

ASTI Standing Committee urges 'NO' vote

ASTI Standing Committee is calling on members to vote 'No' to the LRC proposals on the extension to the Public Sector Agreement (Croke Park Agreement).

- ◆ As public sector workers have already taken a 14% reduction in pay and have delivered additional work and substantial savings under the Croke Park Agreement, the fairer way for the Government to achieve additional savings is through a more progressive tax system, as previously proposed by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.
- ◆ Public sector workers are subject to all of the taxes and charges paid by all workers including income taxes, universal social charge, property tax etc.
- ◆ The Croke Park Agreement gave a commitment to no further pay cuts. Members are angry after having in 2010 committed to delivering their obligations under the Croke Park Agreement, including an additional 33 hours annually. In doing so, they believed that their pay and conditions would be protected for the lifetime of the Croke Park Agreement which concludes in 2014.
- ◆ The feedback from classroom teachers and school leaders is that they are overburdened as a result of cutbacks and the loss of key personnel and are offended by a proposal that their pay be cut and their working conditions further eroded at this time.
- ◆ The proposed abolition of the Supervision and Substitution Scheme in schools would have a disproportionate negative impact on low-paid part-time and temporary teachers.
- ◆ Standing Committee noted that a number of aspects of the LRC proposals have not been clarified and that it would be unacceptable to ask members to sign up to a deal without knowing exactly how it would impact on them. There is no certainty about what happens in 2016.
- ◆ Previously public sector agreements have been interrupted/ changed by governments.

ASTI Standing Committee is calling on members to vote 'No' to the LRC proposals

Post Your Vote Early

Closing date for return of ballot papers is

5.30 p.m., Friday, April 12.

Please post your vote early to ensure delivery on time.

All ASTI members are urged to vote in this important ballot on teachers' pay and conditions.

Standing Committee recommends that you

VOTE NO

to the Labour Relations Commission's Proposals.

YOUR PAY – YOUR CONDITIONS – YOUR VOTE

The full text of the LRC proposals is available at www.asti.ie

Further clarifications will be posted on the ASTI website as they are received

Ballot papers will issue from Wednesday, March 20th and must be returned to arrive in ASTI Head Office by Friday April 12th at 5.30pm.

LEGACY ALLOWANCES

Legacy allowances outstanding from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Review of Allowances will be dealt with in accordance with Labour Court Rec 20448. These allowances include Gaeltacht, Island, Teaching through Irish, and Secretary to BOM. See LRC proposals 2.29 (reproduced on page 7 of this Nuacht).

The Proposals

The Government had stated that it would be cutting €1 billion from the public pay and pensions bill over the years 2013, 2014, and 2015.

Following talks between the public sector unions and the Government side, facilitated by the Labour Relations Commission, the LRC put forward proposals setting out a range of measures to put into effect the Government's decision regarding the €1 billion reduction.

The proposed agreement will run from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2016. The Government has stated that pay and other issues covered in the proposals will not be revisited during the lifetime of the agreement. However, the proposals state that "in the event that the commitments or assumptions reaffirmed under the Agreement must be revisited, the Parties will meet to discuss the circumstances that had arisen and the implications of the Agreement" (1.14).

INCREMENTS

- ◆ If salary is less than €35,000, the increment due in 2013 would be paid but there would be one three-month freeze in payment of the next increment (due in **2014**).
- ◆ If salary is between €35,000 and €65,000, the increment due in 2013 would be paid but there would be two three-month freezes of the next increments (due in **2014** and again in **2015**).
- ◆ If salary is greater than €65,000, there would be a freeze of increments for 3 years with effect from **1 July 2013**.

HIGHER PAY CUTS

The proposal is to introduce pay cuts for those earning more than €65,000.

- ◆ Those earning between €65,000 and €80,000 would have all their earnings reduced by 5.5% (but earnings would not fall below €65,000 as a result of this measure).
- ◆ Earnings between €80,000 and €150,000 would be reduced by 8%
- ◆ Earnings between €150,000 and €185,000 would be reduced by 9%
- ◆ Earnings above €185,000 would be reduced by 10%
- ◆ When calculating earnings for higher pay cuts, payment for S&S will not be included.
- ◆ Where a teacher's pay is being cut and where he/she is also losing the S&S allowance, their earnings will be reduced by the higher amount only.

RECENT GRADUATES

The ASTI sought to have any proposals tabled address the imbalance between those who entered teaching since 2011 and those who entered before that date. The proposals would mean that those who started since 2011 would 'skip' one increment on their new lower salary scales (3rd point for post-2011 and 2nd point for post-Feb-2012 entrants) advancing up the scale a year faster than originally envisaged. Two extra points would be added to the end of the 2012 entrants' scale. The proposed new salary scales for 2011 and 2012 entrants are available on the ASTI website - www.asti.ie.

