

Pay and Junior Cycle reform main focus of Annual Convention

Junior Cycle reform, pay and working conditions will dominate Convention 2013.

Junior Cycle reform

More than 320 schools, representing over 10,000 ASTI members, participated in the ASTI consultation on the Minister Ruairi Quinn's *A Framework for Junior Cycle* document. While many believe that aspects of the Framework are worthwhile, members are resoundingly stating that the Minister's plan to remove the State exam and State certificate is a retrograde step that is fundamentally unfair to students and threatens to lower standards.

Four motions on Junior Cycle will be debated on Tuesday, April 2nd during a day dedicated to Junior Cycle reform. The motions will highlight the need for the Minister to immediately defer his reform plans and consult with teachers; the threat to equality and fairness posed by the plans; and, the need for resources and investment in reform. A motion asserting the ASTI's policy of teachers not assessing their students for State examinations will also be tabled.

LRC proposals - urgent motion

An urgent motion from ASTI Standing Committee calling on members to reject the LRC proposals will be debated at this year's Annual Convention.

New and non-permanent teachers

Improving job security and enhancing conditions for new and non-permanent teachers are two other key concerns at this year's Annual Convention.

Delegates will debate motions calling for:

- a restoration of the pre-2011 common basic scale for all teachers;
- the reinstatement of allowances for all teachers;
- improvements in CID hours and eligibility; and,
- unemployed, non-permanent and serving teachers be prioritised for State Exams positions.

A full list of motions for this year's Annual Convention can be found on pages 6 – 7.

Watch key speeches from ASTI Annual Convention Live by Webcast on Tuesday, April 2 from 4.30 pm.

Ballot on Public Sector Proposals – rejection recommended

ASTI Standing Committee has agreed to put the Labour Relations Commission's public sector proposals to a ballot of ASTI members with a recommendation to reject.

A Special Nuacht will soon issue to provide members with full information.

News from Convention

ASTI Annual Convention takes place from April 1st to 4th. As well as attracting media coverage, reports from Convention will be available at www.asti.ie, on Facebook and on Twitter.

Inside this issue:

Convention 2013 2-7

Junior cycle reform 8

Convention 2013

Key events

Monday April 1

Election of President and Vice-President 2013-2014

Debate on motions

Tuesday April 2

Junior cycle debate

Address by ASTI President

Address by Minister for Education and Skills

Address by Fr Peter McVerry

Wednesday April 3

Election of Trustees and Honorary Treasurer

General Secretary's report

Debate on motions

Thursday April 4

Debate on motions

Key topics

Junior Cycle reform

Contracts and teaching hours

Pay and allowances

Student welfare

School resources

Convention 2013

Convention 2013 will be held in Wexford from Monday, 1st to Thursday 4th of April. Almost 500 delegates will attend the event in Whites Hotel, Wexford.

Candidates for election

Each year delegates elect a new ASTI President and Vice-President. This year's candidates are:

Candidate for President

Sally Maguire

Nominating branches:

Athlone, Carbery, Carlow, Carrick-on-Shannon, Cavan, Clare, Cork North, Cork South Paddy Mulcahy, Desmond, Donegal, Drogheda Sean Higgins, Dublin North Central, Dublin North West, Dublin South 1, Dublin South 2, Dublin South Central, Dublin South County, Dublin South West, Dundalk, Dungarvan, Fermoy, Fingal, Galway, Kerry, Kildare, Laois, Limerick South, Monaghan, Mullingar, Nenagh, Roscrea, Sligo, Stillorgan, Tipperary, Tuam, Tullamore, Waterford, West Mayo, West Waterford, Wexford Tony Boland, Wicklow.



Candidates for Vice-President

Michael Barry

Nominating Branches

Cork North, Cork South Paddy Mulcahy, Desmond, East Cork, Fermoy, Roscrea, Waterford, West Waterford.

Elaine Devlin

Nominating Branches

Cavan, Dundalk, Drogheda Sean Higgins, Monaghan, Tipperary.

