

Why we are on strike

Teachers do not want to be on strike. They are at the heart of our communities and are fully aware of the ravages of the worst recession in living memory. Teachers and public servants will play their role in overcoming the recession. Above all, there needs to be a sense of fairness in bearing the burden of recovery.

Teachers have already seen their pay cut by 7.5% with the pension levy and, as PAYE workers, we have paid in full the additional taxation levies. The government needs to recognise the money foregone by teachers through the pension levy, the pay freezes and the moratorium on appointments to posts of responsibility. Instead of this recognition, we have threats in relation to our conditions of service including the school day, the school year and attendance requirements.

Teachers work hard

In the current climate, there is scant recognition of the extremely difficult work carried out by second-level teachers. Teaching eight classes of sometimes recalcitrant young people in a day is extremely difficult and stressful work and further burdens should not be imposed on teachers.

Vilification of teachers and public servants

Teachers and public servants have in recent weeks been subject to an unprecedented campaign of vilification and devaluation. Incorrect information about teachers' sick leave, hours of work, duties and responsibilities are repeated ad nauseam by the right wing commentariat.

Over the coming weeks, every attempt will be made to divide members and to criticise union leaders. It was never more important that the ASTI speaks with a unified voice. In this campaign, we are working in close co-ordination with the other teacher unions. Working together we are stronger than working alone. Together we represent 65,000 teachers and lecturers.

Solutions

All disputes are eventually resolved. The Congress of Trade Unions has called on the government to introduce:

- (1) a jobs stimulus package which focuses on the country's poor infrastructure - social and physical;
- (2) the reformation of our tax system to provide a sustainable and progressive taxation base to create the kind of public services our country needs.
- (3) extension of the period of adjustment of the government finances.

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Visit the ASTI website at www.asti.ie for regularly updated information on the strike and campaign

The ASTI, in close co-operation with other unions, has called on the government to engage in meaningful discussions which will lead to a resolution in a fair and reasonable manner that protects teachers.

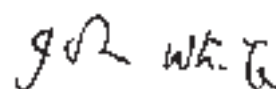
Following a meeting of the Public Services Committee of Congress on November 16th, it was stated on behalf of the Committee in relation to the strike on November 24th that the country is "facing massive disruption of services across health, education, the civil service and local authorities. Yet the government side is showing no visible desire to see if the strike can be avoided through negotiation. This casual approach is leading unions to conclude that the government prefers disruption to a negotiated settlement. More conflict seems inevitable if the government cannot get its act together".

Thanks

Our thanks are due to you, the members, school stewards, branch officers, CEC and Standing Committee for all your work during the ballot. The immediate pre-budget period is likely to be extremely difficult and it is vital that we remain engaged and, above all, united during this campaign.



Joe Moran
President



John White
General Secretary

ASTI members vote overwhelmingly for strike action

Result of Ballot

In a ballot of members, ASTI members have voted overwhelmingly for strike action. In co-ordination with the other public service unions and our colleague teacher unions, the INTO, TUI and IFUT, all members will withdraw their services from second-level schools and colleges on Tuesday, 24th November.

The result of the ASTI ballot as returned by the independent Auditor is as follows:

Total number of papers admitted to count	8,984	99.92%
Number of spoiled ballot papers	(7)	.08%
Total Valid Poll	<u>8,977</u>	<u>100%</u>
Number of "Yes" ballot papers	6,883	76.67%
Number of "No" ballot papers	2,094	23.33%
	<u>8,977</u>	<u>100%</u>

TUI members voted 77% to 23% for industrial action and INTO members voted 79% to 21%. IFUT also has a mandate for industrial action.