ASTI President (2,7)
- 9 Could be a sharer in an All Day Breakfast? (6)
- 10 Musical compositions could bring tears to the poet (9)
- 11 Faux pas (6)
- 12 I'd upset a client all the same (9)
- 13 Zodiac sign (6)
- 17 A task for a paragon of patience! (3)
- 19 The seaman and I are subject to memory loss (7)
- 20 Just (7)
- 21 The bonnet might have this meshed fabric (3)
- 23 Morose and moody (6)
- 27 You'll need this to work out your pedigree (9)
- 28 Fixate (6)
- 29 See 14 down
- 30 Warn or be of limited width (6)
- 31 See 17 down

CLUES DOWN:

- 2 Hold back – I'm getting deep in trouble (6)
- 3 That's her mixed up son with the longlegs (6)
- 4 Reach, achieve or accomplish (6)
- 5 Bombast (7)
- 6 Where Irish is the main spoken language (9)
- 7 A disaster that may cost a packet! (9)
- 8 Suggestions, offers (9)
- 14 down and 29 across: Reached from Croke Park via Haddington Road! (9,9)
- 15 Pen this unquestionably at last (9)
- 16 Is a person to be subjected to a slanderous insinuation? (9)
- 17 down and 31 across: She's the Minister! (3,1'8)
- 18 Maybe the wager is here? (3)
- 22 Emer gestures as she comes into view (7)
- 24 Disclose, divulge (6)
- 25 Past pupils in Rome (6)
- 26 It may be hidden! (6)

Solution to ASTIR Crossword No. 1503

Across

- 1. Pythagoras
- 6. Soap
- 10. Dames
- 11. Spadework
- 12. Complete
- 13. Rider
- 15. Amadeus
- 17. Stamina
- 19. Elysium
- 21. Lissome
- 22. Outdo
- 24. Deadlock
- 27. Resources
- 28. Tolls
- 29. Elan
- 30. Amanuensis

Down

- 1. Pods
- 2. Temporary
- 3. Aesop
- 4. Oysters
- 5. Azaleas
- 7. Ovoid
- 8. Pokerfaced
- 9. Retreats
- 14. Racecourse
- 16. Epilogue
- 18. Isosceles
- 20. Modicum
- 21. Liaison
- 23. Tosca
- 25. Lithe
- 26. Asks

DID YOU MISS?

Mentoring for new teachers – the Droichead Pilot Programme  
 'FEMPI must go': ASTI tells ICTU Biennial Conference  
 Teachers achievements honoured

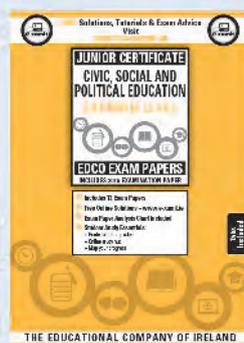
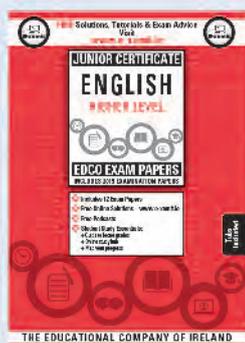
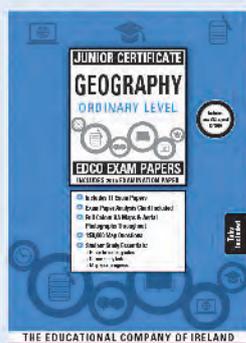
12  
14  
18

Congratulations

Congratulations to the winner of  
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 Road, Waterford. Waterford  
 Branch member.

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