

To: Each School Steward

Dear School Steward,

At the commencement of another school year, I would like to thank you for your commitment to serving the ASTI in your capacity as School Steward. This service is of enormous value to ASTI and is greatly appreciated.

Every school year brings new challenges and some that have been around for too long now remain to be resolved. A successful end to the on-going new-entrant lesser paid teachers' pay campaign and resolution of Junior Cycle issues particularly come to mind.

The review of Leaving Certificate looms large and the bedding down of the new Posts of Responsibility structure are further issues that will undoubtedly feature in a major way this year.

ASTI will continue to strive to achieve the best possible outcomes for our members on all these matters. Protection and enhancement of the terms and conditions of employment of all our members will always be our *raison d'être*.

Pay and Conditions:

As members will be aware, there were a number of events over the past year that frame the scenario for developments in the coming period. The new entrants' salary measure agreed in September 2018 was another in a line of initiatives seeking to bring this sorry saga to a close. However, there is still a distance to travel before pay equality is restored. As I have often said before and will continue to do so, we must never relent until this abominable stain on our profession is removed.

In tandem, the current public service pay agreement (PSSA) is heading into its latter stages. Indeed, it is arguable that it has been terminally damaged as a result of the nurses dispute earlier this year and industrial action by some other unions since then. It is clear that there will be developments in the coming months at national level to deal with the way forward on this matter. ASTI will be to the forefront, seeking to ensure that the particular interests of our members are advanced and protected.

Senior Cycle review:

NCCA has been organising a series of events as part of their Senior Cycle review over the past year. As part of that process a public consultation on the Senior Cycle review is now open. They are inviting feedback on the areas of development from the review to date contained in the interim report and the accompanying consultation document.

Individuals and organisations can provide feedback through an online survey, by making a written submission or by attending a regional focus group meeting. ASTI will be fully participating to ensure that the voice of our members are heard.

Details of how to make a submission and links to all documentation can be accessed online at: <https://www.ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-review/consultation>

I would ask you to ensure that ASTI members in your school familiarise themselves with this process and participate to the maximum possible extent. It is vital that the voice of teachers is heard.

Junior Cycle:

Members will be aware that there has been on-going talks under the auspices of the Junior Cycle Implementation Committee, at which ASTI, TUI and the Department of Education and Skills are represented, to seek to resolve the impasse regarding the holding of Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings in schools.

It remains the case that some schools have continually proposed that the meetings would be held entirely outside normal school tuition hours. This was at variance with the terms of Circular Letter 0015/2017, the Appendix to the Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation (July 2015) and indeed a statement of clarification provided to ASTI by the Department of Education and Skills in December 2015.

This work has not yet concluded. It is to be hoped that a final resolution can be achieved without any further action becoming necessary.

Recruitment and Ballots:

You will be in receipt of recruitment material for new members under separate copy. This is vital work to sustain the lifeblood of our union. It is important that these members are recruited without delay and added to our database in Head Office so that such members may participate fully as ASTI members, particularly in future ballots. In addition, if you have an existing ASTI member or members transferring into your school this year, please remind them to notify Head Office at membership@asti.ie so that we can ensure they can vote in their new school.

Training and Communications:

Information on the annual training courses provided by ASTI to school stewards has been sent under separate copy. ASTI would encourage you to participate. Paid substitution costs will be provided.

ASTI provides information using various media and platforms. In addition to ASTIR and Nuacht regular news items and updates are to be found on our website and social media platforms. Please keep an eye out for timely information.

Finally, I want to wish you and all your colleagues every success in your endeavours throughout the year.

Regards,



Kieran Christie
General Secretary

August, 2019