SUPERVISION AND SUBSTITUTION

The proposals are as follows:

- ◆ Payment for S&S would cease
- ◆ All teachers would be required to participate in unpaid S&S
- ◆ S&S cover would be used to cover all uncertified leave, absence on school business and the first day of certain defined categories of absence: certified sick leave, death in family leave, force majeure leave, and illness in family leave.
- ◆ Teachers would be placed on the substitution rota for five class periods per week and may be required to deliver a maximum of two periods.
- ◆ The annual cap on S&S delivery would increase to 49 hours
- ◆ The weekly cap would increase from 1 hour 30 minutes to 2 hours 15 minutes (this extra 45 minutes may only be used for substitution and not for supervision).

PANEL FOR FIXED-TERM TEACHERS

Subject to the ratification of the LRC proposals, the Department agreed to implement a supplementary panel for permanent positions from the school year 2014/15 for teachers who have had sustained periods of employment with more than one school/ VEC over an extended period of time.

PENSION LEVY

As part of the proposals, the €15,000-€20,000 band rate of pension levy would reduce to 2.5% from 5% - a saving of €125 per annum.

PENSION CALCULATION: GRACE PERIOD

Pension benefits of teachers who retire on or before 31st August 2014 would be calculated on their pre-cut earnings, i.e. based on salary on 30 June 2013.

The full text of the LRC proposals is available at www.asti.ie

Further clarifications will be posted on the ASTI website as they are received

Got a question?

Visit our dedicated LRC Proposals Q&A page at www.asti.ie. If your question is not there, email us and we will add it:
bfitzgerald@asti.ie

During the lifetime of the Agreement, the introduction of performance management systems will be accelerated at the level of the individual in all areas of the Public Service **where they do not currently exist**. These already exist for teachers under the procedures covered by Section 24 of the Education Act.

Retired teachers

Public service pensions in excess of €32,500 will be subject to equivalent measures as apply to the phased pay reductions.

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Ballot arrangements

ASTI members will now be asked to vote to accept or reject the LRC proposals. Ballot papers will be posted to all members at their home addresses from Wednesday, March 20.

The ballot will close at 5.30 p.m. on Friday, April 12th.

It is vital that all members inform themselves about the proposals and exercise their right to vote. Full information – including a comprehensive Q&A section – is on the ASTI website - www.asti.ie.

The ballot paper will ask:

Are you in favour of accepting the Labour Relations Commission's Proposals for a Public Service Agreement (Croke Park II) as issued on 25th February 2013?

You are asked to mark X in the appropriate box, to indicate 'yes' or 'no'.

Standing Committee recommends that you

VOTE NO

to the Labour Relations Commission's Proposals.

YOUR PAY – YOUR CONDITIONS – YOUR VOTE

What teachers have given

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

- Pay cut averaging 6.5% (public sector pay cut)
- Public service pension levy averaging 7.5%
- Non-payment of 3.5% pay increase due in September 2009 under Towards 2016
- Non-payment of a 2.5% pay increase due in September 2010 under Towards 2016
- Inferior pay scale for teachers entering from 2011
- Cut in qualification allowances for teachers entering from December 2011
- Abolition of qualification allowances for teachers entering from February 2012
- A 4% cut in pensions for retired teachers
- Changes in taxation/ levies (e.g. the new Universal Social Charge)
- Inferior pension scheme for teachers entering from January 4, 2013
- An additional 33 hours of non-teaching work per year
- An extra rota period for teachers doing supervision and substitution
- Reduced supervision and substitution payment for teachers entering from 2011
- S&S commitment increased from 37 hours to 49 hours for teachers entering from February 2012
- Dis-improvements to certified and uncertified sick leave arrangements
- Dis-improvements to maternity leave arrangements for teachers
- Abolition of entitlement to tax free maternity benefit; benefit will now be taxed
- Increases in pupil-teacher ratio; fewer teachers in school
- Abolition of ex-quota guidance counsellor provision
- Moratorium on Posts of Responsibility; no promotional opportunities for majority of teachers
- Hundreds of teachers redeployed
- Cuts in capitation funding; continued cuts announced up until 2015
- Visiting teachers for Travellers service abolished
- Withdrawal of many English language teachers
- Removal of 'legacy' disadvantage support teachers from some schools

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Relevant extracts from the Labour Relations Commission (LRC) proposals:

Preamble

.. the Government had resolved to legislate to effect savings in the Public Service pay bill of €1 billion euro by 2015. The primary measures envisaged in such legislation would have included the following:

- Reduction in Overtime Rates from time and half to flat rate
- Reduction in Sunday Premium Payments from double time to Time and a half
- Abolition of Saturday Rate and Twilight Payments
- 3 Year full increment freeze
- Compulsory Exits
- Redeployment to 100K
- Reformed Pension Entitlements for serving staff
- Elimination of Allowances
- Significant Pay Cuts.
- Increase of 5 extra hours for all employees
- A wide range of reform measures across all sectors

The Commission is clear that the alternative to a negotiated outcome is a set of measures designed by Government and delivered through legislation.

Additional Working Hours

2.3

In the case of first and second level teachers, there will be an expanded liability on all teachers to provide cover. The proposed elimination of supervision and substitution payments will allow for additional arrangements for various absences and will provide a further two hours and fifteen minutes in the context of these changes.

