

Escalating campaign action

The ASTI is engaged in work-to-rule type action as part of the public service wide campaign against the pay cut, pension levy and proposed pension changes. Further escalation of this campaign up to and including strike action is under consideration by the teacher unions and the other public sector unions.

New directive

With effect from March 8th a new directive enhancing the current directive on posts of responsibility will be in place. The TUI is issuing the same directive. This directive instructs members not to engage in any of the duties associated with a vacated post:

With effect from March 8th, 2010 all members are directed:

- ◆ Not to engage in reviews of posts of responsibility or to change the duties of existing post-holders to fill vacancies caused by the moratorium on posts of responsibility.
- ◆ Not to agree to alter existing post duties in any way.
- ◆ Where a post of responsibility is vacated, for any reason and where that post is not filled as a result of the moratorium by the appointment of a teacher to the post of responsibility in accordance with the normal procedures for appointment to posts of responsibility and paid in accordance with normal procedures the allowance as appropriate for that post of responsibility and given the appropriate time remission appropriate to the post, then the duties of the post so vacated will no longer be carried out by any staff member under any circumstance.

This directive means that the duties of a vacated post will no longer be carried out by any member. The facility whereby a school can reorganise posts of responsibility is also being suspended.

Directives in place

In addition to the directive above, the following directives are already in place in relation to:

- ◆ Parent-teacher meetings or staff meetings outside school time;
- ◆ School development planning meetings;
- ◆ Cooperation with WSE or subject inspections
- ◆ Class size

Breaches of directives

It is important that all members adhere to the directives. ASTI Standing Committee has decided that breaches of the ASTI directives should be formally submitted, in accordance with the Rules and Constitution of the ASTI, to the General Secretary giving details of the breach.

Review of voluntary activities

The campaign of opposition to the public service pay cut, pension levy and proposed pension review will be long and sustained. The directives in place will be reviewed and expanded on an ongoing basis.

Accordingly, the ASTI is conducting a review of all voluntary activities. School stewards have been asked to consult with staff in their schools and to convey opinion to their local Standing Committee representative. ◆

Inspections directive

Schools that have a scheduled Whole School Evaluation or Subject Inspection should contact their Standing Committee representative.

High levels of public satisfaction with teachers

Teaching ranks as the profession with the second highest level of public satisfaction, according to a recent survey by the Teaching Council. The survey of 1,000 adults showed high levels of satisfaction with the way teachers do their jobs and a high level of trust in teachers.

Go to the ASTI website for more information.

Full details of all directives are available at www.asti.ie.

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The Principals and Deputy Principals Advisory Committee 2010-2012 will be elected at the seminar for principals and deputy principals.

If there is an election in your area, you must be present on the day in order to vote.

ASTI organisation in the school

Standing Committee recommends that each school should have an ASTI school union committee to strengthen the organisation of the union in the school and assist the school steward. The ASTI school union committee will share the responsibilities of the organisation of school meetings; participation in, delegations to, and meetings with, school management; attending branch meetings; distribution of union circulars and newsletters; etc.



Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland

General Secretary

ASTI, the trade union representing 18,500 second level teachers in Ireland, is seeking to appoint a General Secretary. The person appointed will have the leadership skills necessary to build on the Association's achievements to date in serving teachers and promoting education.

ASTI invites applications from suitably qualified persons.

The successful candidate will demonstrate:

- ◆ Extensive experience of negotiation and representation at a senior level
- ◆ Knowledge of the education system and of the teaching profession
- ◆ Highly developed judgement, leadership and communication skills
- ◆ Commitment to trade union principles and social solidarity
- ◆ A track record of achieving strategic objectives over time
- ◆ Strong people management and motivational skills
- ◆ Research, analysis and policy development skills

A remuneration package commensurate with the senior nature of the position will apply.