Philip Irwin

Nominating Branches

Athlone, Carbery, Carlow, Dublin North East, Dublin North West, Dublin South 1, Dublin South 2, Dublin South Central, Dublin South County, Dublin South West, Dungarvan, Fingal, Iar-Thuaisceart, Laois, New Ross, West Mayo, Wexford Tony Boland.

Candidate profiles

Michael Barry

Personal profile

- Born: Shanagarry, Co. Cork
- Educated: Midleton CBS
- Degree in History and Greek and Roman Civilisation from UCC
- Currently teaching in St Patrick's College, Gardiners Hill, Cork (1982-present)
- Member of Cork North Branch since 1982
- School steward
- Have held various Branch Officer positions including Honorary Branch Equality Officer, Honorary Branch Secretary and Honorary Branch Chairperson
- Member of CEC
- Member of CEC Appeals Sub-Committee
- ASTI Representative on NCCA (Classics)
- Former Chairperson of Equal Opportunity Committee
- Former Honorary National Organiser
- ASTI Nominee to Teaching Council
- Standing Committee Representative, Region 7

Key issues

- Junior cert reform
- Restoration of a single salary scale for all teachers
- Certified sick leave for critical illness
- Croke Park II – ongoing
- Overemphasis on measuring and monitoring of teachers
- Teacher supply
- Curriculum reform
- Continue to highlight the positive impact of teachers in Ireland
- Make the ASTI a more visible trade union at grass roots level
- Better job security for casual and contract teachers

The future

- In line with the Standing Committee decision, I would urge a strong no vote in the upcoming ballot.
- We must continue to fight the current cuts in education no matter how long it takes.



Michael Barry

Candidate for Vice-President

Candidate profiles



Elaine Devlin

Candidate for Vice-President

Elaine Devlin

Austerity and Change:

We face pay cuts; we face unruly students; we face inspectors visiting our schools; we face school self-evaluation; we face endless administrative duties; we face huge pressure from the exam system; we face longer working days for less pay; we face a general public who often diminish our work; we face curricular reform that is being imposed without any consultation with us; we need to make sure that the voice of the classroom teacher is heard loud and clear. Schools are on their knees and cannot take any more.

Priorities

We must work to improve the pay and conditions of new entrants to our profession. We need to continue to attract the brightest and the best to teaching. We are proud of our profession and want to remain so. We must achieve appropriate pay rates.

We must protect the PTR. To do this we must argue that in our inclusive classrooms less students means better learning outcomes.

We need to protect pensions.

We must modernise our Rules so that they reflect our membership. Over 30% of our members do not have a full time job. We must work at encouraging these members to be active in ASTI.

We must stop the casualisation of our profession.

We must be courageous in the face of increasing pressure to do so much more for less.

Work in ASTI:

I have been a member of Dundalk Branch since I started teaching. I was Chairperson for a period and then in 2008 I joined Standing Committee. Since then I have represented members in Louth, Cavan and Monaghan where I have been privileged to work with great people. I am an ASTI nominee on the Teaching Council. I help members who experience stress, have CID or redeployment difficulties, who have registration difficulties or need advice in other areas. Sometimes members just need an ear.

Personal profile:

I am originally from Dromahaire, Co. Leitrim but now live in Monasterboice, Co. Louth. I am married to Ciaran, also a teacher and a TUI activist. We have three children. Kate is in college while Jack and Leah are both in secondary school. I am a Maths teacher in De La Salle College, Dundalk. I am an independent thinker who has good judgement. I am dynamic and want to be a respected and influential voice for ASTI. I have the courage to face the difficulties ahead.