Sector Specific Measures

2.18

Education Sector: Supervision and Substitution payments in the Education Sector will be eliminated. There will be an expanded liability on all teachers to provide cover.

Increments and Related Balancing Measures

2.21

For those on salaries below €35,000 (inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay), a three month increment freeze will apply during the Agreement. This freeze will take effect after the next increment is paid with the following increment being awarded in fifteen months rather than twelve, or equivalent if the increment interval is longer.

2.22

For those on salaries between €35,000 and €65,000, inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay, two three-month increment freezes will apply (total of a six month freeze) during the Agreement. As above, this would take effect after the next increment is paid but for two consecutive years there would be a fifteen month period between increment dates.

All ASTI members are urged to vote in this important ballot on teachers' pay and conditions.

2.23

Incremental progression will be suspended for three years for those on salaries of €65,000 and greater, inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay.

2.24

Where an employee's salary (inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay) surpasses €35,000 during the Agreement, a second incremental freeze of three months will apply, in accordance with the arrangements for those on salaries between €35,000 and €65,000, inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay outlined above.

2.25

If a person's salary increases above €65,000 inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay during the Agreement, the pay reduction provisions outlined below will apply.

Higher Remuneration

2.28

In addition to the measures on increments above, and as a means to ensuring broad equity of contribution, the parties note that the Government intends to apply a reduction in pay for those on salaries of €65,000 and greater (inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay) as follows:

| Annualised amount of Remuneration | Reduction |
|--|-----------|
| Any amount up to €80,000 | 5.5% |
| Any amount over €80,000 but not over €150,000 | 8% |
| Any amount over €150,000 but not over €185,000 | 9% |
| Any amount over €185,000 | 10% |

Those on salaries (inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay) greater than €65,000 but less than €100,000 will move back by the appropriate percentage to an off-scale point on their incremental scale.

In relation to impacts at the margin, salaries will not fall below €65,000 as a result of the application of this reduction.

Salaries scales above €100,000 will be reduced by the appropriate percentage based on the application of the reductions above.

Detailed guidance and circulars in relation to the application of the above measures will be prepared.

Other pay related measures: Allowances

2.29

Allowances: There will be full co-operation by the Parties with the follow up to the Government's Allowances Review, taking account of the recommendations contained in Labour Court Recommendation 20448. In accordance with that Recommendation, the Parties agree to enter into central negotiations with a view to reaching a generally applicable agreement on measures by which loss arising from the elimination of pensionable allowances can be ameliorated. Where a dispute arises during the course of this process, the Parties agree to use the agreed industrial relations machinery appropriate to each sector and to be bound by its outcome. *[For teachers, these allowances are Teaching through Irish, Gaeltacht, Island and Secretary to the Board of Management allowances.]*

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Why are we balloting on an extension to the Croke Park Agreement before the Agreement expires?

What are the implications for my salary?

Will I lose my supervision and substitution pension payments?

Find out the answers to these questions and many more at www.asti.ie.

**Your Pay
Your Conditions
Your Vote**

Remember to return your ballot to arrive in Head Office by Friday April 12, at 5.30pm.

Other pay related measures: New entrant salary scales

2.33

New Entrant Salary Scales: In order to address the imbalance between those who entered the public service since 2011 and those who entered before that date, revised incremental salary scales shall be prepared for same grade entrants to each public service sector as necessary to incorporate the revision of salary scales introduced by Decision of Government in January 2011.

Pension-related deduction

2.35

As part of the Agreement, it is agreed to reduce the €15,000-€20,000 band rate to 2.5% from 5% to produce the following Table.

Measure Bands and Rates

| Measure | Bands and Rates | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|--------|
| | €15,000 | Exempt |
| Pension-related deduction | €15,000 - €20,000 | 2.5% |
| | €20,000 - €60,000 | 10.0% |
| | Above €60,000 | 10.5% |

Sectoral arrangements for the application of additional hours

Teachers

Expanded S&S Scheme

At post-primary, hours provided under the expanded S&S scheme will, in addition to usage under the existing scheme, be used to cover all uncertified sick leave absences and official school business absences (currently covered by the allocated fund of €10 million) and the first day of the following absences:

- certified sick leave
- death in family leave
- force majeure leave
- illness in family leave

At primary, hours provided under the expanded S&S scheme will, in addition to current usage, be used to cover all uncertified sick leave absences and the first day of the following absences:

- certified sick leave
- death in family leave
- force majeure leave
- illness in family leave

To ensure the achievement of the required savings, elements of the existing scheme will be amended as follows:

- Participation in the scheme will be compulsory for all teachers and no allowance will be payable.
- The requirement to provide 37 hours per annum will be increased to 49 hours per annum.
- The time currently assigned to substitution and supervision will be increased from one and a half hours in any given week to two and a quarter hours. In this context, the additional time may only be used for substitution.
- The requirement that a teacher be available for three timetabled class periods per week will be increased to five class periods per week.