Applicants who satisfy the requirements set out above should submit a full CV including your vision for the optimal role of the ASTI over the coming years and the strategies necessary to give practical effect to that vision, to:

Michelle Ní Longáin,
BCM Hanby Wallace Solicitors,
88 Harcourt Street,
Dublin 2

Further information in relation to the duties and requirements of this post is available on the ASTI website - www.asti.ie

Closing date for applications is 5.00 p.m. Tuesday, March 16th, 2010.

ASTI is an equal opportunities employer.

Seminar for ASTI principals and deputy principals

The ASTI is hosting a seminar for principals and deputy principals on March 24th. The event will be held in the Heritage Hotel, Portlaoise. Information packs have been sent to all ASTI principals and deputy principals.

This seminar is a first step towards integrating principal and deputy principal members more fully into the union. The seminar will deal with issues to do with the relationship between principals and deputy principals and the ASTI, as well as other topics of interest.

Representatives from legal firm, BCM Hanby Wallace will discuss the relationship with trustees and boards of management, as well as recent legal decisions affecting schools. Hubert Loftus, Principal Officer in the Department of Education and Science will give a presentation on how allocations work at second level. These presentations will be followed by extended question and answer sessions.

The seminar will also be addressed by ASTI president, Joe Moran; General Secretary, John White; ASTI industrial relations officials; and Brendan Forde, Chair of the ASTI Principals' and Deputy Principals' Advisory Committee.

If you wish to attend the seminar, you must book your place on the form included in the information pack sent to you. If haven't received the information pack, please contact Erin Fitzgerald on 01-6040174 or email erin@asti.ie. ♦

Thanks to school stewards

Standing Committee, the ASTI President and the General Secretary wish to thank school stewards for all of their work during this difficult time for trade unions.

Teachers' Flat Rate Expenses

A standard flat rate expenses allowance is set for a variety of professions. In the case of teachers the following flat rate expenses apply:

school principals	€608
other teachers	€518
part-time teachers	€279

You can have your expenses applied by visiting the Revenue Online Service at www.ros.ie or by contacting your local tax office. See www.revenue.ie for more information on tax credits and reliefs.

In addition, all teachers registered with the Teaching Council can claim a tax credit for their registration fee - see www.teachingcouncil.ie.

Extra retirement seminars

Retiring in 2010 or 2011? Come along to an ASTI retirement seminar to have all your retirement and pension questions answered.

Find out about retirement options, pension calculations, retirement procedures, taxation and budgeting, investment and pension enhancement at one of 10 seminars being held nationwide during March, April and May.

The seminars take place from 4.30pm to 7pm over two evenings in venues around the country. Check the ASTI website or the ASTI noticeboard in your school for venues and dates.

You must register to attend. Phone Eileen O'Rourke on 01-6040170 or email asti.library@asti.ie. ♦

Majority of Section 29 appeals not upheld

Over 60% of appeals relating to expulsion, enrolment and suspension at post-primary level are not upheld at hearing. Figures revealed by Minister for Education, Batt O'Keeffe during Dail questioning show that only 259 of 677 Section 29 appeals made over the last five years were upheld at hearing.

Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 provides parents with an appeal process where a student is expelled, refused enrolment, or suspended for more than 20 days. Over the last five years, a total of 1065 such appeals have been made at post-primary level. Only 677 of these appeals proceeded to hearing, as many were withdrawn or resolved locally or by facilitator.

Only 25% of expulsion appeals were upheld at hearing, as compared to about half of enrolment and suspension appeals. ♦

S&S Payments

Following ASTI representations, the Department of Education has informed the ASTI that the first portion of S&S payments will be paid on March 11th.

Work-to-rule action may affect some payments.

Key topics at Convention 2010

Budget 2010 and cuts to education and teachers' pay and will dominate this year's Annual Convention.

Thirteen of the sixteen motions on policy issues, submitted by branches nationwide, relate to the education cuts and the most recent Budget, including motions on the public sector pension levy, public sector pay cuts, the moratorium on posts of responsibility, the worsening of the pupil-teacher ratio, and cuts to special needs assistants.