Candidate profiles

Philip Irwin

Profile

- Born in Cashel, Co. Tipperary
- Married to Sheilann, with two children, Johnjoe (16) and Liam (11)
- My father Joe was Chairman of the Tipperary Branch and CEC member when the ASTI Convention was held in Cashel in 1966.
- Teaching at the High School, Rathgar, Dublin 6 since 1986 (History, Geography, CSPE , TY Co-ordinator and involved in cross-country and Athletics)
- Currently school steward and CEC representative for Dublin South 1.
- ASTI Representative on NCCA. Council and 2nd representative for NCCA. subject group for CSPE.
- I have served as Standing Committee Rep., Vice-Chair, Secretary and organiser for the Dublin South 1 Branch.
- Member of the History Teachers Association of Ireland and currently National Vice Chairperson of the Association of CSPE Teachers.

My policies

Last year I highlighted the necessity for teachers to stand firm for ourselves and the education system in this time of national crisis – this remains my priority.

Croke Park II?

The issues I have include:

- The abolition of the **Supervision and Substitution (S&S)** payment and the imposition of unpaid work on all teachers is enough in itself to vote NO.
- The stalling of increments for all teachers and the **imposition of paycuts** on teachers earning more than €65,000 and on Principals and Deputy Principals is part of an unfair targeting of public servants when this cut should be spread across society through general taxation.
- The implications of the proposed '**elimination of allowances**' as noted in the preface and paragraph 2.29 of the Proposals is a serious concern.
- The introduction of **performance management** systems at individual level for teachers is unacceptable and represents a further deterioration in working conditions.
- The proposals for increases for **new teachers** really only represent compensation for the loss of S&S payments while **casualisation** of the profession continues.

Junior cycle changes

- I see the **removal of State certification** and the **imposition of school-based assessment** as a running down of the education system evident in Minister Quinn's Framework for Junior Cycle.
- We in the ASTI have been too slow in developing **our response** – I hope that this will change after the Wexford Convention.
- In our fight to retain the best qualities of the current broad and balanced Junior Cert, we must keep an eye on threats to the **Leaving Cert** as a high-stakes exam of integrity and public confidence.

Asserting our professionalism

We must seek to:

- Defend teaching as a lifelong occupation and therefore combat **casualisation** and give new teachers a proper start.
- Return **Guidance** provision in second level schools to its proper status
- Resist inappropriate '**drive-by inspections**' which tarnish the Inspectorate.
- Campaign for an end to the moratorium on '**in-school management**' posts which undermines the capacity of schools to function properly.
- Oppose cuts to our **pensions** as a pension is deferred pay.

In these times we must individually and collectively assert the importance of our role for the well-being of our students and for national recovery.



Philip Irwin

Candidate for Vice-President

Convention motions 2013

Committees for election 2013

Education Committee
9 members

Equal Opportunities Committee
9 members

Steering Committee
5 members

Investment Committee
4 members

Rules Committee
5 members

Business of CEC Sub-Committee
3 members

Convention 2013 will also elect:

ASTI Trustees
ASTI Honorary Treasurer

Convention Dinner

A dinner for delegates will be held on the night of Tuesday, 5th April in Whites Hotel. Tickets are priced at €45 and will be on sale in the Main Foyer, Whites Hotel from 2.30 pm to 3.30 pm on Tuesday 2nd April. If your branch reserves a table of 10 before March 22nd, it will cost only €350 - a saving of €100. Contact info@asti.ie, reference 'Annual Convention Dinner'.

JUNIOR CYCLE REVIEW MOTONS

Consultation and Capacity - Motion A

Given that schools are struggling to cope with the impossible demands being placed on them by successive Department initiatives, and recognising the damaging impact these are having on teachers' physical and mental health, particularly in the context of on-going resources and staffing cutbacks, this Convention demands that the Minister shelve the implementation of the Junior Cycle Framework proposals and calls on him to engage in real and meaningful dialogue with teachers so that necessary changes to the Junior Cycle programme, in which teachers can have full confidence, can be designed and introduced. (Wicklow, Standing Committee, Dublin South Central, Kildare, Tuam)

Resources and Investment - Motion B

The ASTI demands that the introduction of any new Junior Cycle proposals will not be initiated until such time as a comprehensive and fully-costed implementation strategy, in which teachers can have full confidence, is put in place; this strategy to include substantial investment in the provision of and time for teacher CPD and other essential resources. (Standing Committee)