Convention 2010 takes place in Galway from April 6th to 8th. See inside for further details.

Key events at Convention 2010

Tuesday April 6th

Election of President and Vice President 2010-2011

Address by ASTI President

Debate on motions

Wednesday April 7th

Election of Trustees and Honorary Treasurer

General Secretary's report

Debate on motions

Thursday April 8th

Debate on motions

Convention 2010

Convention 2010 will be held in Galway City from Tuesday April 6th to Thursday April 8th. Over 500 delegates will attend the event in the Radisson Blu Hotel, and will be addressed by the ASTI President, Joe Moran and General Secretary, John White

Convention Banquet

A banquet for delegates will be held on the night of Tuesday, April 6th in the Radisson Hotel. Tickets are priced at €45 and will be on sale from the Galway Branch information desk in the conference foyer in the hotel from 1.00pm to 3.00pm on Tuesday, 6th April. If your Branch books a table of 10 before Friday, March 26th, it will only cost €350 - a saving of €100. Contact info@asti.ie or phone 01-6040160 for further information.

Convention Business

Each year ASTI branches around the country send motions to ASTI Head Office for inclusion in the Convention programme. The ASTI Steering Committee is responsible for timetabling motions to ensure that important decisions can be made, new policy formed and committees established.

Golf Outing

Golf has been booked for Athenry Golf Club from 8am to 10am on Tuesday April 6th. To book a place contact Luke Glynn on 087-4102148.



The Galway Branch Convention Organising Committee

Back row (left to right): Luke Glynn, Sarah Withero, Carol Dunleavy, Maura Greaney, Liam Glynn. Front row (left to right): Eileen Scanlon, Máire Ní Chonchubhair, Colette Mc Walter, Bridie Higgins. Absent: Christina Kennedy.

Candidates for Election

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

Candidate for President

Jack Keane

Nominating Branches:

Bray, Carbery, Carlow, Carrick-on-Shannon, Cavan, Clare, Cork North, Cork South, Desmond, Donegal, Drogheda Sean Higgins, Dublin North west, Dublin North Central, Dublin South 1, Dublin South 2, Dungarvan, East Cork, East Galway, East Mayo, Enniscorthy, Fermoy, Fingal, Iar Thuaisceart Thir Chonaill, Kerry, Kildare, Laois, Limerick North, Limerick South, Longford, Monaghan, Mullingar, Nenagh, Roscrea, Sligo, Stillorgan, Tipperary, Tuam, Tullamore, Waterford, West Limerick, West Mayo, West Waterford, Wexford Tony Boland, Wicklow.



Candidates for Vice-President

Gerry Breslin

Nominating Branches:

Carlow, Cork South, Donegal, Dublin North Central, East Mayo, Iar Thuaisceart Thir Chonaill, Sligo, West Waterford.

Brendan Broderick

Nominating Branches:

Athlone, Carbery, Carrick-on-Shannon, Cavan, Cork North, Desmond, Dublin North West, Dublin South 1, Dublin South 2, Dublin South Central, Dublin South West, Dublin South County, Dungarvan, East Galway, Fingal, Laois, Mullingar, Roscrea, Stillorgan, Waterford, West Limerick, Wexford Tony Boland.

Committees for Election 2010

Steering Committee

5 members

Rules Committee

5 members

Investment Committee

4 members

Pensions Sub-Committee

5 members

Gerry Breslin

Candidate for Vice-Presidency

Gerry Breslin



Profile:

- ◆ A native of Bundoran, Co. Donegal
- ◆ Secondary Education: St. Macartans College, Monaghan.
- ◆ B. Comm. - U.C.D. H.Dip.Ed. - N.U.I. Maynooth.
- ◆ Married, with family of four and one grandchild.
- ◆ Teacher of Business and Maths in Colaiste Cholmcille, Ballyshannon.
- ◆ Present School Steward.
- ◆ Member of C.E.C. from 2002.
- ◆ Member of Equality Committee 2005 - 2007.
- ◆ Member of Standing Committee, Region 1.
- ◆ Member of Finance Committee.
- ◆ ASTI rep. on Committee dealing with Bullying and Harassment in C. & C. schools.

Immediate priorities for the ASTI:

- ◆ Continuance of our campaign against pay cuts and pension levies
- ◆ Closer links with other teacher unions, particularly the TUI
- ◆ Getting more young teachers involved at all levels of the ASTI
- ◆ Seeking a review by the DES of the mainstreaming of special needs students. The policy as it exists is not delivering as it should to the students and is putting great stress on teachers.

In the longer term I believe the ASTI will have to continue the campaign to regain our pay and conditions that have been eroded over the past few years.

I believe we should campaign strenuously to stop the casualisation of the teaching profession.

I believe that as we enter the second decade of the twenty first century that society will continue to change as rapidly as it did in the first decade. Education will also have to change to meet the challenges that this will present. We, as educationalists and as trade unionists, must be prepared to embrace these changes and to give leadership. We must manage the changes that will happen so that they will benefit us as teachers, the students and all the education partners.

We must partake in change in order to influence it, for the good of society in general and for education and teachers in particular.

We must, of course, continue to campaign for extra funding for education. The Government cannot be allowed to continue to underfund the education system. It has paid lip service to our teachers and our young people for too long.

Brendan Broderick



Brendan Broderick

Candidate for Vice-Presidency

Profile:

- ◆ A native of Kilkenny.
- ◆ Former student of St Kieran's College, Kilkenny.
- ◆ Graduate of UCD and NIHE, Limerick.
- ◆ Married with a 17 year old son.
- ◆ Teaching science in Templeogue College since 1984 (non-permanent teacher in various schools between 1980 - 84).
- ◆ Former school steward.
- ◆ Filled most offices at branch level.
- ◆ Former Regional Organiser.
- ◆ Member of CEC.
- ◆ Member of Standing Committee 2003 - 2009.
- ◆ Served on several ASTI sub-committees (currently chairman of ASTI Science Sub-Committee).
- ◆ Union advisor to the POR Arbitrator for voluntary secondary schools.

Goals:

In the short term, I am committed to:

- ◆ Soliciting support from other public service unions in vigorously opposing the pay cuts and pension levy unfairly imposed on public sector workers last year.
- ◆ Reversing those education cutbacks that impact negatively on teaching jobs and on teachers working conditions.
- ◆ Protecting pensions. (Proposals announced in the December budget, if implemented could result in reductions of up to 20% in the value of existing and future pensions).
- ◆ Urging the ICTU to publish its own commercial newspaper to challenge the monopoly enjoyed by right wing media moguls currently operating in the country.

In the longer term, I am committed to:

- ◆ Revitalising our union at school and branch level.
- ◆ Continue to campaign for non-permanent teachers.
- ◆ Resolving discipline problems in schools.
- ◆ Defending ASTI policy on school-based assessment/certification etc.
- ◆ Highlighting the problems associated with the teaching of science and technology.
- ◆ Converting the long service allowance into a long service increment.
- ◆ A voluntary winding down scheme that enables long serving teachers to work 11 hours (or more) in the 5 years before retirement age while preserving their previous pension entitlements. (Such contracts would be almost cost neutral and provide extra hours for younger non-permanent teachers).
- ◆ Defending the dignity of the teaching profession (a) in relation to promotional posts and (b) by opposing any attempts to introduce performance management systems into our schools.