Treating our Students Equally- Motion C

In light of the role that education plays in promoting social cohesion and inclusion and in providing for students of all abilities to reach their full potential, the ASTI opposes the implementation of the Junior Cycle Framework as currently proposed as it will lead to a widening of social divisions in our education system both at local level and national level. (Standing Committee)

Fair and Transparent Assessment - Motion D

That the ASTI re-affirms its policy of not assessing our own students for state examinations. This Convention demands the Department of Education & Skills abolishes its proposals for teachers to assess their own students for the Junior Cycle Review and gives responsibility for all assessment marking and grading for this exam, to the State Examinations Commission. Given the importance of maintaining the confidence of students, parents, teachers and the general public in the quality and standards of the education system, and in order to maintain the role of teachers as advocates for their students, the ASTI demands the revision of the Junior Cycle Programme must have credible, independent and external assessment which must include the retention of state certification. (Dublin South County, Standing Committee, Waterford, Dublin North West, Wicklow and New Ross)

MOTION 21 – POSTS OF RESPONSIBILITY

That the moratorium on posts of responsibility be lifted so that schools can still continue to function without undue burdens and pressures being placed on teachers without permanent contracts of employment. (Fermoy)

MOTION 35 – CONDITIONS OF WORK - COMPOSITE MOTION

a) That the ASTI seek to ensure that in any negotiations with the Department of Education and Skills that there is no increase in the 22 hours teaching time; and, b) That the ASTI seeks to ensure that in any negotiations there is no increase in the non teaching hours of teachers as negotiated in the Croke Park Agreement. (Athlone, Dublin South Central)

MOTION 106 – ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION

That a Safety, Health & Welfare Committee of 6 be elected biannually at Annual Convention:

- to review the implementation of Safety, Health & Welfare legislation in second level schools.
- to support school Safety, Health & Welfare coordinators and officers. (Wexford Tony Boland)

Convention motions 2013

COMPOSITE MOTION (2, 11, 6) - PAY AND ALLOWANCES

That the ASTI demands that all teachers are paid using the pre 2011 common basic scale and that all teachers, including new entrants, have the same pay, allowances and conditions. (Stillorgan, Galway, Dublin North West)

MOTION 28- CONTRACTS OF INDEFINITE DURATION

That the ASTI seeks that teachers approaching eligibility for CIDs should be allocated the maximum hours possible. (Stillorgan)

MOTION 29- CONTRACTS OF INDEFINITE DURATION

That the ASTI will endeavour to attain recognition of all hours served in a school towards a CID. (Dungarvan)

Amendment:

Amend Motion 29 by replacing the words 'a school' by 'all schools' so that the motion would now read: 'That the ASTI will endeavour to attain recognition of all hours served in all schools towards a CID'.

MOTION 23 – EXAMINERS AND SUPERINTENDENTS – COMPOSITE MOTION

That the ASTI negotiate with the State Examinations Commission that the procedure for appointment of examination superintendents and examiners be reviewed so that in making appointments to these positions priority will be given to unemployed teachers, part-time teachers, non-permanent teachers and serving teachers generally and that the practice of employing retired teachers to these positions will be phased out over the next three years. (Tuam, Wicklow, Galway)

MOTION 93 – EDUCATION

That the ASTI carry out a review of the whole inspection process in light of teachers' experiences of the ever increasing number and type of inspections. (Carbery)

MOTION 44 – STUDENT WELFARE – COMPOSITE MOTION

That out of concern for the welfare of students and the whole school community, the ASTI urgently seek the immediate restoration of the ex quota guidance allocation. (Stillorgan, Carbery, Tipperary) AP

MOTION 4 – SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES

That the ASTI opposes the abolition of allowances for teacher upskilling and that the ASTI vigorously pursues the reinstatement of qualification allowances for all teachers in order to maintain equality and fairness in the teaching profession. (Clare, Kildare)