**Convention 2010 will also
elect Trustees and ASTI
Honorary Treasurer**

Convention Motions 2010

Posts of responsibility

Posts of responsibility - Motion 4

That the ASTI seeks the reinstatement of all posts of responsibility in schools and the immediate lifting of the moratorium on the filling of posts. (Iar-Thuaisceart, Galway, Nenagh, West Limerick, Clare, Stillorgan, Mullingar, Donegal, Wexford Tony Boland, Dublin North 1, Dublin South County)

Special needs

Special needs - Motion 44

That the ASTI resists any further reduction in the provision of teachers and resources to students with special needs. (Stillorgan)

Conditions of employment

Conditions of employment - Motion 20

That the ASTI rejects any worsening of teachers' conditions of employment and strenuously resists any attempt (a) to abolish the Supervision and Substitution Scheme; (b) to require teachers to be present on the school premises throughout the day, or (c) to lengthen the school day or the school year. (Dublin North East, Stillorgan)

Amendment

Amend by replacing "throughout the day" with "for the duration of school opening hours" and replacing "or" school year with "and/or" school year. (Desmond)

Pension levy

Pension levy - Motion 10

That the ASTI withdraw from all co-operation with DES syllabus, curriculum changes and other DES initiatives which increase the workload of teachers until the pension levy and other educational cutbacks are reversed. (Dublin South 1)

Pension parity

Pension parity - Motion 8

That the ASTI will resist, with every means up to and including strike action, any attempt by Government to break pension parity for retired members with the salaries paid to serving teachers with similar academic and post allowances. (Dublin North West)

Industrial action

Industrial action - Motion 1

That the response of the ASTI to any attempt by the government to cut salary, allowances, pensions or working conditions of teachers, be met with a sustained campaign of industrial action, up to and including all-out strike, following a ballot of members. (Cork South)

Pay cuts

Pay cuts - Motion 2

That the ASTI will resist any further cuts in teachers' salaries and will not trade working conditions in order to prevent pay cuts. (Carbery, Stillorgan)

Withdrawal from duties

Non-contractual duties - Motion 28

That the ASTI ballot its members to withdraw from all school related non-contractual duties. (Dungarvan)

Junior Cert format

Junior Certificate examination format - Motion 33

That the ASTI resists any attempt by the Minister for Education and Science to discontinue the present format of the Junior Certificate examination and its independent assessment. (Dungarvan, West Limerick, Nenagh, Kerry, Stillorgan)

Junior Certificate examination reform - Motion 47

That the ASTI welcome the reform of the Junior Certificate Examination on the basis that the following essential educational aims are achieved in the review:

- (a) an agreed system of independent external assessment is maintained;
- (b) the "overload" in the current curriculum is addressed;
- (c) that adequate resources are made available for more active teaching and learning methodologies. (Tipperary)

Assesment - Motion 50

That the ASTI strongly oppose any efforts to introduce methods of assessment that will involve teachers assessing their own students. (Wexford Tony Boland)

Amendment

Insert "in Certificate examinations" after "assessment. (Dundalk)

Pupil-teacher ratio - Motion 30

That the ASTI negotiate with the DES a restoration of the pupil-teacher ratio to 18:1. (Clare)

Revision of syllabi - Motion 31

That, in the light of the recent unexpected changes to the Irish Junior Certificate syllabus, this Convention demands that any future revision of syllabi must be preceded by proper and adequate consultation with the relevant teachers and that implementation of syllabi revisions does not take place before structures, resources and adequate inservice are in place. (Dublin South County, Desmond)

Revision of Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate - Motion 38

That the ASTI, in co-operation with the TUI, oppose the introduction of new programmes, revision of any existing syllabi or any further revisions of the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes until there is a reversal of the cutbacks in education, the reductions in teachers salaries and the restoration of the broken Conciliation and Arbitration agreements. (Desmond)

Contract of indefinite duration - Motion 16

That the ASTI demands that all teaching hours are included for the calculation of a Contract of Indefinite Duration. (Carbery)

Employment vacancies - Motion 17

That, in the present economic situation, the ASTI would encourage school managements to employ newly qualified teachers where possible and that where part-time hours exist in a school, the ASTI demands that priority in employment be given to teachers on the live register or to teachers who do not have 22 hour contracts. (Donegal, East Cork)

Amendment

Amend by removal of the word "encourage" and addition in its place of the word "exhort". (Tipperary)

 Junior Cert reform

 Assesment of students

 Pupil-teacher ratio

 Revision of syllabi

 Revision of exams

 Contract of indefinite duration

 Filling of vacancies

Review of union

Review of union's structures, rules and organisation - Motion 73

That the Officers of the Association investigate mechanisms, including the possibility of engaging an independent body, by which a complete review of the union's structures, rules and organisation can be carried out with the object of making the ASTI more effective, totally democratic and essentially member centred; proposals to be put to a Special Convention in September 2011. (Dublin North East, East Cork, Standing Committee)

Rule change - Rule 145 (a)

Rule 145 (a) - Motion 68

There shall be three Trustees of the Association. The Trustees shall be members of the Association elected by a simple majority vote by the Annual Convention from among those who have been members for not less than ten years.

Amend rule 145 (a) by addition of the following after the words 'ten years':

"The Trustees may attend meetings of the CEC as observers. The Trustees may speak at CEC meetings on matters pertaining to their duties but shall not have the right to vote at CEC meetings".

Rule 145 (a) shall then read as follows:

There shall be three Trustees of the Association. The Trustees shall be members of the Association elected by a simple majority vote by the Annual Convention from among those who have been members for not less than ten years. The Trustees may attend meetings of the CEC as observers. The Trustees may speak at CEC meetings on matters pertaining to their duties but shall not have the right to vote at CEC meetings. (Standing Committee)

Rule change - Rule 145 (c)

Rule 145 (c) - Motion 69

Trustees shall hold office for one year and shall be eligible for re-election but in no case shall the term of office exceed five years. If from any cause the number of Trustees should fall below three, the CEC shall elect a Trustee or Trustees to bring the number up to three. Any Trustee so elected shall hold office until the conclusion of the next Annual Convention.

Amend Rule 145 (c) as follows:

- (i) by deletion of the first sentence and by insertion of the following first sentence: "Trustees shall hold office for two years and shall be eligible for re-election but in no case shall they exceed a maximum of 4 consecutive years in office",
- (ii) by insertion of the words "for the remainder of that 2 year term of office" after the words "up to three", and
- (iii) By the deletion of the third sentence and by insertion of the following sentence at the end: "The terms of office of all Trustees shall end at the conclusion of the Annual Convention at which the biennial election of Trustees has taken place".

Rule 145(c) shall then read as follows:

Trustees shall hold office for two years and shall be eligible for re-election but in no case shall they exceed a maximum of 4 consecutive years in office. If from any cause the number of Trustees should fall below three, the CEC shall elect a Trustee or Trustees to bring the number up to three for the remainder of that two year term of office. The terms of office of all Trustees shall end at the conclusion of the Annual Convention at which the biennial election of Trustees has taken place. (Standing Committee)

Rule 147 - Motion 70

So much of the funds of the Association as may not be required for immediate use, or to meet the usual day to day expenditure, may at the discretion of the CEC or Standing Committee be invested in any investment in which Trustees are for the time being authorised by law to invest trust funds.

Amend Rule 147 as follows:

- (i) By deletion of the words "in which Trustees are for the time being authorised by law to invest trust funds" after the word "investment", and by insertion of the words "authorised by law" after the words "investment".
- (ii) By insertion of the letter '(a)' immediately before the words "so much".
- (iii) By addition of the following at the end of the rule: "(b) The Trustees shall meet with the Honorary Treasurer to review finances and investments at least twice annually."

Rule 147 shall then read as follows:

- (a) So much of the funds of the Association as may not be required for immediate use, or to meet the usual day to day expenditure, may at the discretion of the CEC or Standing Committee be invested in any investment authorised by law.
- (b) The Trustees shall meet with the Honorary Treasurer to review finances and investments at least twice annually. (Standing Committee)

Rule 150 - Motion 71

The Trustees may attend the Conventions of the Association and may speak at Convention on matters pertaining to their duties but they shall not act as delegates to Convention.