MOTION 45 – SCHOOL RESOURCES

This Convention acknowledges the serious deterioration of behavioural standards and discipline in schools and calls on the Department of Education and Skills to reverse cuts in the number of teachers in guidance, resource provision and general subjects, for pupils most in need. (Dublin South County)

MOTION 32 –TEACHER SUPPLY – COMPOSITE MOTION

That in the light of the current high unemployment figures for teachers and acknowledging that the regulated supply of teachers is central in ensuring quality in the teaching profession, the ASTI engages in discussions with the relevant education partners, including the Department of Education & Skills and the Teaching Council, that review the role of private and on-line colleges in the training of new teachers, with the objective of securing agreement on a model of regulation of teacher supply. (Sligo, Dublin South County, Tipperary)

Urgent Motion

At its meeting on March 7th, Standing Committee adopted the following motion to be put forward to Steering Committee as an urgent Standing Committee for Convention 2013:

“That this convention calls on all ASTI members to vote to reject the LRC proposals on public service pay.”

ASTI consultation gives voice to teachers' junior cycle views

Most teachers believe that elements of the education Minister's Junior Cycle reform plans have the potential to improve learning outcomes, but could also undermine educational standards in schools, according to the findings of ASTI consultation with teachers published earlier this month.

Over 320 second-level schools, representing an estimated 10,000 teachers, participated in the consultation, which followed the announcement last October of radical plans to reform the Junior Cycle and the Junior Certificate examination by the Minister for Education and Skills Ruairi Quinn.

Teachers were shocked when the Minister announced his proposals. Without any consultation with the teaching profession, the Minister announced that he planned to abolish two cornerstones of second-level education – external assessment and a State certificate at the end of Junior Cycle. The Minister's plans depart in a number of significant ways from the advice to the Minister from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

Fearing that education standards might be at risk, the ASTI set in motion a comprehensive consultation process with all its members to gauge the views of those best placed to offer their analysis – teachers on the ground, who engage with students and school life every day.

Key concerns of teachers

The ASTI consultation exercise was the first opportunity that teachers had to give their views on the Minister's radical reform plans for Junior Cycle.

The consultation found that teachers believe that the Minister's Framework has the potential to improve learning outcomes for students. However, teachers resoundingly stated that the Minister's plan to remove the State exam and State Certificate at Junior Cycle is a retrograde step that is fundamentally unfair to students and threatens to lower standards.

Teachers who participated in the consultation voiced grave concerns about the impact of the Minister's Framework in its current form on standards in education, equity in the second-level education system, and the nature of student-teacher relationships. A number of teachers noted that, if implemented, the Framework would result in a minority of students leaving school without any State certificate, despite having completed the Junior Cycle.

Recent international evidence shows that when teachers are involved in the development and implementation of education reform, the reform is more likely to be successful for that country. It is vital that the Minister begins dialogue with teachers on Junior Cycle reform.

Teachers are also concerned that the Minister's far reaching proposals are not accompanied by an implementation plan and resources for schools.

Read the full report at www.asti.ie.

More than 320 school meetings, representing over 10,000 ASTI members, were held around the country to discuss the potential impacts to the Minister's plans. Views were reported back to ASTI Head Office.

Teachers' key concerns

Consultation with teachers is vital and has been overlooked

School based assessment presents equality concerns

Teachers assessing their own students will damage the education service

Removal of external assessment removes consistency and threatens standards

Removal of State Certificate is unfair to students and diminishes student achievement

Schools' capacity to implement reform questioned

Shaping your union

A Special Convention will debate recommendations arising from the Review of ASTI Structures carried out by the ASTI Officers. Delegates from branches all over the country will attend the Special Convention on April 26 and 27.

ASTI Scholarship applications now open

The ASTI offers an annual scholarship of €4,000 to assist ASTI members in undertaking further third-level studies. Any ASTI member who is currently in service, or who is on paid study leave, is eligible to apply. Find out more at www.asti.ie.