Amend rule 150 by addition of the following:

"An annual report by the Trustees shall be included in the Convention Handbook and such report shall be presented to Convention by the Trustees".

Rule 150 shall then read as follows:

"The Trustees may attend the Conventions of the Association and may speak at Convention on matters pertaining to their duties but they shall not act as delegates to Convention. An annual report by the Trustees shall be included in the Convention Handbook and such report shall be presented to Convention by the Trustees". (Standing Committee)

Rule 151 - Motion 72

The Trustees or any one or more of them may be removed from office at any time by a resolution of the CEC passed by two thirds of members present and voting.

Amend Rule 151 by insertion of the words "for conduct injurious to the Association" immediately after the words "from office".

Rule 151 shall then read as follows:

"The Trustees or any one or more of them may be removed from office for conduct injurious to the Association at any time by a resolution of the CEC passed by two thirds of members present and voting". (Standing Committee)

Rule change - Rule 88

Vacancy on the Teaching Council

There will be a vacancy for an ASTI nominee to the Teaching Council as Jack Keane will be assuming office as ASTI President.

Any member interested should submit their name to the General Secretary.

The big swap!

Fairtrade fortnight runs from 22 February to 8 March. During that time, ICTU and Fairtrade is asking people to join the 'Big Swap' - to swap their usual products for Fairtrade products. Find out more on www.fairtrade.ie

Haiti appeal

Following an appeal in the last issue of Nuacht, a number of teachers have contacted ASTI Head Office to let us know about the success of collections in their schools. Well done to all schools who participated in fundraising events or gave generously to charities involved in relief efforts in Haiti.

If you would like to help some more, Concern is currently seeking volunteers to give up two hours of their time to collect in one of the Dunnes Stores network on the weekend of March 13-14. If you can help, e-mail fundraiselocallyireland@concern.net with your name and contact number and the day and time you are available. See www.concern.net for more information.

Rule 88 - Motion 64

- (i) Amend Rule 88 by deletion of the word "all" in the first sentence and by replacing it with the word "the", and
- (ii) Amend Rule 88 by deletion of the second sentence "Plebiscites or ballots of Association members shall be by postal ballot" and by insertion of the following new second sentence: "The format of any plebiscite or ballot of Association members shall be by postal ballot, by branch based ballot or by school based ballot, such format to be decided by Standing Committee".

Rule 88 to then read as follows:

With a view to deciding matters of policy or principle, the CEC may take or cause to be taken a plebiscite or ballot of the members of the Association. The format of any plebiscite or ballot of Association members shall be by postal ballot, by branch based ballot or by school based ballot, such format to be decided by Standing Committee. All branches shall, where possible, convene information meetings prior to such plebiscites or ballots. (Standing Committee, Wexford Tony Boland)

ASTI Centenary Scholarship

The ASTI offers an annual scholarship to assist ASTI members in undertaking further third level studies. The annual scholarship of €4000 is awarded to an ASTI member, with preference given to members who do not hold any other scholarships or financial awards for study.

Any ASTI member who is currently in service, or who is on paid study leave can apply.

The closing date for applications is April 30, 2010. Application forms are available on the ASTI website. ♦

Political lobby - turning up the pressure

The ASTI is engaging in a sustained political pressure lobby in conjunction with the other teacher unions - INTO, TUI and IFUT. This lobby is in addition to industrial action in opposition to the public service pay cut and is intended to influence Budget 2011 decisions.

The public service pay cuts and the threat to public service pensions have put huge pressure on teachers and their families; it's time to turn the pressure back on politicians.

Make your voice heard

Public sector pay has been slashed and changes to the public service pension indicated in the last budget could have a significant impact on the value of your pension. Make sure your politicians know your outrage at proposals to change the pension scheme for new entrants and to break pension parity.

Members are urged to make several visits to TDs' clinics in small groups or individually. The strength of feeling among members must be clearly expressed. Every voice counts so make the effort to have yours heard. ♦